

# Glossary of Terms in Kendo

Stephen Quinlan

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**Pronunciation Aids.** Many Japanese terms have been *artificially* hyphenated to aid in pronunciation, and some common rules for writing terms in English have been replaced, e.g., writing a Latin ō vs. an OU for a long *oh* sound. Also, the IPA convention for indicating a silent or voiceless vowel, e.g.,  $\text{̥}$  for a voiceless *u*, is used. This is *not* normally done when writing Japanese terms in English and is purely a convention used here.

Any errors are solely those of the author.

## DOJO COMMANDS

**Hajime** : 始め Begin/start.

**Kamae-tō** : 構え刀 Assume your stance.

**Men (w)o tore** : 面を取れ Take off your **men**.

**Men (w)o tsuke** : 面を付け Put on your **men**.

**Mokusō** : 黙想 Begin meditation.

**Osame-tō** : 納め刀 Put away your weapon.

**Otagai ni rei** : お互いに礼 Bow to your peers.

**Seiretsu** : 整列 Line up.

**Seiza** : 正座 Assume **seiza**.

**Sensei ni rei** : 先生に礼 Bow to the **sensei**.

**Shōmen ni rei** : 正面に礼 Bow to the **shōmen**.

**Sonkyo** : 蹲踞 Assume **sonkyo**.

**Tai-tō** : 帯刀 Bring your weapon to the ready position at your hip.

**Yame** : 止め Stop.

**Yasume** : 休め Break/rest period.

## SHIAI TERMS & COMMANDS

**Chūken** : 中堅 Third player on a team match.

**Enchō** : 延長 Overtime. Enchō is “sudden death”, i.e., the first point wins. There is usually no time limit during enchō.

**Fukushin** : 副審 A sub-referee in a court during **shiai**.

**Fukushō** : 副将 Fourth player on a team match.

**Fusen-gachi** : 不戦勝ち Player wins a match by default or disqualification.

**Gōgi** : 合議 Judges conference. Players **osame-tō**, step back to the inner edge of the court and assume **sonkyo** in **tai-tō** until the gōgi is over.

**Hajime** : 始め Begin a match.

**Hansoku** : 反則 Penalty. Match stops, and players return to their starting positions.

**Hansoku ikkai** : 反則一回 First penalty.

**Hansoku nikai** : 反則二回 Second penalty. A second penalty results in one point being awarded to the opponent and the penalty count is reset.

**Hantei** : 判定 Judges decision.

**Hiki-wake** : 引き分け Match is a draw.

**Jihō** : 次鋒 Second player on a team match.

**Jikan desu** : 時間です The time keeper’s signal to indicate to the **shushin** “time-up”. Players return to starting positions.

**Mejirushi** : 目印 Colored flag worn on the backs of the players. Also termed a **tasuki**.

**Nihonme** : 二本目 Begin round two.

**Senpō** : 先鋒 First player on a team match.

**Shinpan** : 審判 A judge or referee in a tournament.

**Shinpan-chō** : 審判長 The referee director of the tournament; the head referee.

**Shinpan-shunin** : 審判主任 The court specific referee director.

**Shōbu** : 勝負 Begin final round of a match.

**Shōbu-ari** : 勝負あり Match point. Players assume **sonkyo**, **osame-tō**, **ritsu-rei**, and exit the court.

**Shushin** : 主審 The lead judge during a match.

**Taishō** : 大将 Fifth player on a team match.

**Tasuki** : See **mejirushi**.

**Wakare** : 分かれ Players separate to **issoku ittō no maai**, but maintain relative court positions.

**Yame** : 止め Stop the match. Players return to center.

## GENERAL TERMS

**Age-tō** : (上げ刀) “Raised sword”. A **katate** variant of **jōdan no kamae**.

**Ai** : (1) (prefix) 相 “Mutual, balanced, joint.” (2) (suffix) 合い “Union, integration, match (together).”

**Ai-chūdan** : 相中段 “Mutual chūdan”. Both opponent’s face each other in **chūdan no kamae**.

**Ai-kakari geiko** : 相掛稽古 “Mutual attack practice.” Two **kendōka** do **kakari geiko** simultaneously.

**Ai-te** : 相手 “Opponent.”

**Ai-uchi** : 相打ち “Mutual strike.” Commonly translated as “simultaneous strike(s).”

**Ashi** : 足 “Foot” or “leg.”

**Ashi-gamae** : 足構え “Foot Position.”

**Ashi-sabaki** : 足捌き (lit.) “Handle” or “deal with” the “foot/leg”, i.e., “footwork”. See also **ayumi-ashi**, **fukumi-ashi**, **fumi-komi**, **hiraki-ashi**, **nusumi-ashi**, **okuri-ashi**, **suri-ashi**, and **tsugi-ashi**.

**Ayumi-ashi** : 歩み足 “Walking foot.” A normal walking motion where the feet cross.

**Bokken** : 木剣 “Wooden sword.” See **bokutō**.

**Bokutō ni yoru kendō kihon waza keiko hō** : 木刀による剣道基本技稽古法 “Practice of fundamental kendo techniques with a bokutō.” See **bokutō waza**.

**Bokutō waza** : 木刀技 “Wooden sword techniques.” Abbreviation for **bokutō ni yoru kendō kihon waza keiko hō**. A series of forms created to practice fundamental **shinai kendō** techniques with **bokutō**.

**Bokutō** : 木刀 “Wooden sword.” The **bokutō**, **tachi** and **kodachi**, are primarily used to practice **nihon kendō no kata**. The **tachi** is also used in the **bokutō waza** and can also be used to practice **shinai kendō** basics.

**Bōgu** : 防具 “Kendō armor.” Consisting of the **men**, **kote**, **dō**, and **tare**. See **kendō-gu**.

**Budō** : 武道 “Martial art” or “martial way.” Budō are martial arts where the focus is placed on bettering oneself instead of pure combative victory.

**Bujutsu** : 武術 “Martial art” or “military art.” Bujutsu is a martial art where the focus is placed on effective combat skills for defeating an opponent.

**Bushi** : 武士 “War/military gentleman.” A **samurai**. Often translated simply as *warrior* however this translation overlooks the meaning of the character **shi** 士: one who serves or does in a *polite* context.

**Bushidō** : 武士道 “The way of the samurai”. A code of ethics, morals, and conduct for **samurai**.

**Chi no kamae** : 地の構え The “kamae of earth.” See **gedan no kamae**.

**Chiisai** : 小さい “Small.”

**Chiisai waza** : 小さい技 “Small techniques.” A term used to refer to small strikes.

**Chika-ma** : 近間 “Short interval.” A distance that is shorter than **issoku ittō no maai**.

**Chōtan-itchi-mi** : (長短一身) “Strong point, weak point, one body.” The concept that everything has both strengths and weaknesses in the same package.

**Chūdan hanmi no kamae** : 中段半身の構え A variant of **chūdan no kamae** used in the **kodachi kata**. See **hanmi kamae**.

**Chūdan no kamae** : 中段の構え “Mid level stance.” Chūdan is known as the “kamae of water” due to its adaptability for offensive and defensive **waza**. Chūdan is the fundamental **kamae** in **kendō**.

**Connection** : **En** in Japanese, meaning a “bond, link, relationship, or connection.” In **kendō** this implies a mental and physical connection to the opponent. The mental connection implies one has a perception as to how the opponent will act, their intents, their level of focus, **ki-ken-tai-itchi**, and **zanshin**. The physical connection allows one to respond to physical movements, maintain distance, adjust **kamae**, etc... A connection is essential to understanding the **rhythm**.

**Daitō** : 大刀 The name used to refer to the “long sword” when using **nitō**.

**Dan** : 段 “Step” or “level.”

**Dan-i** : 段位 “Rank.” This refers to the set of **dan** ranks in **kendō**, commonly equated with the rank of “black belt”. Dan ranks range from first to eighth.

