

This guide is intended for use by members of the Kingston Kendō Club. Any errors within this text are those made solely by the author.



Kingston Kendo Club

<http://www.kingstonkendo.org>

kendokingston@gmail.com

Kingston, Ontario

Canada

Original Copyright © 2006 by Stephen Quinlan & Christina Quinlan.
Revised edition Copyright © 2025. All rights reserved.

This guide is Copyright (CC BY-NC-ND) by Stephen Quinlan & Christina Quinlan. Material from copyrighted sources are marked throughout the guide as well as listed in the bibliography, and are Copyright by their respective authors, publishers, and/or owners. These materials are used in accordance with the "Fair Use" stipulation of the Canadian and International Copyright Laws.



CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International. This guide may be freely distributed, as is, provided the author is attributed. Electronic links to this text must be directed to the original at the Kingston Kendo Club's website. This text may not be used for commercial use. Publishing of derivative work is prohibited. The full license can be found [here](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

The Kingston Kendo Club logo is Copyright by Stephen Quinlan and Christina Quinlan.



The *Noto Serif Display*, *Noto Sans Display*, *Noto Sans JP*, and *Pali* fonts are used under the General Public and Open Font Licenses. The *Siddhanta* font is used under the Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-ND).



Open Font License: <http://scripts.sil.org/OFL>

General Public License: <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>



Creative Commons License BY-NC-ND & CC-BY: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

5th Edition, v.3.2, May 2025



Figure 1: The Niō protectors, Agyō (right) and Ungyō (left) are named after particular sounds; Agyō who sounds “ah”, meaning birth or beginning, and Ungyō who sounds “un”, meaning death or ending. They also represent overt strength & latent strength respectively. These ideas are encoded in the Nihon Kendō no Kata.

STEPHEN QUINLAN

A Beginner's Guide to Kendō

FIFTH EDITION, v.3.2 • MAY 28, 2025

FORMATTING CONVENTIONS

Kanji, Glossary Entries, & the List of Terms. When Japanese terms are *first encountered* their kanji (漢字) are listed in parentheses. Any terms which are glossary entries are [highlighted](#), providing a link to the entry's location in the glossary. Most often Japanese terms will *not* have their definitions listed alongside the kanji within the main text and the reader is urged to consult the glossary on p. [175](#).

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., u̥ for a voiceless *u*, is used. This is *not* normally done when writing Japanese terms in English and is purely a convention used in this text. See Appendix E, p. [173](#), for a basic pronunciation guide.

Correct & Incorrect. The convention of marking something with an “O” for correct and an “X” for incorrect is used throughout

Margin Notes. Notes on the current topic appear as a boxed margin note.

Titled Margin Notes. Additional material related to the current topic, important ideas or concepts, or ones which simply require a detailed explanation appear as a titled margin note.

Footnotes. Footnotes appear as a boxed note in the margin.¹

Citations. Citations appear as a footnote with the author, or title for online media, of the reference material followed by the publication date linking its location in the bibliography.² The bibliography begins on p. [190](#).

Key Points. A list of key points for the current topic are given as titled note within the main text.

KEY POINTS

1. Key points in the main text.

Colours are selected to comply with WCAG AA contrast standards.

Note: A margin note.

TITLED MARGIN NOTE

A titled margin note.

¹ Footnotes appear as sequentially numbered margin notes.

² Author or “Title”, ([publication date](#))

Note: Citations within the text of a note appear as an in-line citation, i.e., Author or “Title”, ([publication date](#)).

CONTENTS

CONCEPT & PURPOSE OF KENDŌ, THE MINDSET OF KENDŌ INSTRUCTION	7
OVERVIEW OF A KENDŌ PRACTICE	9
Entering & Exiting the Dōjō	9
Warm-up	10
Opening Formalities	10
Putting on the Bōgu & Beginning the Practice	12
General Format for a Bōgu Practice	12
Closing Formalities	13
CORE, HIPS, & BREATHING	15
The Core	15
The Hips	16
Abdominal Breathing	17
WARM-UP & STRETCHING	19
A General Warm-up	19
Static & Dynamic Stretching	19
Safe & Effective Static Stretching	20
Common Static & Dynamic Stretches	21
REI-HŌ: “SYSTEM OF ETIQUETTE”	25
Shizentai: The “Natural” Posture	25
Seiza: The Formal Sitting Position	26
Rei: “Bowing”	28
Sonkyo: The Formal Crouching Position	29
Carrying the Bokutō & Shinai: Sage-Tō	30
Drawing & Sheathing: Tai-Tō, Kamae-Tō, & Osame-Tō	32
Setup & Carrying of the Bōgu	36
MOKUŚŌ: “MEDITATION”	39
The Purpose of Mokushō	39
Posture During Mokushō	41
Breathing During Mokushō	42

ASHI-SABAKI: “FOOTWORK”	43
Ashi-Gamae: “Foot Position”	43
Okuri-Ashi: Kendō’s Fundamental Footwork	45
Fumi-Komi: “Lunging Footwork”	46
Secondary Footwork	46
KAMAE: “STANCES”	49
Chūdan no Kamae: “Mid-Level” Stance	49
Holding the Shinai or Bokutō	50
Alternate Kamae	52
KENDŌ-GU: “KENDŌ EQUIPMENT”	61
The Bokutō: “Wooden Sword”	62
The Shinai: “Bamboo Sword”	63
Hakama & Gi: The Kendō Uniform	71
The Bōgu: “Protective Armour”	83
MAAI: “DISTANCE & SPACING”	99
Issoku Ittō no Maai: The “One Step, One Sword” Distance	99
Tō-ma: “Far Distance”	99
Chika-ma: “Short Distance”	100
Tsuba-Zeriai: “Matched Tsubas”	100
SUBURI & UCHI-KOMI: “BASIC SWINGS & LUNGING STRIKES”	101
Datotsu-Bui: “Targets Areas”	101
Basic Target Striking	103
Adding Footwork & Coordinating the Strike	107
Te-no-Uchi: Controlling the Strike	108
Advanced Strikes	109
Suburi: “Elementary Swing” Practice	113
Uchi-Komi: “Lunging Strike”	117
Physical Zanshin: Basic “Follow-Through” of a Strike	118
Turning to Face the Opponent	119
Kiri-Kaeshi: “Returning Cuts”	119

WAZA: “TECHNIQUES”	127
Shikake Waza: “Techniques to Initiate an Attack”	127
Ōji Waza: “Techniques to Respond to an Attack”	129
Waza from Tsuba-Zeriai	132
Tai-Atari: “Bodycheck”	133
 CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF KENDŌ	 135
Kiai	135
Maai & Kamae	137
Suki & Zanshin	138
Mushin & Sytemi	141
Ki Ken Tai Ichi	142
San-Sappō, Mitsu no Sen, & the Four Sicknesses	143
The Fundamental Theorem of Kendō?	145
A Role Model of Modern Kendō	154
 KEIKO: “PRACTICE”	 155
Effective Keiko	155
Uchi-Komi Geiko: “Lunging Strike Practice”	159
Kakari Geiko: “Attack Practice”	159
Ai-Kakari Geiko: “Mutual Attack Practice”	160
Shiai Geiko: “Tournament Practice”	160
Defensive Keiko & Blocking	161
A Historical Influence on Modern Keiko	162
 TOURNAMENTS & PROCEDURES	 163
FIK Court Layout	163
Shinpan: “Referees”	164
Players & Court Management	164
Player Formalities & Procedures	165
Team Matches	166
Beginning & Ending a Team Shiai	166
Reading the FIK Scoreboard	167
Summary of Flag Signals Used in Shiai	168

APPENDICES	169
Bōgu Measurements	169
Shinai Regulations	170
Grading Requirements	171
Counting, Enumeration, & Pronunciation	173
GLOSSARY	175
BIBLIOGRAPHY	190
INDEX	198

CONCEPT & PURPOSE OF KENDŌ, THE MINDSET OF KENDŌ INSTRUCTION

CONCEPT & PURPOSE OF KENDŌ

The Concept of Kendō

The concept of kendō is to discipline the human character through the application of the principles of the katana.

The Purpose of Kendō

The purpose of kendō is:
to mold the mind and body,
to cultivate a vigorous spirit,
and through correct and rigid training,
to strive for improvement in the art of kendō,
to hold in esteem human courtesy and honor,
to associate with others with sincerity,
and forever pursue the cultivation of oneself.

This will make one be able:
to love his/her country and society,
to contribute to the development of culture
and to promote peace and prosperity among all peoples.



*Figure 2: The kanji for dō, literally “the way”. The All Japan Kendō Federation’s *Concept and Purpose of Kendō*, as well as the *Mindset of Kendō Instruction*, embody the concept of dō.*

The Concept & Purpose of Kendō was established March 20, 1975, by the All Japan Kendō Federation.

THE MINDSET OF KENDŌ INSTRUCTION

Significance of the Shinai

For the correct transmission and development of kendō, efforts should be made to teach the correct way of handling the shinai in accordance with the principles of the sword.

Kendō is a way where the individual cultivates ones mind (the self) by aiming for shin-ki-ryoku-ichi utilizing the shinai. The “*shinai-sword*” should be not only directed at ones opponent but also at the self. Thus, the primary aim of instruction is to encourage the unification of mind, body and shinai through training in this discipline.

Rei-Hō – Etiquette

Emphasis should be placed on etiquette to encourage respect for partners, and nurture people with a dignified and humane character. Even in competitive matches, importance is placed on upholding etiquette in kendō. The primary emphasis should thus be placed on instruction in the spirit and forms of rei-hō (etiquette) so that the practitioner can develop a modest attitude to life, and realize the ideal of koken-chiai.

Lifelong Kendō

Students should be encouraged to apply the full measure of care to issues of safety and health, and to devote themselves to the development of their character throughout their lives.

Kendō is a “*way of life*” that successive generations can learn together. The prime objective of instructing kendō is to encourage the practitioner to discover and define their way in life through training in the techniques of kendō. Thus, the practitioner will be able to develop a rich outlook on life and be able to put the culture of kendō into use, thereby benefiting from its value in their daily lives through increased social vigor.

The Mindset of Kendō Instruction was established March 14, 2007, by the All Japan Kendō Federation.

OVERVIEW OF A KENDŌ PRACTICE

CHAPTER PREVIEW

AS WITH MANY MARTIAL arts, a **kendō** (剣道) practice is a very structured event containing many formalities and traditions that have been upheld for many years.³ The goal of this chapter is to give a short overview of a kendō practice, briefly explain some of the formalities, and indicate where and when they are to be observed.

At the beginning the structure of a practice and the formalities observed may seem confusing; this is to be expected as there is a lot of new information to take in, a lot of subtle dos-and-don'ts with the formalities, and a lot of new terminology to learn. You will become accustomed to all of this surprisingly quickly, and the Japanese terminology will easily be learned over time through regular repetition.

³ Each dōjō will have their own variations in routine and formality. Those listed here seem to be common to most.

ENTERING & EXITING THE DŌJŌ

At all **dōjōs** (道場) there is usually a particular threshold or area of the building that marks the border or entrance. This may be a doorway or just an area of the practice floor. Before crossing this threshold, i.e., before entering the dōjō, it is required that you remove your shoes. On crossing the threshold a **kendōka** (剣道家) is expected to perform a 30° **ritsu-rei** (立礼), p. 28, a standing bow. This is done to show courtesy toward the dōjō and its traditions, the martial art one is about to train in, and all those who trained in and developed the art before you.

KEY POINTS: ENTERING & EXITING THE DŌJŌ

1. Always remove your shoes before entering a dōjō.
2. Always bow before entering or leaving a dōjō.

WHAT IS A DŌJŌ?

Dōjō is composed of two characters: dō (道) meaning “way” and jō (場) meaning “place”, making a dōjō literally a “place to practice the way” (of kendō, for example). This implies that a dōjō is not only a special historical building or place, but *any* place where one practices. This can be a traditional martial arts dōjō, a gym, a school, a dance studio, or even your home or a public park. Regardless of what the location is, the same formality and etiquette is observed there as any other location.

TAI-SŌ: "WARM-UP EXERCISES"

At the beginning of practice one of the dōjō's *senpai* (先輩) or *sen-sei* (先生) may conduct *tai-sō* (体操), or a warm-up.⁴ In many dōjōs, kendōka who have *bōgu* (防具), p. 83, are expected to be wearing their *tare* (垂) and *dō* (胴) during warm-up. However some dōjōs do not make this a requirement, leaving the decision up to individual.

To begin, the kendōka leading the *tai-sō* calls out "tai-sō!" and all kendōka form a group to warm-up together. As a part of *tai-sō*, kendōka count out loud as a group during the exercises as this warm-up is not just for the body, but also for ones "spirit"; everyone should count as loudly as possible and with lots of energy. See p. 19 for more details on *tai-sō*.

⁴ For those who require a longer warm-up period, often kendōka will show up a bit early to practice and use the time to conduct more warm-up exercises on their own.

OPENING FORMALITIES

After *tai-sō*, a *senpai* will call "*seiretsu*!" (整列). This is the signal for all of the kendōka to line up on one side of the dōjō facing the *sensei*. Everyone should carry their *bokutō* (木刀), p. 62, or *shinai* (竹刀), p. 63, in *sage-tō* (下げ刀), p. 30; senior students also carry their *bōgu* at this time if it is required for the practice.⁵ It is customary to have your *dō* and *tare* on before lining up if *bōgu* is to be used during the practice. Thus depending on how the practice is structured, i.e., performing *tai-sō* with or without your *bōgu* on, you may be given a short break to put on your equipment or sometimes line up "as is". The *sensei* will make it clear as to what you should do.

The order in which you line up is important.⁶ The *senpai* who initiated *seiretsu* is always at the start of the line nearest the *shōmen* (正面) and all the other kendōka should then line up in order of descending rank at the *senpai*'s right. Multiple rows of kendōka are sometimes needed depending on the number of students and the size of the dōjō. See figure 3, p. 11, where for this example we assume there is only one *sensei* present. Each person should be arms length from the kendōka on their right side as this gives the proper spacing needed for your equipment to be set down properly.

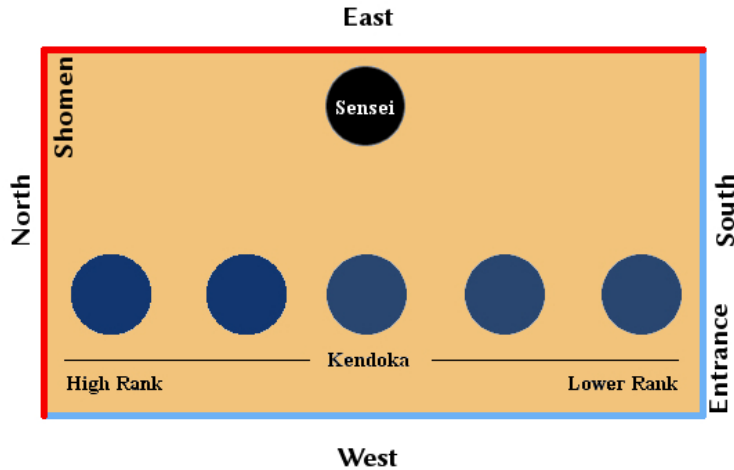
⁵ A *bokutō* is initially held in *sage-tō* in the *right* hand and then later switched to the *left* hand. The *shinai* is held in the *left* hand from the start.

⁶ If you are practicing at a dōjō other than your own, you should always line up at the end of the line, in the lowest rank position, unless invited to do otherwise.

KEY POINTS: SHINAI OR BOKUTŌ & LINE UP

1. The use of *shinai* or *bokutō* is dictated by the type of class. Drill practice, sparring, etc...use the *shinai* whereas *nihon kendō no kata* (日本剣道の形) or basics practice use the *bokutō*.
2. Guests line up as the lowest rank unless invited to do otherwise.
3. Line up quickly and in a straight line.

Note: Many dōjōs will also have kendōka who are of equal rank sort themselves even further for line up purposes. These sub-divisions, from higher to lower "rank" are whether or not they wear *bōgu*, whether they wear the uniform, and finally by age.



After everyone is lined up the senpai will call “seiza!” (正座). This is the signal to assume the formal sitting position of the same name, p. 26, however, you must wait for the proper time to sit. Once the sensei are seated, the remaining kendōka assume seiza starting with the highest rank down to the lowest. The first person to kneel is the senpai, then the next in line and so on creating a domino effect. This should be done quickly; assuming seiza just after the person next to you begins to move.

Once everyone is seated the senpai will call “mokusō!” (黙想). Mokusō, p. 39, is a form of meditation used to prepare for the coming practice. It is not a simple rest period or a chance to relax. Use this time to clear your mind and prepare yourself to focus on performing the upcoming practice with your utmost concentration. Mokusō is usually done for about three full breaths (~30-60 seconds) and is ended either by the senpai calling out “yame!” (止め), “mokusō yame!”, or a similar signal.