**Datotsu** : 打突 A “strike” or “thrust.” **Shinai kendō** is a **datotsu** style of fencing as compared to a **zantotsu** style if a **katana** were used.

**Datotsu-bu** : 打突部 “Striking section.” The portion of the **shinai** strikes are made with; the **mono-uchi**.

**Datotsu-bui** : 打突部位 “Striking position.” Portion of the **bōgu** where one may strike.

**De** : 出 From the verb *deru*, “start, begin, (just) coming out”, i.e., something is being initiated or started.

**Dead** : A term used to describe one’s weapon when the ability for offensive and defensive techniques has been eliminated. This can be the result of improper grip or striking technique, but most commonly this is caused by one’s strike being effectively parried via some type of defensive technique.

**Dead hands** : Similar to your weapon becoming **dead**, however in this case it is caused specifically by your hands or forearms being in an improper position to control one’s weapon or strike/cut effectively.

**Debana** : 出ばな From **de** “Come out, start, begin.” and *bana* “moment, situation”, i.e., the moment something begins.

**Debana waza** : 出ばな技 Techniques used to strike as the opponent’s attack is being initiated.

**Dō** : (1) 道 “The way”, i.e. a way of enlightenment, or of bettering oneself, e.g., **kendō**. (2) 胴 The abdominal protector worn in **kendō**. See **kendō-gu**. (3) The name of the target when striking the abdomen.

**Dō-chikawa** : 胴乳皮 Leather loops on the **dō-kawa** used to attach the **dō-himo**.

**Dō-himo** : 胴紐 The strings used to tie the **dō**.

**Dōjō** : 道場 “Practice hall.” A place where one practices **budō**.

**Dō-kawa** : 胴皮 The lower portion of the **dō** covering the abdomen, the left and right sides of which makes up the striking area of the **dō**.

**Dō-mune** : 胴胸 The chest portion of the **dō**.

**Dōmo-arigato-gozai-mashita** :  
どうも有賀とご座いました “Thank you” (very polite).

**En** : 縁 A “bond, link, relationship, connection.” See **connection**.

**Enbu** : 演武 A “martial arts demonstration.”

**Enzan no metsuke** : 遠山の目付け “Fixing your eyes on a distant mountain.” See **metsuke**.

**Four sicknesses** : The four sicknesses (*shi-kai*), or admonitions, are *ku* 恐怖 “fear”, *gi* 疑 “doubt”, *kyu* 驚 “surprise”, and *waku* 惑 “confusion.”

**Fukumi-ashi** : 含み[ふくみ]足 “Hidden” footwork. This type of footwork is where one advances forward unnoticed by their opponent, while maintaining their

**ashi-gamae**. It is done by slowly creeping toward the opponent by, e.g., curling and uncurling the toes, to pull oneself forward. This is an advanced application of footwork.

**Fumi-komi** : 踏み込み The shortened, and almost exclusively used, term for *fumi-komi ashi* meaning “stepping” or “rushing into footwork.” *Fumi-komi* is a large, *lunging okuri-ashi* style step where one momentarily forgoes using **suri-ashi** as the leading foot leaves the ground near the end of the *fumi-komi* step. This type of footwork is well known as the one that makes the stomping sound as the foot claps the floor.

**Furi-kaburi** : 振り被り “To hold aloft (e.g. a sword); to brandish.” This refers to raising one’s weapon over one’s head in preparation to strike; the upswing prior to a strike.

**Gedan hanmi no kamae** : 下段半身の構え A variation of **gedan no kamae** used in the **kodachi kata**. See **hanmi kamae**.

**Gedan no kamae** : 下段の構え The “low level” **kamae**, also known as the “*kamae of earth*.” *Gedan* is considered a physically defensive *kamae* but a strong and aggressive spirit is required for its success.

**Geiko** : 稽古 See **keiko**.

**Gi** : 着 The traditional practice jacket worn in **kendō**. Also known as a *kendō-gi*, *dō-gi*, or *keiko-gi*.

**Go no sen** : Also termed *go sen no sen*. See **mitsu no sen**.

**Gyaku** : 逆 “Reversed” or “opposite.”

**Gyaku-dō** : 逆胴 “Reverse *dō*.” Specifically this refers to the left **datotsu-bui** of the **dō**. Formerly this was considered a non-standard target and strikes to it were rarely awarded **ippon**. However with the popularization of **san-pō-mamori** awarding **ippon** for *gyaku-dō* is now common.

**Gyo** : 行 “Stream.” See **yuku** and **shin-gyo-so**.

**Ha** : 刃 The “blade/edge” of a sword.

**Hajime** : 始め “Begin/start.”

**Hakama** : 袴 The traditional practice pants in **kendō**.

**Hanmi** : 半身 “Half body.”

**Hanmi kamae** : 半身構え “Half body stance.” When assuming a *hanmi kamae* the torso is turned so it is only half exposed to the opponent.

**Hara** : 腹 The “intestines” or “gut.” Located three fingers width below the navel.

**Harai** : 払い “Sweep away” or “brush off.”

**Harai waza** : 払い技 “Sweeping aside” **waza**. A *waza* where one pushes the opponents weapon aside, breaking

their **kamae**, to create a **suki**.

**Harai-ageru** : 払い上げる “Sweep and knock upward.” A specific version of **harai waza** where the opponent’s **kamae** is swept to diagonal up-left or up-right.

**Harai-otoshi** : 払い落とし “Sweep and knock downward.” A specific version of **harai waza** where the opponent’s **kamae** is pushed to the down-left or down-right.

**Hasaki** : 刃先 A sword’s “cutting edge.”

**Hassō no kamae** : 八相の構え Known as the “**kamae of wood**”, the “**eight position stance**”, and sometimes **in no kamae**, it is a variant of **jōdan no kamae**.

**Haya suburi** : 速素振り “Quick/swift” **suburi**, also known as “jumping” **suburi**, is a common warm-up and/or endurance exercise.

**Heijōshin** : 平常心 “Common” or “everyday mind.” A basic definition of this is keeping one’s mind in a normal state, unaffected by things around you; your mindset during regular or common situations.

**Hi no kamae** : 火の構え The “**kamae of fire**.” See **jōdan no kamae**.

**Hidari** : 左 “Left” (direction).

**Hidari shizentai** : See **shizentai**.

**Hidari-te** : 左手 “Left-hand(ed).”

**Hiki** : 引き (lit.) “Pull.”

**Hiki-age** : 引き上げ (lit.) “Pulling rise.” **Hiki-age** refers to somebody pulling up their hands upon hitting a target. This is considered improper as the **shinai** is no longer in the correct position to emulate a cut. A subtle exception is a **hiki-waza men**; the **zanshin** for **hiki-men** brings the **shinai** up into **migi jōdan no kamae**. However, this is done *after* the **kendōka** has made their cut, i.e., one moves backward with the **shinai** in the proper cutting position *first*, then assumes **jōdan** as they continue their **zanshin**.

**Hiki-tsuke** : 引き付け “Pull into place.”

**Hiki-waza** : ひき技 “Pulling (away) techniques.” Techniques where one strikes while moving backward. Also called **hikibana waza**.

**Himo** : 紐 “String”, “cord”, or “strap.”

**Hiraki** : 開き “To open” or “unfold.”

**Hiraki-ashi** : 開き足 “Opening foot.” This is a semi-circular step to the left or right.

**Hira-seigan no takai** : (平正眼の高い) A “high, tall” variant of “flat, common, ordinary” **seigan no kamae**. The variant of **seigan** written as 正眼 is equivalent to **chūdan no kamae**. This term then refers to altering one’s **chūdan** to be higher. Specifically this **kamae** is used against an opponent that assumes **hidari jōdan no kamae**.