Upon finishing mokusō, if a shōmen is identified, “shōmen ni rei!” (正面に礼) is called. All kendōka and sensei perform za-rei (座礼), p. 28, or a seated bow, to the shōmen. The shōmen is always at the front of the dōjō and bowing to the shōmen is similar to bowing upon entering the dōjō; a part of dōjō courtesy.⁷ Next, “sensei ni rei!” (先生に礼) is called and all kendōka perform za-rei to the sensei (and vice versa). Finally, “otagai ni rei!” (お互いに礼) signals a mutual bow, at which point everyone says “onagai-shimasu!” (御願います).⁸ This translates to “if you please”, however in the context of kendō it implies “please teach/practice with me.”

KEY POINTS: BOWING AT THE START OF PRACTICE

At the start of practice, bowing is done to the most senior rank position first, lowest rank position last. The shōmen is always considered the highest “rank” in the dōjō.

Figure 3: The standard orientation of a modern kendō dōjō. The north and east sides of the dōjō, marked in red, are considered “high rank” while the west and south sides, marked in blue, are considered “low rank”. The shōmen is situated at the north side (highest rank area) with the sensei(s) sitting on the east. Students sit on the west and the entrance is at the south (lowest rank area). Sensei and students line up in descending order of rank with the highest rank closest to the shōmen. This layout is often altered according to where the entrance to the dōjō is relative to the cardinal directions as an entrance cannot be located in the high rank areas. This systematic ordering has its basis in Japanese Shintoism.

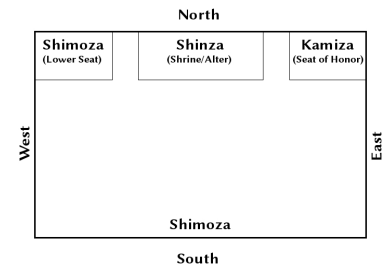


Figure 4: From Tokeshi (2003), a traditional dōjō layout recognizes the shinza, “the place where there is a god or spirit”; the kamiza, “the seat of honor”; and the shimoza, “the lower seat”, from Shintoism. In most modern kendō dōjōs, religious aspects have been removed and replaced with a system of etiquette that recognizes a shōmen.

⁷ The front of the dōjō is usually the north side of the dōjō, opposite the entrance, unless otherwise indicated.

⁸ The commands used and the various bows done may differ between dōjō.

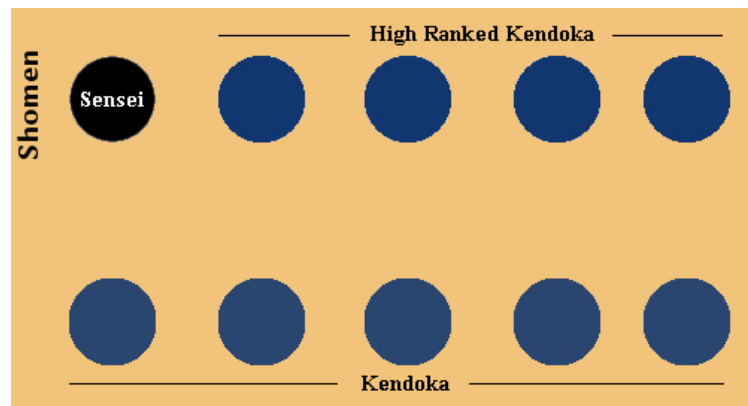
PUTTING ON THE BŌGU & BEGINNING THE PRACTICE

While still in seiza, “*men (w)o tsuke!*” (面を付け) is called, if in a bōgu class, to indicate that the kendōka should put on their *men* (面) and *kote* (小手). See pp. 87, 88, 89, 91, and 93 on how to wear the bōgu. The sensei may or may not put on their men at this point. Either way, it is important that you put your men on *quickly*, preferably *before* the sensei finish putting on theirs.

When you are finished putting on your bōgu, pick up your shinai and stand up with it held in sage-tō while waiting for the class to begin.

GENERAL FORMAT FOR A BŌGU PRACTICE

During a standard bōgu practice, you will pair up with another kendōka or sensei to practice drills and *waza* (技) together.



Usually the highest ranking kendōka will line up alongside the sensei, with the lower ranked kendōka pairing up across from somebody from this line as in figure 5. Holding the shinai in your left hand in sage-tō, the relaxed position, ritsu-rei (15°) to your opponent and say “*onegai-shimasu*”.

Bring your shinai to tai-tō, p. 32, and take three sliding steps forward. On the third step *kamae-tō* (構え刀), p. 33, and assume *sonkyo* (蹲踞), p. 29.⁹ Stand up from sonkyo and perform the drill indicated by the sensei.

After the exercise assume sonkyo if appropriate. *osame-tō* (納め刀), p. 33, and take five sliding steps backward. Assume sage-tō, ritsu-rei, and say “*dōmo-arigato-go-zai-mashita!*” (どうもありがとうございました) to thank your opponent.

SPEED & ETIQUETTE

It is impolite to allow a sensei to wait for you to get ready. You are there to wait for the opportunity to practice with them, not the other way around. It is important to put your bōgu on as quickly as possible; the usual goal is to be able to put your men on in about one minute and to be dressed and ready before the sensei are. At the same time some try to get dressed and ready as quickly as possible and stand up *before* they have finished putting on their bōgu properly, often putting on their kote and adjusting their men strings while lining up with a sensei. While this eagerness is to be applauded, impatience and a lack of attention to detail is not.

Figure 5: Initial pairing-up of kendōka during a bōgu practice.

Note: Figure 5 shows only one of the ways in which kendōka will arrange themselves for practice. It will be made clear how to line up during practice for each exercise or drill.

⁹ Not all dōjōs will perform sonkyo and some dōjōs may not require that you assume sonkyo each time you begin a new drill with a new opponent.

When the current exercise is over, the sensei will indicate for people to rotate partners. You must change partners quickly as you must not keep the sensei waiting to continue with the class. This is especially important when your rotation takes you from one side of the dōjō to the other as in figure 6.

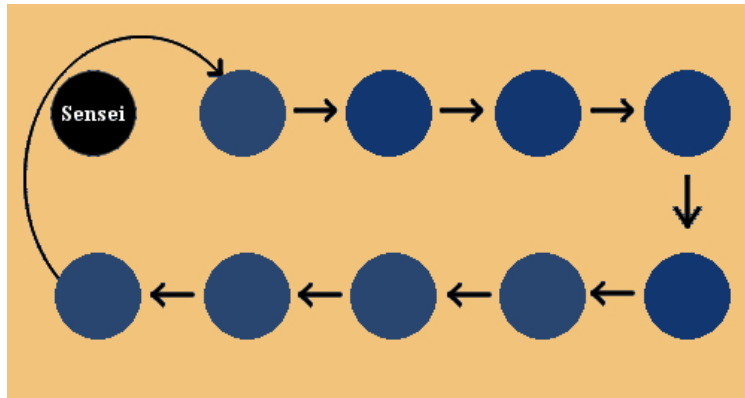


Figure 6: Rotation during practice.

WHO BOWS FIRST?

It is considered proper etiquette that when bowing to a senior you bow *slightly* before they bow to you; this includes crouching into sonkyo. Also the more senior kendōka begins to straighten from their bow, as well as rise from sonkyo, *slightly* before you do.

KEY POINTS: ROTATION DURING PRACTICE

Rotate to your next position quickly; don't keep the class waiting.

CLOSING FORMALITIES

When the practice comes to an end the same formalities used at the beginning are repeated but with a few changes. First seiretsu and seiza are called. Then the senpai will call “*men (w)o tore!*” (面を取れ), to indicate that kendōka should remove their men and kote. Once removed, mokusō is called, then otagai ni and sensei ni rei are called, at which point everyone says dōmo arigato gozaimashita. Finally shōmen ni rei is called.

ROTATE AS A GROUP

When kendōka rotate positions between drills, everyone should rotate together. Don't begin rotating early while others are still performing their bows and other formalities, waiting for them to “move out of your spot”. Simply wait for everyone to finish and rotate as a group.

KEY POINTS: BOWING AT THE END OF PRACTICE

At the end of practice the bowing order is reversed compared to the start; it starts with the lowest rank and finishes with the highest.

If you are visiting a dōjō, or have the opportunity to practice with a particularly high ranking sensei, it is customary to walk up to the sensei once class has ended, seiza, and perform za-rei to them directly thanking them for their instruction. Finally, ritsu-rei upon leaving the dōjō.

KEY POINTS: BOWING TO SENIOR SENSEI

It is customary to perform another seated bow directly with a senior ranked sensei at the end of practice. Depending on the number of kendōka present, groups of 3-4 or more can bow as a group.



Figure 7: Depiction of an Edo period (1603-1868) kendō practice using shinai and bōgu.

CORE, HIPS, & BREATHING

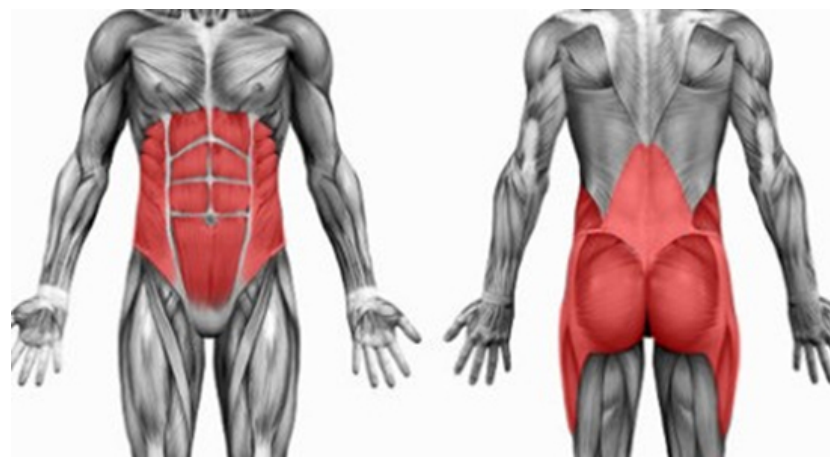
CHAPTER PREVIEW

THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES THREE areas of importance to kendō: the core, the hips, and breathing. First the muscles that make up the core are indicated. Next, the correct position and alignment of the hips are shown, and finally the method of breathing used in kendō; abdominal breathing. All three are intricately linked to one another.

THE CORE

The core, often referred to as the *koshi* (腰, “hips, waist, lower back”), is of fundamental importance in kendō as it relates to breathing, posture, stability, power generation, and much more. The core is a group of muscles around the trunk of our body, the primary function to give our body stability.

In kendō it is of crucial importance to learn how to “engage” your core.¹⁰ This is done first through correct positioning of the hips, making a *slight* posterior pelvic tilt, and abdominal breathing. All of which are discussed in the following sections.

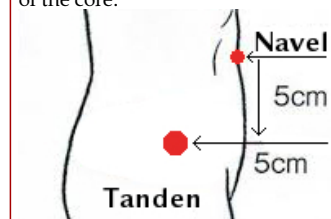


THE TANDEN

The idea of the core in martial arts is intricately linked to what is called the tanden. The tanden is described as an area below the navel inside our abdomen. The tanden is at our body's center of gravity and said to be the source of our energy. Many arts, including kendō, emphasize we must:

1. Straighten the spine.
2. Tuck the tail bone under the body.
3. Put strength in the tanden.
4. Relax the lower back.
5. Squeeze the buttocks.
6. Move from the hips.

According to Parker (2016) and Sagi (2015), all of this refers to effective use of the core.



¹⁰ There is no single right way to go about doing this, and different methods will work for different people. However in martial arts the usual method is through emphasis on correct posture and abdominal breathing.

Figure 9: The muscles that make up one's “core”. These include muscles from the hips, waist, buttocks, abdomen, and lower back.

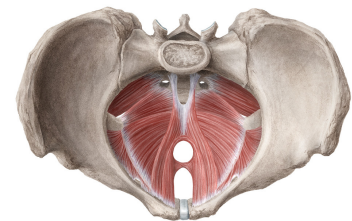


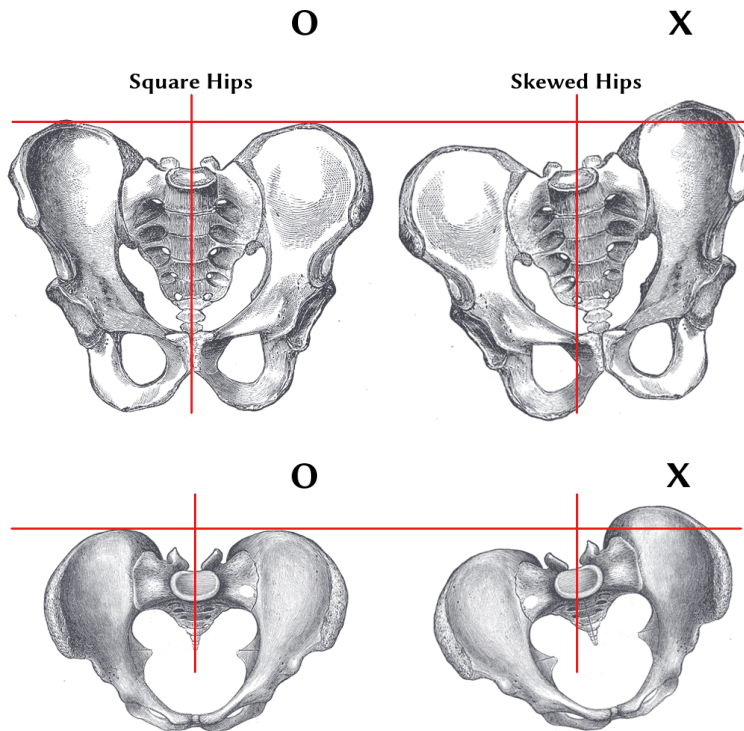
Figure 8: The pelvic floor muscles. Some include the pelvic floor muscles as a part of your core as they provide support for the pelvic organs and helps maintain optimal intra-abdominal pressure.

THE HIPS

Hip position affects much more than just posture, but has an impact on many different aspects of kendō such as posture, stability, balance, and power generation. It is important to be mindful of your hip posture right from the beginning.

Square hips. It is essential that you keep your hips square and engage your core. Engaging your core results in a *slight* “posterior pelvic tilt” due to your abdominal muscles pulling upward on the front of your pelvis. See figure 10.

Skewing your hips forward or back, upward or downward is unstable. Keep your hips and torso aligned, see figures 11 and 12.



KEY POINTS: ALIGNMENT & POSITION OF THE HIPS

Square hips is a key aspect of correct posture, balance, and generating power for movement and striking in kendō. As this ties in to so many aspects of kendō, it is well worth the time and effort to learn how to keep your hips square and then work on gaining flexibility and range of movement from a squared hip position.

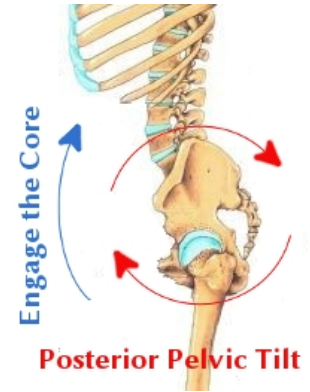


Figure 10: Posterior pelvic tilt. Starting from neutral, engaging the core causes a *slight* posterior pelvic tilt.

Figure 11: Square hips. (Top) Frontal view of the hips skewing upward and downward. (Bottom) Overhead view of the hips skewing forward and backward.

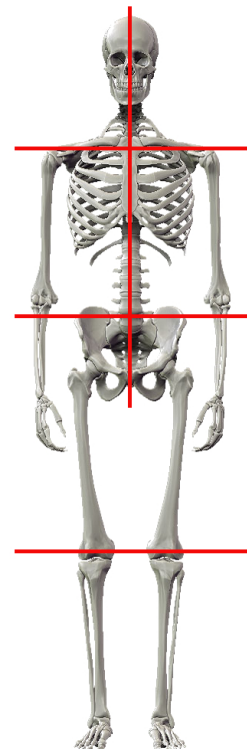


Figure 12: The shoulders, hips, and knees are parallel, the spine is perpendicular to all three. The core is a connecting bridge between the hips and the torso.

ABDOMINAL BREATHING

Breathing in kendō is the same style of breathing used in practicing *za-zen* (座禅), or seated (Zen) meditation. While this type of breathing is considered to be the natural way to breathe, many people find it difficult.

Most people tend to breathe with the chest; expanding on the inhalation and collapsing on the exhalation. If one watches a baby it breathes from its belly using the diaphragm and abdominal muscles to control inhalation and exhalation instead of the chest muscles. During practice, it is important to focus on breathing correctly as it serves a number of purposes.

First, by controlling our breath through abdominal breathing the upper body is kept from becoming tense, allowing us to move more fluidly and enabling the upper body to become coordinated with the lower body and legs. A relaxed upper body prevents tensed muscles from wasting energy.