**Hira-uchi** : 平打ち Strike with the flat side of a blade. In **kendō**, striking with the side of the **shinai**.

**Honshō** : (1) 本勝 (lit.) “Base victory”, (2) (lit.) 本生 “born in the present”, (3) (lit.) 本正 “true base.” A term used in the **ittō ryū** school to describe certain types of attack methods related to the **kata**.

**Hyō-hō** : 兵法 “Strategy, tactics, art of war.” Also written as **hei-hō**.

**Iaidō** : 居合道 (lit.) “The way of the state of being present.” Interpreted as “the way of mental presence and immediate reaction”. As an oversimplification, **iaidō** is a **kata** based martial art focused on the drawing, striking with, and sheathing of a real sword, in an optimal way, while maintaining focus and **zanshin**.

**Ichi byōshi** : 一拍子 “One [musical] time; beat.” A term used to indicate a motion or action that is to be done as one smooth motion, without pauses. Also translated as “in one breath.” For example, in **kendō** the movements of an attack, i.e., lifting the **shinai** or **bokutō** overhead and swinging to attack the target, should be done as one motion without pause.

**Ichidan suburi** : 一段素振り “One step” **suburi**.

**In no kamae** : 陰の構え “Waiting/still **kamae**.” The antithesis of **yō no kamae**. See **hassō no kamae**.

**Insō** : 印相 “Hand sign.” See **mudrā**.

**Invading the maai** : The act of physically moving well into the striking range of the opponent with the express purpose of (1) pressuring the opponent, (2) crowding the opponent making attacks awkward, or (3) making the opponent feel exposed. The end result is to cause the opponent’s spirit of attack to collapse. This is used in the **nihon kendō no kata** in **tachi kata** #3 & #6 and is the intent behind **iri-mi** in the **kodachi kata**. See also **kurai-zume**.

**In-yō** : 陰陽 The Japanese reading for the *individual characters* for **yin-yang**. The term as a whole is correctly pronounced as *onmyō*, meaning “dual cosmic forces”.

**Ippon** : 一本 “One point” or “one strike.”

**Iri-mi** : 入り身 (lit.) “Entering body”, often translated as “entering directly.” This is the fundamental intent and mindset while using the **kodachi**. The action of spiritually threatening and physically moving into your opponents **maai** to attack.

**Iri-mi no kamae** : 入り身の構え (lit.) “Entering body stance.” This is the position taken when invading the opponent’s **maai** through **iri-mi**; the **kodachi** is in **chūdan no kamae**, blade downward, and the **kensen** directed toward the opponent’s throat.

**Ire-zuki** : 入れ突き “Entering thrust.” See **nayashi ire-zuki**.

**Issoku ittō no maai** : 一足一刀の間合 The “one step,

*one sword distance.*” The distance where one can launch, or evade, an attack by taking one step. This is the fundamental **maai** of **kendō**. While there are approximations to what this maai is, usually described as the distance where you and your opponents sword tips cross, each individual will have their own *unique* issoku ittō no maai simply due to the fact that each person will have a different “one-step” distance.

**Issun no seme** : 一寸の攻め “One sun” **seme**. Sun is an old Japanese unit of measurement, approximately three centimeters long. Issun no seme refers to applying seme by consistently moving forward toward the opponent one sun at a time, e.g., slowly but surely creeping forward while threatening a strike.

**Ittō ryu** : 一刀流 “One cut school/style.” Itto ryu was a sword school founded by Ito Ittosai Kagehisa which branched into several sub-schools. This school has heavily influenced modern **kendō**.

**Ji-geiko** : 地稽古 “Foundation practice.” Free sparring practice allowing the student to work on their own strengths, weaknesses, and spirit. See **keiko**.

**Jin-bu** : 刃部 The “blade edge” of the **shinai**.

**Jishū-geiko** : 自習稽古 (lit.) “Self-learning practice.” To actively learn by watching, reading, contemplating what was taught, etc...

**Jōdan no kamae** : 上段の構え The “high level” **kamae**, jōdan is known as the “*kamae of fire*.” As jōdan is very spiritually aggressive, the terms **ten no kamae** and **hi no kamae** are used to describe the spirit required.

**Jō-ge buri** : 上下振り “Up-down swing.” A basic form of swing practice to teach beginners how to swing in large motions along their centerline. It is also often used as a warm-up to help loosen up the shoulders.

**Kaeshi** : 返し “Return, reversal.”

**Kaeshi waza** : 返し技 “Return” techniques. Techniques where one momentarily receives the opponent’s strike and, changing the direction of their weapon, *immediately* counter attacks.

**Kakari geiko** : 掛稽古 “Attack practice.” This drill is very common as it builds endurance and spirit. **Kendōka** attempt to attack quickly and continuously, flowing from one strike to the next, while still maintaining proper form and **zanshin**. With kakari geiko the zanshin can sometimes be more spiritual than physical, depending on the situation.

**Kakari-te** : 掛手 (lit.) “Attacking hand.” (1) **Kakari-te** is the one who attacks during drill practice. (2) The person performing **waza** during the **bokutō waza**.

**Kakegoe** : 掛け声 “Yell.” Although having very different meanings this is often interchanged with **kiai**.

**Kamae** : 構え “Stance” or “position.” In **kendō**, this term

has an obvious physical meaning, but it also has mental or spiritual implications. Kamae doesn’t mean to just hold your weapon in a certain position but that you must also assume a certain spiritual attitude; both together is what makes an effective kamae.

**Kamae-tō** : 構え刀 Literally “stance sword”, this is the term used to indicate one should bring the sword into **kamae** if in a relaxed position. It also refers to drawing the sword from the **tai-tō** position.

**Kamae (w) o toku** : 構えを解く **Kamae** “untie, unfasten, undo.” This term is used to refer to the breaking of kamae at the end of each of the **nihon kendō no kata** or **bokutō waza**.

**Kan-kyū-kyō-jaku** : 緩急強弱 “Slow-quick-strong-soft.” The timing, power, tension, speed, etc..., that come together to give a **waza** it’s rhythm. This is not an artificially imposed rhythm as each technique has it’s own unique rhythm in accordance with the opponent, their attack, and the waza being used.

**Kane** : 金 “Metal.”

**Kane no kamae** : 金の構え The “kamae of metal.” See **waki-gamae**.

**Kata** : 形 See **nihon kendō no kata**.

**Katana** : 刀 “Sword.” Also pronounced as **tō**.

**Katate** : 片手 “One hand(ed).”

**Katate waza** : 片手技 “One handed” techniques.

**Katsugi waza** : 担ぎ技 “Shouldering the sword” technique. The sword is brought over the shoulder before striking. The overt motion is to create a **suki** in your opponent while still being in a position to attack.

**Katsujinken** : 活人剣 “The life-giving sword.” In sword arts “life-giving” does not refer to not killing the opponent, but to not kill their attacking spirit, i.e., allowing the opponent to act (attack). By manipulating the opponent and allowing them to feel free to attack, opportunities for **ōji waza** can be created. Using a katsujinken then refers to a particular type of strategy for defeating the opponent. “*Katsujin-ken... involves a sophisticated manipulation of the opponent and his actions by means of utter selflessness; properly conducted it is virtually undefeatable*”, Friday (1997). This is a central strategy in **Yagyū Shinkage-ryū** and other descendants of **Shinkage-ryu**. The antithesis of katsujinken is **setsunin-tō**.

**Keiko** : 稽古 “Practice”, “training”, or “study.” Often used by **kendōka** to imply sparring practice in **bōgu**.

**Ken** : (1) 剣 “Sword”, (2) 懸 “Be trapped, begin, attack”.

**Kendō** : 剣道 “The way of the sword.”

**Kendō-gu** : 剣道具 “Kendō protective equipment”: See **bōgu**.

**Kendōka** : 剣道家 A **kendō** practitioner.

**Kenjutsu** : 剣術 “Sword art/technique.”

**Kensen** : 剣先 “Tip/point of a sword.” The tip of the **shinai** or **bokutō**; also called the **kissaki**.

**Ken-tai-itchi** : 懸待一致 (lit.) “Attack and waiting in unison.” This notion includes many complicated ideas that relate to the application of **seme** toward the opponent in order to set up an opportunity to strike. Simply put, one pressures the opponent through **seme** (attack) and then holds to see their reaction (waiting), calmly preparing to either counter attack or initiate an attack depending on the result, i.e., **seme-tame**. The meaning of **ken** in this instance adds complexity as it translates to “attack”, but it also can mean “to begin” or to “be trapped”. This could imply forcing the beginning the encounter or trapping the opponent into a situation they must respond to and that they do not control.