Second, by keeping our breathing controlled and *rhythmic*, we help keep our brains from entering what is known as the “fight or flight” response where, essentially, the physiology of our body changes and many of our higher cognitive functions shut down.

Third, and influenced heavily by Zen philosophy, is to help us train our minds in ridding ourselves of distractions, anxieties, etc.. That is to maintain *heijōshin* (平常心) or an “everyday mind”.

Finally, correct breathing is an aid to maintaining correct posture, adds power and stability to our striking, and is directly linked to coordinating our body and strike together.

Holding Your Breath During Activity: The Valsalva Maneuver

In any activity, one must consistently exhale during any muscular exertion and not hold their breath.

Holding your breath, or tensing up creating resistance to your exhalation, during an activity results in what is known as the Valsalva maneuver: “*exhalation against a closed or impeded airway*”, e.g., “straining”.

While not harmful when done lightly or infrequently, extended use or when done with high pressure can have some potentially serious side effects: elevated blood pressure, fainting, headache, dizziness, and vertigo to name only a few.¹¹ This makes it crucial to breathe continuously in a controlled and natural manner during physical exertion.

KEY POINTS: EXHALATION DURING EXERTION

Exhale in a slow, natural manner during any muscular exertion.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE

When the body is stressed it engages the “fight or flight” response, affecting the body physiologically and cognitively; the body shuts down unnecessary functions and our thought process becomes more “primal” and less “logical”. While this may be of benefit for simple tasks, complex tasks such as kendō become nearly impossible. Effects of this response include:

Physiologic

1. Increased pulse, blood pressure, and respiration.
2. Hearing loss.
3. Tunnel vision.
4. Shaking.

Cognitive

5. Inhibited cognitive ability: logic, rational thought, etc...
6. Increased anxiety or aggression.
7. Increased perception of negative stimuli and perception of ambiguous situations as negative.
8. Over/underestimation of ability.

There are many anecdotes on breathing in the martial arts, Deshimaru (1991), Herrigel (1989), Hyams (1982), Watts (1985), Starr (2006), and Starr (2008), but it has been shown, Watkins (2016) and Yackle et al. (2017), that the fight or flight response can be controlled through rhythmic breathing, giving credence to breath control in martial arts.

Blood Pressure and Heart Rate During the Valsalva Maneuver

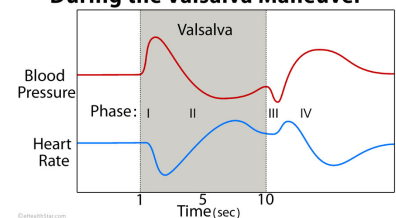


Figure 13: From Modric (2016), the effects on heart rate and blood pressure during the Valsalva maneuver.

¹¹ Modric (ibid.)

Breathing using the abdomen. Engage your core and maintain throughout inhalation and exhalation. Breathe in through the nose quickly, using your diaphragm to pull the air in, not your chest muscles. As you breathe in you should feel a “ball of pressure” on the inside of your belly, as if the air is being pressed against *all sides* of your engaged core from within. Breathe out slowly through the mouth, by relaxing your diaphragm and allowing your abdominal muscles to press inward and upward. Maintain your exhalation until you feel the need to breathe in again.

During correct abdominal breathing, specifically during the inhalation, one must use their entire core to control the breath. Specifically, one should feel the muscles on the front of the abdomen, sides, and back expand/tighten during inhalation. Incorrect abdominal breathing occurs when only the front of the abdomen expands giving a “bloated” feeling.

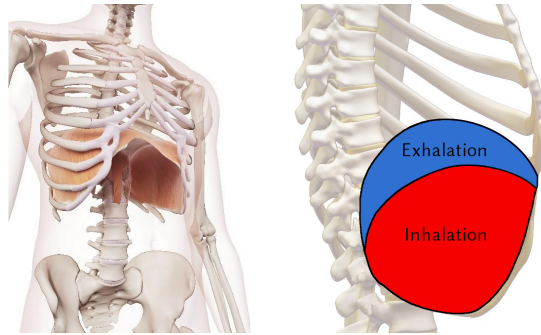


Figure 14: From Long (2015), abdominal breathing emphasizes use of the diaphragm.

When one utters their *kakegoe* (掛け声) or “shout, yell” during kendō it is through correct and *forceful* abdominal breathing, specifically the exhalation, that one is able to help coordinate their efforts and maintain correct posture while moving by strongly engaging their core. Putting strength in the *tanden* (lower abdomen) causes a slight posterior pelvic tilt which reinforces correct posture which in turn facilitates movement from our center of gravity, both of which mesh together to create power and stability.¹²

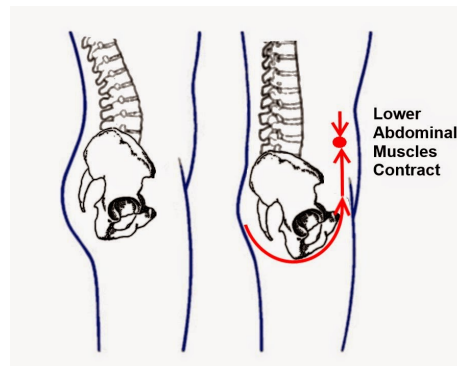


Figure 15: From Parker (2016), a pelvic tilt adds power and stability to our posture and consequently our movements.

KEY POINTS: ABDOMINAL BREATHING

1. Keep your core engaged throughout. Breathe in through the nose for the count of four, out through the mouth for the count of eight (or longer). Adjust the timing to suit your needs but keep your breath rhythmic, trying to exhale longer than you inhale.
2. With abdominal breathing your chest and shoulders shouldn't move very much; let your diaphragm do the work.
3. On inhalation, you should feel internal pressure on all sides of your lower abdomen: belly, back, and both sides.

¹² Parker (2016)

WARM-UP & STRETCHING

CHAPTER PREVIEW

WARMING-UP BEFORE ANY activity helps prevent injuries, and enables one to perform more effectively.

A GENERAL WARM-UP

A warm-up increases heart rate and the flow of blood to the muscles. Some form of stretching is often done with focus on the shoulders, forearms, wrists, thighs, calves, and ankles.¹³

STATIC & DYNAMIC STRETCHING

Static stretching. Static stretches are done while stationary and increase one's flexibility when done regularly over the long term. Many tend to "bounce" as they stretch v.s. holding their stretch for a sustained period. During a static stretch one should maintain proper posture and stretch as far as they can *comfortably*, holding that position for about 30 seconds.

It is also necessary to relax the muscles that are involved in the stretch.¹⁴

Dynamic stretching. Dynamic stretching stretches a muscle under the tension of use. This is usually done by continuous movements similar to the movements done in the main activity. Movement begin small and slow, becoming larger and faster as the muscles loosen to up.

THREE TYPES OF STRETCHES

Static stretching is when one stretches a muscle while it is at rest, e.g., a seated hamstring stretch. Dynamic stretching is when one stretches while the muscle is in motion. An example would be stretching the hamstring by swinging the leg forward and backward in a continuous motion. PNF (proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation) stretches are a form of static stretching where one either flexes the muscle being stretched or resists through a range of motion via its antagonist. The flex or resistance is held for a period, then released and the stretch is relaxed. The same exercise is then done again however the "distance" of your stretch will have increased. PNF stretching bypasses the "stretch reflex" allowing this increase, see margin note on p. 20.

¹³ There is still debate between having a dynamic stretching only warm-up versus including both static and dynamic stretching, see *It'd.* (2018). Most dōjōs often perform a combination of both.

¹⁴ This is much more difficult than it may seem as it requires substantial concentration.

KEY POINTS: APPROACH TO STRETCHING

1. Stretching is not a test to see "how far you can go". Stretch as far as you can while *maintaining proper posture*.
2. The full benefit of static stretching comes from a *slow and sustained* stretch. Dynamic stretching should start out small and slow and *gradually* increase in range and speed.

SAFE & EFFECTIVE STATIC STRETCHING

Pain. If a stretch hurts, *stop!* Reduce the distance you are stretching by a small amount until you reach *your* comfortable maximum. This does not mean to reduce your stretch so that you feel nothing. Instead, reduce your stretch so that you feel a deep stretch v.s. pain.

Relax. Try to relax the muscles you are stretching while you stretch them. Many people will find that their muscles begin to quiver or shake during a deep stretch. If this occurs, hold the position but focus on relaxing the muscles that are being stretched, breathing slowly and naturally with your abdomen. The point at which people notice this quivering is a good indication of where your comfortable maximum is.

Breathe. Breathe deeply with your abdomen while you stretch, see p. 14, exhaling as you move or exert your muscles; don't hold your breath. See p. 17 on the Valsalva maneuver.

Duration. Hold each stretch around thirty seconds, or two or three breaths, without "bouncing". Hold the stretch in a steady position.

Protect the knee. Never put weight on your knee with it bent more than 90°, i.e., your knee should always be directly over your ankle not ahead of it, as this puts stress on the joint which could result in injury.

Opposites. Stretch opposite muscles. If you stretch one muscle, stretch that muscle's antagonist as well.

Posture. Proper posture during a stretch is infinitely more important than how far you can stretch. Don't sacrifice your posture for stretching distance as it is a false sense of accomplishment and not effective stretching.

Never rush. Stretching must be done *slowly* and with a sense of purpose.

THE SCIENCE OF STRETCHING

When we stretch, we are attempting to lengthen muscle fibers, ligaments, connective tissues, and to a small extent tendons. Ligaments and connective tissue will lengthen over time with repetition. It is the muscles that tend to make stretching difficult due to the "stretch reflex", a response of the nervous system to muscles stretching too far, too fast, or both. This causes the stretching muscles to fire inhibiting our movement. Examples of this are the "quiver" we get when we stretch deeply. This reflex is controlled by muscle spindles which monitor muscle position (length) as well as how quickly a stretch occurs and sends signals to the nervous system accordingly as a mechanism to prevent injury from slips, falls, etc. Muscle spindles react vigorously to stretch velocity compared to length which is why stretching slowly, without bouncing, is the effective way of stretching. Flexibility training is not simply making our muscles and other tissues "longer", but re-training our automatic responses to accept longer stretches before triggering the "stretch reflex"; this takes time and concentration. In a similar, but opposite way, there is the "Golgi tendon reflex", an automatic response which causes muscles to relax while stretched in order to avoid damage to the tendons. High level athletes requiring maximum range of motion make use of these reflexes to obtain the required flexibility. PNF (proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation) stretching, fools the stretch reflex by inhibiting the muscle spindles from firing allowing us to stretch further yielding faster gains in range of motion. It requires an expert trainer to induce the Golgi tendon reflex. See Ruiz (2007), SportsFitnessAdvisor (2001b), Wikipedia (2008), Wikipedia (2015), and Wikipedia (2004).

KEY POINTS: GENERAL STRETCHING

1. Static stretching requires slow, deliberate, and relaxed movements.
2. Take your time. Flexibility is built up slowly over time with practice.
3. Dynamic stretching is a good warm-up prior to exercise. Static/PNF stretching is most beneficial when done regularly over the long term.

COMMON STATIC & DYNAMIC STRETCHES

Neck.

Static: bend, tilt, and rotate the neck forward, backward, left, and right, holding each position.

Dynamic: continuously roll the neck through the above positions.



Figure 16: Neck warm-up.

Shoulder.

Static: bring the right arm to your the shoulder. Grab the right elbow, pulling the arm left as far as possible. Don't twist the torso.

Dynamic: swing the arms across the front of the body and then outward. Repeat this several times.



Figure 17: Shoulder warm-up.

Triceps.

Static: bring your right hand to your left shoulder blade. Grab your right elbow and pull your arm to the left as far as possible. Don't twist your torso or bend your neck to the left.

Dynamic: swing your arms upward bending your elbows and try to touch the backs of your shoulder blades. Swing them forward and then repeat.

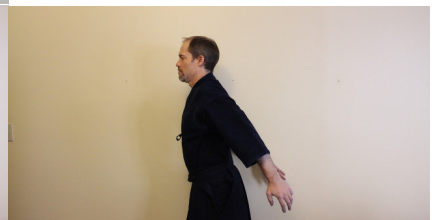
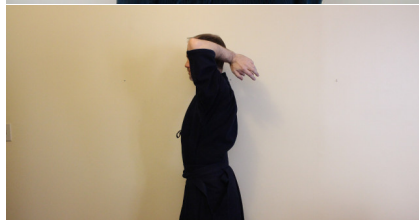


Figure 18: Stretching the triceps.

Shoulder & upper back.

Dynamic: stand up straight with your shoulders and neck relaxed. Slowly rotate the shoulders in a circle being sure to extend them as far forward, upward, backward, and down as possible on each rotation.



Figure 19: Warming-up the shoulder and upper back.

Wrist.

Static: grab your right hand, palm away from you. Extend your arms forward. Pull your right hand toward you, stretching your wrist.

Dynamic: make a fist and continuously bend the wrists, forward and backward.



Figure 20: Stretching the wrist.

Quads.

Static: while standing bring your left foot up behind you. Pull your foot up behind you as far as possible using one or both of your hands. Do not lean forward as you pull your foot up.



Figure 21: Stretching the quads.

Hamstrings.

Static: sit on the floor with your legs in front of you making sure you are on your sitting bones. Keeping your toes pointing up and bending at the waist, lower your chest toward your knees. When at your maximum, lower your chin toward your chest.

Dynamic: while standing, swing your leg forward, knee straight, as high as you can stretching your hamstrings. Swing the leg backward, knee bent, as far as you can pressing your foot to the ceiling stretching your quad. Keeping your hips square and a straight posture. Repeat several times then switch legs.



Figure 22: Stretching the hamstrings.

Hip.

Static: get on to your hands and knees, hands directly below the shoulders. Bring your right foot forward between your hands with the knee bent at 90°. Fully extend your left leg backward.

Dynamic: while standing, bring your knee to your chest then back down and switch legs. Repeat this several times. Keep your hips square and posture straight throughout.

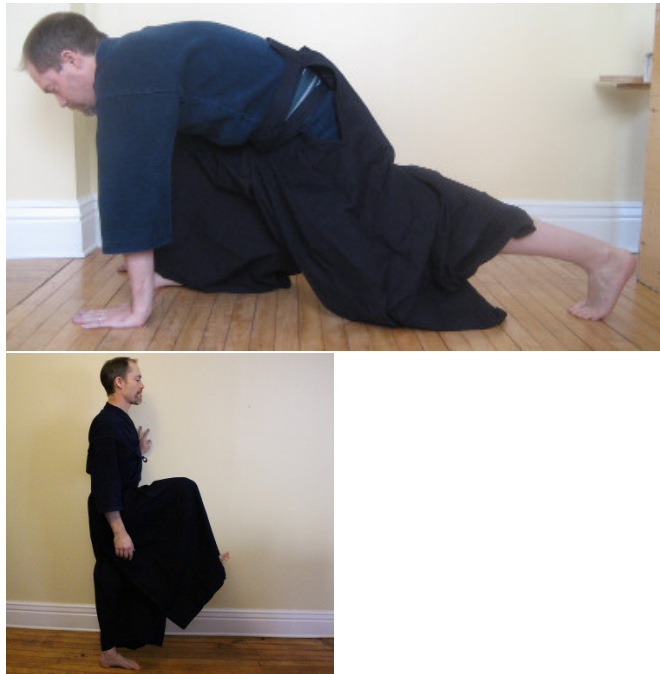


Figure 23: Stretching the hip.

Ankle.

Static: hold the foot and bend the ankle forward, backward, left, right, internally, and externally, pausing at each position.

Dynamic: slowly rotate the ankle in as large a rotation as possible.



Figure 24: Ankle warm-up.

Achilles tendon & calf.

Static: stand up straight putting your hands against a wall if needed. Bend your right knee 90°. Keeping the left foot fully on the floor, extend the rear foot back keeping the toes pointing forward.

Dynamic: stand with the toes on the edge of a step with the heels hanging over the edge. Slowly lower the heels over the edge below the level of the toes. Then raise the heels upward by extending the foot. Repeat several times, sinking all the way down and lifting all the way up.



Figure 25: Stretching the Achilles tendon.

KEY POINTS: PERSONALIZED WARM-UP

It is in your best interest to be sure that you are sufficiently warmed-up before you begin your practice. If you require a longer warm-up than provided, it is up to you to ensure you take the time needed before practice.

REI-HŌ: “SYSTEM OF ETIQUETTE”

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THIS CHAPTER WILL GIVE details on the *rei-hō* (礼法), the “system of etiquette”, observed in a kendō dōjō. Explanations for the various formalities are given along with a number of points on what one should and should not do. In particular, this chapter will discuss:

shizentai (自然体), p. 25

seiza, p. 26

rei, p. 28

sonkyo, p. 29

sage-tō, p. 30

tai-tō, p. 32

kamae-tō, p. 33

osame-tō, p. 33

bōgu setup, p. 36

carrying the *bōgu*, p. 37

Note: According to *Jim Breen’s Online Japanese Dictionary* (2015), *rei* means “expression of gratitude”. Often simply translated as “courtesy” *rei* can be broken into two subdivisions: *rei-gi* and *rei-hō*. *Rei-hō* is the “technical” aspects of *rei*, i.e., how to bow, stand, line up, etc. *Rei-gi* (礼儀) are the reasons behind the courtesy, i.e., why you want to show the courtesy.