**Ken (w)o korosu** : 剣を殺す “Kill their sword.” See **san-sappō**.

**Kera** : けら Horizontal padding on the fist of the **kote**.

**Ki** : 気 “Mind”, “spirit”, or “energy.”

**Ki (w)o mite** : 機を見る “To see the opportunity [to strike], seizing the [correct] moment [to strike].” In the **nihon kendō no kata**, **tachi** kata #1-7, **uchidachi** strikes **shidachi** at the correct moment, defined as “...the chance coming from the shifts in the opponent’s spirit, body, and technique”, AJKF (2002) and “the instant separating mental and physical transformation on the verge of an attack. In other words, the opening that is created as a result of the shifts in body, spirit, and technique”, Y. Inoue (2003).

**Kiai** : 気合い “Energy integration.” The vocal expression of a unified mental & physical intent. Although one’s “fighting spirit” can be expressed through **kakegoe**, **kiai** and **kakegoe** are not the same.

**Kiarasoi** : 気争い “Spirit of mutual combat.” Overcome an opponent through a vigorous spirit, pressing forward to break their guard.

**Ki-atari** : 気当たり (lit.) “Spirit/energy hit/prediction.” Displaying an offensive stance or intent to strike, then observing or anticipating the opponent’s reactions.

**Kigurai** : 気位 “Presence, bearing, pride, dignity.” AJKF (2011) defines **kigurai** as “the strength or commanding presence derived from confidence acquired through repeated training.”

**Kihaku** : 気迫 “Spiritual force.”

**Kihon** : 基本 “Fundamental.”

**Kihon bokutō waza** : 基本木刀技 See **bokutō waza**.

**Kikai** : 気海 “The sea of energy.”

**Ki-ken-tai-itchi** : 気剣体一致 “Spirit, sword, body, as one.” The unified action of the spirit, sword, and body of a **kendōka** is a fundamental principle in **kendō**.

**Kiri-kaeshi** : 切り返し “Returning cuts.” A partnered practice of **men**, **tai-atari**, and **sayū-men**. One of the most important drills in **kendō**, it’s often done as the initial and final drill of a practice.

**Kiri-oroshi** : 切り下ろし “To cut downward” (with a sword). This is the basic, large overhead cut used in **iaidō** which aims to cut the opponent from the head down to the navel. This cut is also used in the **nihon kendō no kata**.

**Kiri-otoshi** : 切り落とし “Knock down while cutting.” A **waza** for when two strikes occur in a potential **ai-uchi**, one strike pushes the other aside, by the act of cutting, and lands on the opponent.

**Kiri-tsuke** : 切り付け “Cut or slash” (at something).

**Kissaki** : 切っ先 See **kensen**.

**Ki (w)o korosu** : 気を殺す “Kill their spirit.” See **san-sappō**.

**Kōbō** : 攻防 “Offense & defense.” In **kendō** this term is used to describe the general combative aspects of **chūdan no kamae**, specifically referring to the ease with which both offensive and defensive **waza** can be used.

**Kōbō-itchi** : 攻防一致 “Unified offense & defense.” This is usually translated the same as **ken-tai-itchi**: **ken** means to “attack” while **tai** has the meaning of “wait” which AJKF (2011) indicates means to “wait while observing the opponent’s movement calmly”, i.e., being ready to defend while attacking and vice versa. **Kōbō** is made up of the characters **kō** (攻), “aggression, attack”, and **bō** (防), “ward off, defend, protect”. **Kōbō** then implicitly has a more physical or **waza** oriented meaning for offense and defense, e.g., actively striking and parrying. The inferred meaning taken here then is that **kōbō-itchi** refers to a **waza** or action that is used to *simultaneously* attack and defend.

**Kobushi** : 拳 “Fist.”

**Kodachi** : 小太刀 The “short sword” used in the **nihon kendō no kata**.

**Kodachi kata** : 小太刀形 A subset of the **nihon kendō no kata** using the **kodachi**.

**Ko-dare** : 小垂 Small inner flaps on the **tare**.

**Kohai** : 後輩 A “junior.” This is a relative term relating to experience and not necessarily ones age.

**Kōken-chiai** 交剣知愛 : (lit.) “Mixing swords-know love/compassion.” Translated as bettering oneself by learning compassion and understanding of humanity through **kendō**. This is one of the ideals underlying the “Mindset of **Kendō** Instruction”.

**Kokoro** : 心 “Spirit” or “mind.”

**Kokoro no kamae** : 心の構え A “spiritual” or “mental stance”; a mindset or attitude.

**Komono** : 小物 (lit.) “Small part.” This refers to the small piece of leather sometimes attached to the **tsuru** used in tying the **tsuru** to the **tsuka-gawa** of a **shinai**.

**Koshi** : 腰 “Hips, waist, or lower back.” Often translated simply as “hips”, a broader translation is the term “core”.

**Koshiita** : 腰板 “Back” or “waist plate.” The firm plate on the back of the **hakama**.

**Kote** : 小手 “Forearm.” (1) The protective gloves worn in **kendō**, see **kendō-gu**. (2) The name of the forearm target.

**Kote-gashira** : 小手柄 (lit.) “Top/head of the kote.” The hand portion of the **kote**.

**Kurai** : 位 “Rank” or “level” of something. Also an “amount” of something.

**Kurai-zume** : 位詰め (lit.) “Level (of) rebuke.” Pressure the opponent into disadvantage through physical and/or spiritual intimidation. Invading an opponent’s *maai* through strength of spirit, posture, *kamae*, etc...alone; no specific *waza* is needed.

**Kyusa** : 草 “Grass, weeds.” *Kyusa* is an alternate reading of the term **so**.

**Kyo-jitsu** : 虚実 (lit.) “Truth and illusion.” A complex term with many interpretations, but the most basic is that when one is in a state of *jitsu* 実, “truth, preparedness, reality” they are prepared, and when unprepared they are in a state of *kyo* 虚, “unpreparedness, falsehood, fake.” Opportunities to strike occur when one is in a state of *jitsu* and the opponent is in that of *kyo*. A more complex situation of *kyo-jitsu* is that one can present a weakness or expose an opening *purposely* as a lure to the opponent (*kyo*) but the true intent is to strike as they react (*jitsu*). Or one can have their outward **kamae** or posture be in a state of *kyo*, again as a lure or deception, but keep their mind in a state of *jitsu* in order to take advantage of the opponent’s actions. These complex examples are directly linked to **seme**, **tame**, **ken-tai-itchi**, and the **mitsu no sen**. Both the basic and advanced use of *kyo-jitsu* requires a **connection** to the opponent.

**Kyū** : 級 “Rank”, “class.” In **kendō** this is used as a ranking system for beginners, i.e., those who are below the **dan** ranks. *Kyū* ranks usually begin at sixth *kyū* advancing up to first *kyū*, however in some **dōjō** younger **kendōka** may begin at tenth *kyū*.

**Ma** : 間 “Space.” Used in terms referring to distance or spacing.

**Maai** : 間合 “Spacial integration.” Usually interpreted as “distance”, *maai* takes into account many different factors than just distance. Your speed, opponent speed, reaction time, power, distance to opponent, **kamae**, etc... are all factors.