SHIZENTAI: THE “NATURAL” POSTURE

Shizentai translates to “natural body”, i.e., natural posture.¹⁵ While in the dōjō stand in *shizentai* whether receiving instruction during a class, during a short break between exercises, or simply waiting for class to begin. Your posture greatly affects your ability to learn and perform proper strikes and *waza* in kendō and can even affect *kamae* and footwork. Attention to *shizentai* is essential.

¹⁵ According to Musashi (2012), “All in all, regarding your physical carriage in (military) strategy, it is vital to make your normal, everyday posture your strategic posture, and to make your strategic stance your usual stance. You must investigate this thoroughly.”

Foot position. From a normal standing position with the feet side by side, angle the toes outward by about 15°–30° and bring the heels in toward one another.



Figure 26: (Left) Normal standing position. (Right) *Shizentai*; the toes are angled outward 15°–30°, heels touching.

Shizentai. Stand with hips & shoulders square, arms at the side. Bring the shoulders and neck back straightening your posture. Extend the spine by pointing the top of your head, *baihui* (百會) point in Chinese martial arts, *hyakue* in Japanese, straight up; the chin will naturally tuck in slightly toward the chest. Engage the core, p. 15, causing a *slight* posterior pelvic tilt, p. 16; this is to actively connect the torso and hips creating a strong posture, *not* to completely flatten the lower back. Legs should be straight but not locked and feet should be pointing out by a small angle, heels together.



Figure 27: Shizentai: the natural posture. (Left and Center) A kendōka standing in shizentai. (Right) From Sagi (2015), “flattening” the cervical and lumbar spine by pointing the baihui point on the head upward and “tucking the tail bone under the body” respectively.

SEIZA: THE FORMAL SITTING POSITION

The modern standardized formal sitting position is called seiza and is used frequently in kendō. The following description assumes a kendōka is assuming seiza without a shinai, bokutō, or bōgu.

From shizentai take a small step back with your left foot and kneel down on your left knee keeping the bottoms of your toes in contact with the floor. Then, kneel down onto your right knee. The toes of both feet are still in contact with the floor.



Figure 28: Assume seiza by kneeling onto your left knee then the right.

Lower your hips and momentarily sit on the back of your heels. Raise your hips back up slightly, then relax your toes and flatten your feet out behind you. The tops of your feet are in contact with the floor. Lower your hips again and sit down onto your ankles.

Your toes can be in one of two positions, either on the floor side-by-side or the big toes can cross over one another.



To get up from seiza, reverse the process for entering into it; standing up on the right foot then the left.

Figure 29: Flatten your toes then sit on your heels.

KEY POINTS: SEIZA

1. Enter into seiza moving the left foot, then the right. Get up from seiza with the right foot first, then the left.
2. Never use your shinai to help you get up.
3. Many will find seiza difficult. It is acceptable to wear knee pads if necessary; it will become easier as you gain flexibility.
4. If you cannot assume seiza due to injury, you will be shown ways to modify it according to your ability.

VARIANTS OF SEIZA

A variation of seiza, known as *kiza* (跏座), used in other martial arts is to remain sitting with the toes underneath you instead of flattening them out. While there is no *rule* against this, this is generally not used as a part of kendō etiquette.

REI: "BOWING"

Ritsu-Rei: "Standing Bow"

Ritsu-rei is used upon entering or leaving the dōjō, and before and after performing a drill or practice with an opponent.

From shizentai, p. 25, bend at the hips, tilting your body forward about 15°, and maintain your gaze forward¹⁶.

If you are performing ritsu-rei where a higher level of courtesy is required, bow at an angle of about 30°. Do not maintain your gaze forward during this version of ritsu-rei.

You should not allow a senior to start bowing before you do. You should strive to bow first to them.



Figure 30: Proper ritsu-rei position.

Note: Be sure to bend at the hips and not the shoulders or neck when you bow. The hips, back, neck, and head should all stay in a straight line; don't let your neck or shoulders to "curl".

¹⁶ Maintaining your gaze forward does not mean to keep your face forward by bending your neck back; it refers only to your keeping your eyes looking forward. This can be visualized as being similar to somebody "looking over the tops of their glasses."

Za-Rei: "Sitting Bow"

Za-rei is used when a higher level of courtesy is required¹⁷.

Assume the seiza position as outlined on p. 26. Place your left hand on the ground in front of you, maintaining your gaze forward.

Place your right hand on the ground, your gaze still in the forward direction. The index fingers and thumbs of your hands should make a triangle shape on the floor.

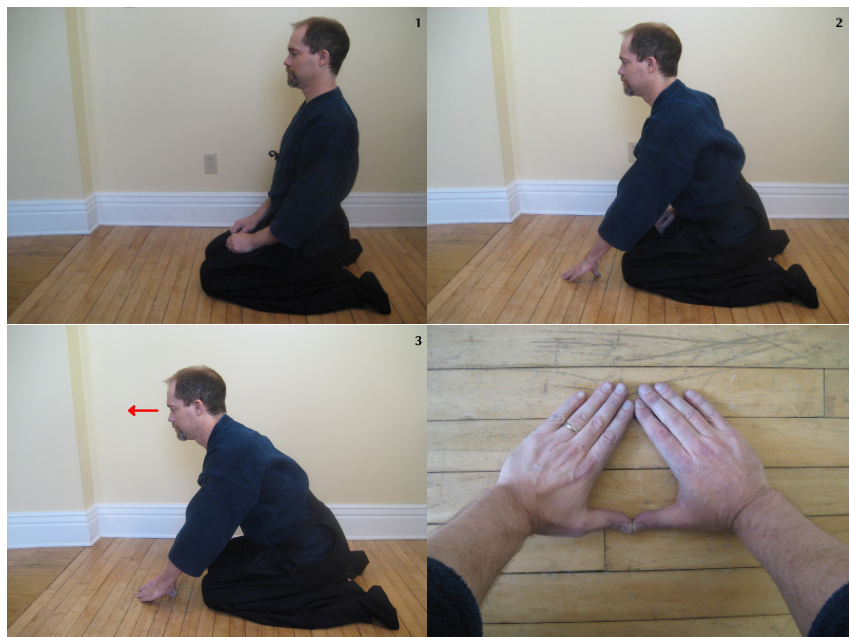


Figure 31: From seiza, place your hands on the ground.

¹⁷ Usually when bowing to a senior sensei or the dōjō shōmen.

Bend at the hips and perform a seated bow. Your nose should point into the center of the triangle your hands are making. Your forearms ought to be touching or nearly touching the floor. Do not bend so far forward that somebody seated in front of you could see the back of your neck; this is improper.

Straighten up and return your gaze to the forward direction. Bring your right hand, then the left, back onto your thighs.



Figure 32: Bend at the hips when performing za-rei.

SONKYO: THE FORMAL CROUCHING POSITION

Sonkyo is the formal crouch in kendō and is unique to Japanese rei-hō. It is derived from a more formal type of movement while kneeling called *shikko* (膝行) which was used to show respect and humility toward a senior.

Assuming sonkyo. Stand with your feet in the standard kendō footwork position, see p. 43. While remaining on your toes, rotate your left heel inward about 45° and your right heel inward by about 15°. Keeping your back straight squat down such that you are sitting on your heels. The centerline of your hips will naturally rotate toward your left leg by about 15° to 45°, but your torso and shinai or bokutō should remain along your original centerline.

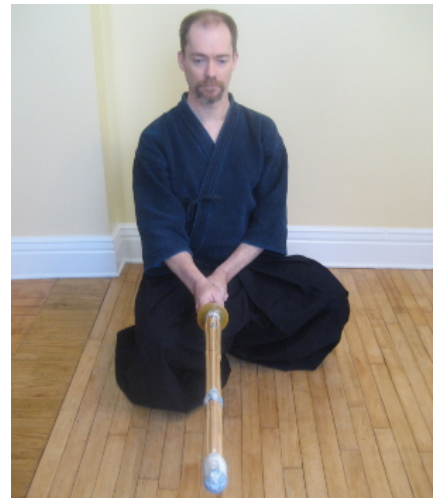


Figure 33: The sonkyo position.