**Mae** : 前 “Front” or “forward.” *Mae* refers to a direction, e.g., moving forward.

**Mae-obi** : 前帯 “Front belt.” See **tare-obi**.

**Maki** : 巻き (v) To “roll up”, “hoist”, “lift up.”

**Maki-kaeshi** : 巻き返し The **kaeshi waza** used in the fourth **nihon kendō no kata**. The **bokutō** is lifted upward from underneath the incoming thrust; the **bokutō** begins on the right side of the thrust and ends on the left, at which point the counter strike is made.

**Men** : 面 (1) “Mask; face guard”; the helmet worn in **kendō**, see **kendō-gu**. (2) The name of the target when attacking the head.

**Men-buton** : 面ぶとん The pressed cotton portion of the **men** covering the top and sides of the head.

**Men-chikawa** : 面乳皮 The small leather loops used to attach the **men-himo** onto the **men**. There are two types of *men-chikawa* used depending on the method used for wearing the **men**.

**Men-dare** : 面垂 The large flaps of the **men-buton** which protect the shoulders.

**Men-gane** : 面金 The metal grill that covers the face in the **men**.

**Men-himo** : 面紐 Strings used to tie the **men**.

**Men-tate-gane** : 面縦金 The large vertical bar of the **men-gane**.

**Men-yoko-gane** : 面横金 The horizontal bars of the **men-gane**.

**Metsuke** : 目付け “Point of observation.” The full term is “*enzan no metsuke*” or “fixing your eyes on a distant mountain”. This refers to where one should look while engaging an opponent. In essence you liken looking at your opponent to looking at a mountain with the opponent’s eyes being the peak. Focus directly on just one point and that is all you see, look *toward* the peak the entire mountain comes into view.

**Migi** : 右 “Right” (direction).

**Migi shizentai** : See **shizentai**.

**Migi-te** : 右手 “Right-hand(ed).”

**Mitori geiko** : 見取り稽古 “Observational practice.” Quite literally, learning by watching.

**Mitsu no sen** : 三つの先 “The three sens.” This refers to the three initiatives giving your attack an advantage. The first, *sen sen no sen* 先々の先, refers to having prior knowledge of your opponent’s intentions and, using this knowledge, draw out their attack capitalizing on it. The second, *sen no sen* 先の先, refers to attacking at the very moment your opponent is about to attack. Third is *go no sen* 後の先. This refers to counter-striking your opponent after they have made their attack. The opponent is countered as in *sen sen no sen*, but knowledge of the opponent’s intentions are not known beforehand.

**Mizu no kamae** : 水の構え The “*kamae of water.*” See **chūdan no kamae**.

**Mogitō** : 模擬刀 “*Practice sword.*” Mogitō are blunt metal swords with a sheathe used in formal demonstrations of the **nihon kendō no kata**.

**Moku no kamae** : 木の構え The “*kamae of wood.*” See **hassō no kamae**.

**Mokusō** : 黙想 The “*meditation*” done at the beginning and end of a **kendō** practice.

**Mono-uchi** : 物打 “*Hitting part.*” The upper ¼ length of a **shinai** measured from the **kensen** down. See **datotsu-bu**. For a **bokutō (tachi)** it is “*the part of the blade of a sword which cuts the best, said to be about 10cm from the tip.*”

**Morote** : 諸手 “*Two handed.*”

**Motodachi** : 元立ち (lit.) Moto, “*origin or cause*”, tachi, “*standing.*” The motodachi is the one who attacks or creates an opening for the **kakari-te** to practice striking or some type of **waza**.

**Motodachi geiko** : 元立ち稽古 Also termed **uchi-komi geiko**, this is when a **kendōka** strikes targets offered by an opponent.

**Mu** : 無 “*Not*” or “*no.*” A prefix indicating a negation.

**Mudrā** : (Sanskrit: मुद्रा, “*gesture*”, Japanese: **insō**) The mudrā (International Phonetic Alphabet: /muˈdraː/, International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration: mudrā) are hand positions used to symbolize various Buddhist concepts and meanings. There are a number of such hand positions, however in **kendō** we use but one: **zenjō-in**, the mudrā of meditation during the brief period of **mokusō** before and after practice.

**Mu-gamae** : 無構え “*No kamae*” or the “*void kamae.*” This stance expresses independence from a rigid **kamae**; one able to freely adapt and use any **kamae** as needed.

**Mune** : (1) 棟 The top (blunt) side of a Japanese sword, also referred to as “*mine.*” (2) 胸 “*Chest.*” The upper chest portion of the **dō**; the **dō-mune**.

**Mune-chikawa** : 胸乳皮 The leather loops on the **dō-mune** used when tying the upper set of **himo**.

**Mushin** : 無心 “*No mind.*” In very basic terms, mushin is acting with a natural, calm state of mind, i.e., not distracted by over thinking. Mushin is directly related to the concept **heijōshin**.

**Mutō no kokoro** : (無刀の心) “*Heart of no sword.*” The concept that the strength of one’s sword doesn’t depend on the type of weapon or **kamae** used, but on the strength of one’s heart or spirit.

**Nafuda** : 名札 The name tag worn on a **kendōka**’s **ō-dare**. Also known as a **zekken**.

**Nagasu** : 流す “*Drain, pour, set adrift.*” Japanese words

can be converted between a noun form and a verb form according to the suffix. Nagasu is the verb form, nagashi the noun. See **uke-nagashi**.

**Nakayui** : 中結 The leather tie on the **shinai** ¼ the length of the shinai from the top.

**Naname buri** : 斜め振り “*Diagonal swing.*” Similar to **jō-ge buri** but with the strikes angled at about 30°–45°.

**Nayashi** : 萎し “*Wither, droop; to be lame.*”

**Nayashi ire-zuki** : 萎し入れ突き **Shidachi**’s parry and counter thrust in the third **tachi kata**. Shidachi first deflects **uchidachi**’s thrust, **nayashi** and then counter attacks with an immediate thrust of their own, **ire-zuki** with the intent of invading uchidachi’s **maai**.

**Nidan** : 二段 “*Two step*” or “*two level.*”

**Nidan suburi** : 二段素振り “*Two step*” **suburi**.

**Nidan waza** : 二段技 “*Two step*” **waza**.

**Nihon kendō no kata** : 日本剣道の形 “*The Japanese kendō forms.*” These are the formal set of techniques designed to express the technical principles of swordsmanship which form the basis of modern **shinai kendō**.

**Nitō** : 二刀 A common term referring to **nitō kamae**.

**Nitō kamae** : 二刀構え “*Two sword stance*” where one holds a long and a short sword.

**Nuki** : 抜き To “*escape.*”

**Nuki waza** : 抜き技 **Waza** where you simultaneously dodge a strike and execute a counter attack.

**Nusumi** : 盗み “*Stealing.*” From nusumu, “*to steal.*”

**Nusumi-ashi** : 盗み足 “*Stealing/stealthy footwork.*” There are several methods for performing nusumi-ashi, H. Inoue (2003). A simple variation of **tsugi-ashi**, however the feet are moved such that one puts the feet in the position to cover a large distance as in tsugi-ashi, however it is done without the opponent noticing.

**Obi** : 帯 “*Belt.*” The obi is a belt that is worn (optionally) with the **hakama** and **gi**. The obi is the belt that held the **samurai**’s sword at their waist.

**Ō-dare** : 大垂 The large outer flaps on the **tare**.

**Ōji** : 応じ “*To respond.*”

**Ōji waza** : 応じ技 Counter attacking **waza**, i.e., techniques used in response to your opponent’s attack.

**Okuri-ashi** : 送り足 “*Sending out (the) feet*” From the verb okuru, “*to send out*” or “*to see off.*” The standard footwork used in **kendō** where one makes complimentary steps, most commonly a “*right-left*” motion, using **suri-ashi**, without crossing the feet.

**Omote** : 表 “*Front*”, “*outside*”, or “*visible side.*” This refers



to the left side of the **shinai** or **bokutō**.

**Onegai-shimasu** : 御願いたします “Please” (do me the said favor).

**Orishiki** : 折り敷き “Kneeling.”

**Orishiki dō** : 折り敷き胴 “Kneeling dō.” In the seventh **tachi kata**, a **nuki dō** is followed by kneeling vs. the usual **okuri-ashi zanshin**. This style of zanshin is unused in modern **kendō**.

**Rei** : 礼 (1) “Bow”, or the act of bowing. (2) “Manners; etiquette” A term referring to general etiquette.

**Rei-gi** : 礼儀 “Bow/thanks rule/ceremony.” Rei-gi refers to the reasons behind **rei**, i.e., “why”, “who”, and “when” we are to perform the actions of **rei-hō**.

**Rei-hō** : 礼法 “Bow/thanks law/principle.” The formal systematization of the movements and actions of etiquette and formality.

**Renzoku** : 連続 “Continuous, repeating.”

**Renzoku waza** : 連続技 “Repeated/continuous techniques.” This usually implies striking multiple times in succession.

**Rhythm** : A term frequently by Musashi to describe the unique flow and/or timing associated with an encounter. He uses the term to refer to *individual actions* of oneself or the opponent, e.g., a specific **waza**, an *interaction* between opponents, e.g., adjusting or balancing **maai**, to the more abstract of deciphering the intentions of the opponent. “There are a variety of rhythms in strategy. First of all, understanding the matching rhythm and distinguishing from the rhythm which does not match, and from among rhythms large and small, slow and fast, understanding the rhythm of hitting the mark, understanding the rhythm of intervals, and understanding the rhythm that goes against rhythm – these are the most essential things in strategy. If you do not get how to discern the rhythm of opposition, your strategy will never be certain”, Musashi (2012).

**Riai** : 理合 “Principles behind.” The condition under which an action or actions are rational, purposeful.

**Ritsu-rei** : 立礼 A “standing bow” which is done at 15° or 30°, depending on context.

**Ryoku** : 力 “Strength, power, proficiency, ability.”

**Sae** : 冴え (n) “Clearness, clarity.” Also referred to as the sharpness or skillfulness of a strike. When done with correct **te-no-uchi** a **shinai** strike that has sae is often accompanied by a characteristic “pop” upon landing while appearing effortless.

**Sage-tō** : 下げ刀 “Hanging sword.” The relaxed standing position with one’s weapon held at their side.

**Saki-gawa** : 先革 The leather cap, attached to the **tsuru**,

on the end of the **shinai**.

**Saki-gomu** : 先ゴム The insert in the tip of the **shinai**.

**Samurai** : 侍 See **bushi**.

**Sandan** : 三段 “Three step” or “three level.”

**Sandan suburi** : 三段素振り “Three step” **suburi**.

**San-pō-mamori** : 三方守り “Three point defense.” A position, popularized in **shiai**, used to block attacks toward **men**, **kote**, and **migi dō** simultaneously. While potentially effective, san-pō-mamori leaves **gyaku-dō** and **tsuki** open for attack.

**San-sappō** : 三殺法 (lit.) “Three killing laws.” Three methods for overwhelming an opponent using a sword; (1) *ken (w) o korosu*: kill their sword, (2) *ki (w) o korosu*: kill their spirit, and (3) *waza (w) o korosu*: kill their techniques. The basic idea is that killing the opponent’s spirit implies overwhelming them with your own, causing hesitation and doubt. See **four sicknesses**. Killing the opponent’s sword implies controlling their ability to manipulate their weapon for offensive or defensive purposes. Finally, killing the opponent’s techniques implies countering or anticipating the opponent’s intentions, removing their ability to make an effective attack.

**Saya** : 鞘 “Sword sheathe”.

**Sayū-men** : 左右面 (lit.) “Left and right” **men**. An angled strike to the upper left or right men.

**Seigan no kamae** : Most commonly written as 正眼の構え (lit.) “Correct eye stance” or 晴眼の構え (lit.) “clear eye stance.” Often translated as “aiming at the eyes”. There are several variations of seigan, each a slightly different **kamae** with respect to the position of the **kensen**, and each written with different characters, Shigeoka (1977) and Imafuji (2019). Previously in the **nihon kendō no kata** the term seigan was common and the variant used was to be understood from the context, in modern **kendō** the term has been eliminated from the official kata descriptions. One specific variant is still used in response to **jōdan no kamae** and is often called seigan or **hira-seigan no takai**, H. Inoue (2003), but in the kata descriptions it is referred to as “a *chūdan position*”, AJKF (2002), with notes on how to adjust it correctly.

**Seiza** : 正座 “Correct sitting” (position). The Japanese formal seated position.

**Seme** : 攻め (n) An “attack” or “offense.” From the verb *semeru* meaning “to attack” or “to assault”, seme is most often interpreted as “pressure”, e.g., a spiritual pressure put on the opponent, the intent of which is to make them focus on your (perceived) imminent attack resulting in a momentary loss of composure creating various opportunities to strike.

**Seme-ai** : 攻め合い “Union of pressure.” Seme-ai is the point where two opponents actively pressure one another in an attempt to create an opening. Seme-ai,

realistically, only occurs when in combative range.

**Seme-komu** : 攻め込む “To invade; to attack.” The forward step taken by **shidachi** to invade **uchidachi**’s **maai** during the second **kodachi kata**.

**Seme-kuzushi** : 攻め崩し An “unbalancing” or a “disruptive pressure.” While pressuring the opponent, **seme-kuzushi** can be likened to the *final nudge* inducing the opponent to react.

**Sen** : 先 (1) “First move”, is synonymous with **sente**. (2) “Previous; former.”

**Sen no sen** : See **mitsu no sen**.

**Sen sen no sen** : See **mitsu no sen**.

**Senpai** : 先輩 “Senior.” Literally “previous people.” In **kendō** this is a *relative* term relating to experience in something, not necessarily age.

**Sensei** : 先生 (lit.) “Born previous”, usually interpreted as “teacher”, i.e., somebody older than you and hence has more experience. In **kendō** experience and rank are also taken into account regarding this term.

**Sente** : 先手 (n) “First move, initiative.” **Sente** in **kendō** refers specifically to an attack used to seize the initiative against the opponent.

**Setsunin-tō** : 殺人刀 “The killing sword.” In sword arts this does not refer to killing the opponent, but to killing their attacking spirit. By overwhelming the opponent’s spirit they are unable to attack or cope with attacks. **Setsunin-tō** is then a specific strategy for facing an opponent. “*Setsunin-to is an egoistic and risky approach to combat—the slightest miscalculation will result in the swordsman walking straight into the opponent’s counter-attack*”, Friday (1997). **Setsunin-tō** is the antithesis of **katsujinken**.

**Shi** : 仕 “To serve” or “to do” in a polite context.

**Shiai** : 試合 “Match, game, bout, contest.” A match where points are scored to determine a winner.

**Shiai-jō** : 試合場 “Match area.” The court for a **shiai**.

**Shidachi** : 仕太刀 “The doing/serving sword.” The role of the “student” in the **nihon kendō no kata**.

**Shi-kai** : 四戒 “Four admonitions.” See **four sicknesses**.

**Shikake** : 仕掛け “Start, begin, commence.”

**Shikake waza** : 仕掛け技 Techniques to initiate a strike.

**Shin-ki-ryoku-itchi** : 心気力一致 “Mind, spirit, and action as one.” The **shin**, a heart or mind able to predict an opponent’s action through a state of **mushin**, guides one’s **ki**, the dynamic mental state of one’s spirit, which in turn dictates one’s **ryoku**, physical actions in the form of technique.

**Shimoza** : 下座 “The lower seat” or “seat at the bottom.”

In a modern **dōjō** the **shimoza** refers to two areas: where the entrance/exit is located, and opposite the **shōmen**. Both are “low rank” positions.

**Shin** : (1) 心 “Mind”, “heart”, or “spirit.” (2) 真 “Truth”. See **shin-gyo-so**.

**Shinai** : 竹刀 “Bamboo sword.”

**Shin-gi-tai-itchi** : 心技体一致 “The mind and one’s ability as one.” The ability to put one’s intent into effective action.

**Shin-gyo-so** : 真行草 ‘Shin’, (lit.) “truth”, ‘Gyo’, (lit.) “stream”, and ‘So’, (lit.) “grass.” The three *feelings* which **shidachi** embodies in the **kodachi kata**. From the **ittō ryu** school, these correspond to three different methods of attack. These also correspond to the ideas of three phases or transitions, for example *formal*, *semi-formal*, *informal*. Another example refers to shapes or forms where **shin** is the true shape, so is the essence of the shape, and **gyo** is the transition between the two. These feelings also correspond to **shu-ha-ri**.

**Shinogi** : 鑓 The thick, raised ridge on either side of a **katana**. The **shinogi** is used for deflecting or manipulating the opponent’s sword. In general, this should also transfer to deflections in modern **kendō** with **bokutō** or **shinai**.

**Shinogi (w) o kezuru** : 鑓を削る “Shaving/scraping the **shinogi**.” This is done in the fourth **tachi kata** after **uchidachi** and **shidachi**’s **ai-uchi**. Keeping a sense of combative tension while lowering to **chūdan no kamae** each fights for center to prevent a **shūki** their opponent can take. This is the essence of **tsuba-zeriai**.

**Shinpan** : 審判 “Referee, judge.” A **shiai** referee.

**Shinsa** : 審査 “Judging, inspection, examination.” A grading/examination done before a panel of judges.

**Shisei** : 姿勢 “Position.” **Shisei** refers to a physical position, e.g., **tai-tō shisei** indicates a *position* often shortened to **tai-tō**.

**Shishin** : 止心 “Stopped mind.” This refers to the mind becoming focused on one thing inhibiting free action. Focusing on the opponent’s weapon, plans to find an opening, not wanting to get hit or countered, etc...

**Shizentai** : 自然体 The “natural body.” This posture is one where the **kendōka** stands with natural (proper) posture, i.e., standing straight and extending the spine, shoulders back, arms hanging naturally at ones side, feet shoulder width, and the core engaged via a pelvic tilt. **Migi** and **hidari shizentai** is when the right or left foot is forward respectively and the opposite shoulder is pulled slightly backward. This is not to be confused with a **hanmi kamae**; the body is turned *slightly* in a **migi/hidari shizentai** whereas it is turned much more in a **hanmi kamae**.

**Shitsurei-shimasu** : 失礼します “Excuse me.” Usually said prior to taking **jōdan no kamae**, in particular against

a senior.

**Shōmen** : 正面 (lit.) “Front.” (1) The frontal target area of the **men**. (2) The symbolic head/front of the **dojo**.

**Shoshin** : 初心 “Beginners Mind.” The idea of not letting experience dilute the vigor one has for even simple things when inexperienced.

**Shōtō** : 小刀 The “short sword” used in **nitō**.

**Shu-ha-ri** : 守破離 ‘Shu’, (lit.) “protect”, “obey”, ‘Ha’, (lit.) “detach”, “digress”, and ‘Ri’, (lit.) “leave”, “separate.” In brief, shu-ha-ri is a term used to describe the various stages of learning or progress in many arts. The first stage, ‘Shu’, has the practitioner obeying the teachers method and ideals in every detail. The second, ‘Ha’, is when the student has learned enough that they are able to incorporate their own ideas. The third, ‘Ri’, is when the student is able to leave their teachings behind them as the “specific machinery” is no longer overtly needed; all is natural. The **nihon kendō no kata** embody shu-ha-ri in **tachi kata** #1-3, and in **kodachi kata** #1-3.

**So** : 草 “Grass.” See **kusa** and **shin-gyo-so**.

**Sonkyo** : 蹲踞 (lit.) “Crouching”. The formal crouching position in **kendō**.

**Suburi** : 素振り “Elementary swing.” A fundamental part of basic **kendō**. **Kendōka** will easily perform many thousands of practice strikes in their training, learning proper technique through repetition.

**Suki** : 隙 “Interval”, “gap”, “opportunity.” Referring to an opening in either your own or in your opponent’s defense. It also refers to an opening or gap in ones thoughts or actions.

**Suri-age** : すり上げ (lit.) “Sliding rise.”

**Suri-age waza** : すり上げ技 A “rising slide” **waza**. Used to deflect an attack by sliding your weapon along the opponent’s making a small, half-circle motion as you lift your weapon into the path of the attack. This rising-slide motion is not to be confused with hitting or knocking the opponent’s weapon out of the way.

**Suri-ashi** : 摺り足 (lit.) “Sliding foot/leg.” **Kendōka**, regardless of the type of footwork, will most often be sliding their feet as they step. There are exceptions but the fundamentals of **kendō** always use sliding footwork.

**Suri-komi** : すり込み (lit.) “Sliding step.” This **waza** is used during the third **kodachi kata**. **Shidachi** slides their blade along the **uchidachi**’s, controlling it, as they step into **uchidachi**’s **maai**.

**Suri-nagashi** : すり流し (lit.) “Slide and ward off.” The motion is often likened to allowing water to “pour off” of something. This **waza** is used during the third **kodachi kata**.

**Suri-otoshi** : すり落とし (lit.) “Slide and knock down.” This **waza** is used during the third **kodachi kata**. **Shi-**

**dachi** pushes their blade down and to the left, sliding it along **uchidachi**’s blade, pushing their strike down and away.

**Sutemi** : 捨て身 (lit.) “Sacrifice/abandon body/self”, often translated as “body abandoning.” Usually interpreted as “all or nothing” this term refers to the mentality, derived from combat with actual swords, needed in order to make effective strikes. That is that one will either kill or be killed during the strike attempt. Only by placing one’s life on the line and giving their all can a strike become truly effective.

**Tachi** : 太刀 The “long sword” used in the **nihon kendō no kata**.

**Tachi kata** : 太刀形 A subset of the **nihon kendō no kata** using the **tachi**.

**Tachi-ai no maai** : 太刀合いの間合 The distance **kendōka** are separated before engaging in each of the **nihon kendō no kata** or **bokujō waza**; approximately nine steps apart.

**Tai** : (1) 体 “Body.” (2) 待 “Wait.” (3) 帯 “Belt/sash”.

**Tai-atari** : 体当り “Body blow”, “ramming attack”, or “suicide attack.” A technique used by **kendōka** to create a **suki** in their opponent by upsetting their balance via a push. It is crucial to understand the difference between **tai-atari** and simple pushing or shoving.

**Tai-sō** : 体操 “Gymnastics, calisthenics”, i.e., a warm-up.

**Tame** : 溜め (lit.) To “store, amass, accumulate.” AJKF (2011) defines tame as “the condition of being composed both mentally and physically and maintaining a spiritually replete state despite the tense situation.” Tame is a complex idea, however in a very basic sense tame is the continuation of **seme**. When applying **seme**, one waits to see the opponent’s reactions while maintaining their attacking spirit. It also has a broader meaning that applies over the duration of a match. A **kendōka** is to amass their spirit throughout, constantly building it, but also having the willpower to face the opponent at their own pace, e.g., not rushing or being pushed into reacting to the opponent at a pace they set.

**Tanden** : 丹田 “Energy farm/field.” In Eastern martial arts this is where one develops **ki**. Also termed *kikai-tanden*, *ge-tanden*, or *sei-tanden*, it’s a point about three fingers width below the navel, at the center of gravity of the human body.

**Tare** : 垂 (lit.) “Hang, suspend.” The “skirt of a coat.” The waist/groin protector worn in **kendō**.

**Tare-himo** : 垂紐 The thin, long belts attached to either side of the **tare-obi**.

**Tare-obi** : 垂帯 The waistband of the **tare**. Also known as the **mae-obi**.

**Ten** : 天 “Sky”, “heaven” or “point.”

**Ten no kamae** : 天の構え The “*kamae of heaven*.” See **jōdan no kamae**.

**Te-no-uchi** : 手の内 “*Palm, skill*.” In **kendō** this is how one handles their **shinai** or **bokutō** upon striking. Te-no-uchi allows one to transfer power to the **kensen** while maintaining control over the strike during the moment it impacts the target.

**Te-no-uchikawa** : 手の内皮 The palms of the **kote**.

**Tenugui** : 手拭い “*Hand towel*.” The cloth towel worn underneath the **men**.

**Tō** : 刀 “*Sword*.” A Japanese sword; **katana**.

**Tobi-komi** : 飛び込み “*Burst into*.”

**Tobi-komi waza** : 飛び込み技. Making a powerful attack the moment the opponent’s spirit falters.

**Toku** : 解く To “*untie, unfasten, undo*.” See **kamae (w) toku**.

**Tokui waza** : 得意技 “*Strong point*” or “*specialty technique*”, refers to one’s strongest **waza**.

**Tō-ma** : 遠間 A distance longer than **issoku ittō no maai**. Also called *tōi-maai*.

**Tsuba** : 鐔 The “*sword guard*” on a **shinai** or **bokutō**.

**Tsuba-dome** : 鐔止め “*Stopper*” holding the **tsuba** in place.

**Tsuba-zeriai** : 鐔迫り合い (lit.) “*Urging/forcing (while) tsugas are joined together*.” The position when two **kendōka** are in close proximity, **tsuba** against **tsuba**, attempting to create an opening to strike.

**Tsuchi no kamae** : 土の構え The “*kamae of earth*.” See **gedan no kamae**.

**Tsugi** : 継ぎ (lit.) “*Patch, join, successor*.”

**Tsugi-ashi** : 継ぎ足 “*Adding/extending/elongating*” footwork. This style of footwork is a variation of **okuri-ashi**, where the **kendōka** brings both feet side by side before taking the **okuri-ashi** step. This motion helps to build momentum and is often used to cover very large distances.

**Tsuka** : 柄 “*Handgrip*.” This refers to the handle of the **shinai** or **bokutō**.

**Tsuka-gashira** : 柄頭 “*Top/head of the tsuka*.” This refers to end of **tsuka**.

**Tsuka-gawa** : 柄革 Literally “*tsuka-leather*”, the **tsuka-gawa** is the leather sheath covering the handle of the **shinai**.

**Tsuka-himo** : 柄紐 The small leather “*cord*” at the top of the **tsuka-gawa** the **tsuru** attaches to.

**Tsuki** : 突き (1) (lit.) “*Thrust*.” (2) The name of the target when thrusting to the throat.

**Tsuki-dare** : 突き垂 The throat protector on the **men**, see **kendō-gu**, for receiving **tsuki** attacks.

**Tsuru** : 弦 The string connecting the **saki-gawa** and **tsuka-himo** on the top side of the **shinai**.

**Tsutsu** : 筒 “*Cylinder, pipe, tube*”. Area of the **kote** one may strike. Also called the *kote-tsutsu*.

**Uchi** : 打 (1) “*To hit; strike*”, (2) “*to present something*.”

**Uchi-ma** : 打ち間 “*Striking distance*.” The *spatial distance* at which one can strike the opponent. While **ma** has a distinct meaning from **maai**, **uchi-ma** is implicitly related to the three general **maai**: **issoku ittō no maai**, **chika-ma**, and **tō-ma**.

**Uchidachi** : 打太刀 “*The striking sword*” or “*the presenting sword*.” **Uchidachi** assumes the role of the “*teacher*” in the **nihon kendō no kata**.

**Uchi-komi** : 打ち込み Striking practice using **fumi-komi**.

**Uchi-otoshi** : 打ち落とし To “*knock/hit down*.”

**Uchi-otoshi waza** : 打ち落とし技. Techniques for striking the opponents weapon downward, midway through their attack, redirecting it.

**Uke** : 受け “*Accept, take, receive*.” (1) One who is receiving strikes during practice drills. (2) Momentary block of an incoming strike prior to a counter attack.

**Uke-nagashi** : 受け流し “*Receive and ward off*.” This **waza** is used during the first and second **kodachi kata**. The **uchidachi**’s attack is received using the **kodachi** while at the same time redirecting it by making it slide off the **kodachi** via the **shinogi** and **hiraki-ashi**.

**Ura** : 裏 (lit.) “*Inside*.” The right side of the **shinai** or **bokutō**.

**Ushiro** : 後 “*Backward*.” **Ushiro** refers to a direction.

**Waki-gamae** : 脇構え “*Side stance*.” Known as the “*kamae of metal*”, sometimes **yō no kamae**, it is a variant of **gedan no kamae**.

**Waza** : 技 “*Technique(s)*.” Fencing techniques used against an opponent.

**Waza (w) o korosu** : 技を殺す “*Kill their Waza*.” See **san-sappō**.

**Yagyū Shinkage-ryū** : 柳生新陰流 **Yagyū Shinkage-ryū** is one of the oldest **kenjutsu** schools in Japan. Descendant from **Shinkage-ryū**, founded by **Kamiizumi Nobutsuna**, the **Yagyū Shinkage-ryū** was founded by **Yagyū Munetoshi** and is still practiced today.

**Yin-yang** : 陰陽 Individually the characters are read as **in-yō** in Japanese, this term is from Chinese Taoism dealing with opposites and/or duality; the definition of

one is dependent on the definition of its opposite. The idea of yin–yang also embodies the idea of a dynamic balance of opposites or opposing aspects throughout nature, e.g., still/moving, negative/positive, defense/attack, etc...

**Yoko-men** : 横面 “Sideways” or “horizontal” men. A sideways **katate** strike to the right or left side of the **men**. Some use this term to refer to a **sayū-men** strike.

**Yokote** : 横手 The area on a **katana** where the tip ends and the blade proper begins.

**Yokote-kōsa** : 横手交差 “Intersection of the yokote.” The position **kendōka** meet at when they will perform formality based motions, e.g., **kamae (w)oku** or **sonkyo**, in the **nihon kendō no kata** and **bokutō waza**.

**Yō no kamae** : 陽の構え “Attacking kamae”. The antithesis of **in no kamae**. See **waki-gamae**.

**Yūkō-datotsu** : 有効打突 “Effective strike.” In **kendō**, yūkō-datotsu is an accurate, i.e., made in the same direction as the **jin-bu**, strike or thrust (1) onto the **datotsu-bui** of the opponent’s **kendō-gu** with the **shinai** at the **datotsu-bu**, (2) in high spirits and correct posture, and (3) followed by **zanshin**.

**Yuku** : 行 “To proceed, to flow.” Yuku is another reading of the term **gyo**.

**Zanshin** : 残心 “Remaining mind.” In the context of **kendō** this is, simply put, interpreted as sustaining both mental and physical readiness with every action in order to be able to respond or cope with the opponent; a sustained alertness.

**Zantotsu** : 斬突 “Cut” or “thrust.” Similar to **datotsu**, however zantotsu applies to *cutting*, e.g., with a sword, where as datotsu refers to *hitting*, e.g., with a **shinai**. Modern **kendō** is a datotsu style, however the mentality and intent should mimic that of a zantotsu style. This is made explicit in the *Concept & Purpose of Kendō* by “... application of the principles of the katana.”

**Za-rei** : 座礼 “Seated bow” from the **seiza** position.

**Za-zen** : 座禅 “Seated Zen” (meditation).

**Zekken** : ゼッケソ Name tag worn on the **tare**. Also termed a **nafuda**.

**Zen** : 禅. See **za-zen**.

**Zenjō-in** : 禅定印 “Zen meditation hand position.” See **mudrā**.

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