KEY POINTS: SONKYO

1. Keep your posture straight while assuming and sitting in sonkyo.
2. If you cannot assume sonkyo due to injury, it can usually be modified to accommodate the individual.

CARRYING THE BOKUȚŌ & SHINAI: SAGE-TŌ

In the dōjō, there are certain formalities that must be observed. One of the most important is how one carries the shinai and bokuȚō. They both represent a *katana* (刀) and must be treated as though they were the real thing. Sage-tō, “*hanging sword*”, is the correct way to carry your weapon.

Note: Always remember that the shinai and bokuȚō represent a real blade while you are in the dōjō.

Sage-tō. Hold the shinai in your left hand, blade side in your palm, below the guard. A bokuȚō is held in sage-tō in the right. Often both the long and short bokuȚō are carried together; the short is held with the thumb and index finger, the long between the index and other three.



Figure 34: (Left) Gripping the shinai, (Right) gripping both bokuȚō in sage-tō



Figure 35: Proper sage-tō position. Let the shinai or bokuȚō hang naturally at your side without opening your fingers. The shinai is held in the left hand, the bokuȚō in the right hand.

KEY POINTS: HOLDING & CARRYING THE SHINAI OR BOKUȚŌ

1. Never rest the shinai or bokuȚō on its tip.
2. Don't spin or twirl the shinai or bokuȚō.
3. Treat the shinai and bokuȚō as real blades while in the dōjō.

Laying Down & Picking Up the Shinai & Bokutō

Shinai. Holding the shinai in sage-tō in the left hand, crouch down onto your left knee and place the tip of the shinai on the floor, then the sword guard.

Bokutō. Holding the bokutō in sage-tō in the right hand, crouch onto your right knee and set it (or both) down on your right side. If the short bokutō is also carried, the short sword is set down closest to you, the long sword just beside it. The blade side of a bokutō should always be facing toward you.



Figure 36: Kneel to lay the shinai down.

Picking up the shinai or bokutō.

When picking up your shinai or bokutō, the above process for setting it down is reversed. If you drop your shinai or bokutō on the floor, to pick it up position yourself with the handle in front of you, then kneel down and pick it up with both hands; do not bend over and pick it up.



Figure 37: (Left) Properly and (Right) improperly picking up a dropped shinai.

KEY POINTS: LAYING DOWN & PICKING UP SHINAI OR BOKUTŌ

1. From sage-tō a shinai is put down on your left. For bokutō from a right handed sage-tō put it down on your right.
2. Lay the shinai or bokutō down gently and quietly; tip then handle.
3. If carrying both long and short bokutō, the short bokutō is always set down closest to you and the long bokutō just beside it. The blades of each should be facing you. You may use both hands when setting the bokutō down.
4. Always pick up a dropped shinai or bokutō up by the handle.
5. Dropped or not, always crouch down to pick up a shinai or bokutō; don't just bend over.



Figure 38: Setting down the bokutō from sage-tō. The blades face toward the body with the short bokutō closest. Both sword guards are level with the knee.

DRAWING & SHEATHING: TAI-TŌ, KAMAE-TŌ, & OSAME-TŌ

There is a proper way for kendōka to “draw” and “sheathe” their shinai or bokutō during practice depending on the setting.

Tai-Tō: The Ready Position

Tai here means “belt, obi, sash” and to means “sword”. Thus tai-tō can be interpreted as the command to “wear your weapon in your belt”. Tai-tō mimics the position one assumes when about to draw an actual sword from a sheathe worn in the traditional belt/sash.

Tai-tō, sometimes referred to as tai-tō *shisei* (姿勢), is an intermediate step for both drawing and sheathing your weapon that is between sage-tō and your active fencing stance.

Shinai. From sage-tō, bring your left hand up to your hip, placing your thumb on the sword guard. This is done only if you *not* wearing kote. The kensen is angled downward with the end of the handle at your centerline.

Bokutō. Tai-tō with a bokutō is the same as with a shinai. As a bokutō is held in sage-tō with the right hand, it is passed from the right hand to the left, at about navel height, in front of the body.



Figure 40: (Left) The end of the handle of the shinai or bokutō is on your centerline, (Right) the shinai or bokutō tilts at an angle of 30°–45° below your hip.

KEY POINTS: TAI-TŌ

1. In tai-tō place your thumb on the sword guard if you are *not* wearing the kote; leave it off if kote are worn.
2. The end of the handle should be on your centerline.
3. The sword should be angled such that the end of the handle is higher than the tip, approximately 30°–45°.



Figure 39: Place your thumb on the sword guard for tai-tō if not wearing kote.

Kamae-Tō: "Drawing" the Bokutō & Shinai

Kamae (構え) means "stance". Thus, kamae-tō is interpreted as the command to "bring your weapon into position" or "assume your stance".¹⁸

Kamae-Tō from Sonkyo

Kamae-tō from sonkyo is always used at the first drill with an opponent, for sparring, and at competition matches.

1. From sage-tō, tai-tō and, starting on your right foot, take three sliding steps forward using **ayumi-ashi** (歩み足), p. 46.
2. On step three, grab the handle with your right hand below the guard.
3. As you finish your step pull the shinai or bokutō forward as though pulling it out of a sheathe and begin to crouch into sonkyo, p. 29.
4. As you crouch, turn your right hand over bringing the tip from behind you to point toward your opponent. The tip should make a circular arc going over your shoulder and into kamae.¹⁹
5. As you finish drawing the sword, grab the handle with your left hand and come fully into sonkyo. You should be in a crouched version of the **chūdan no kamae** (中段の構え), p. 49.

Kamae-Tō While Standing

Kamae-tō from a standing position is the same as that from sonkyo, however during the third step one remains standing. This is often used between drills, resuming practice after adjusting equipment, etc...

Osame-Tō: "Sheathing" the Bokutō & Shinai

Osame is from the verb osameru: "to put away", giving it the meaning "put away your weapon". Osame-tō can be performed standing or in sonkyo. The process is the reverse of the corresponding kamae-tō save that one takes five small steps back to the initial rei position, not three.

¹⁸ During kamae-tō, it is understood that this command always indicates the kendōka is to assume chudan no kamae.

START HOW FAR APART?

When kendōka meet to perform a drill, spar, or tournament match they perform rei a distance of nine steps apart. For kamae-tō they take three large steps forward to meet at the mid-point. For osame-tō, from the mid-point they take five small steps backward to their starting position nine paces from each other. Beginners often need to practice adjusting their steps to get the forward and backward distances correct.

¹⁹ There is a slight angle as you draw according to Y. Inoue (2003). The tip moves diagonally from over the left shoulder down into kamae.

Note: The process of assuming sonkyo and drawing ones weapon should be considered as one smooth step, both actions done simultaneously.

Note: As H. Inoue (2003) and Y. Inoue (2003) explain, bring the kensen vertically up and then back to your left side into tai-tō when performing osame-tō. Never bring the bokutō to the tai-tō position from below or from the side.

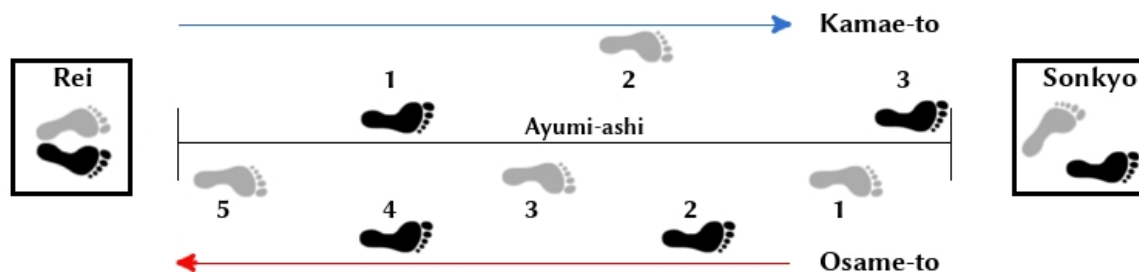


Figure 41: Schematic diagram of kamae-tō and osame-tō from sonkyo. Three steps forward for kamae-tō and five steps back for osame-tō respectively.



Figure 42: Kamae-tō via sonkyo. The process is: sage-tō, rei, tai-tō, three steps forward, and “draw” the shinai or bokutō as you crouch into sonkyo. With bokutō, one switches from sage-tō in the right hand to tai-tō in the left after the bow.

KEY POINTS: KAMAE-TŌ FROM SONKYO

1. For kamae-tō take three large steps forward using ayumi-ashi, p. 46.
2. Bring the tip diagonally up and over the left shoulder, never horizontally across from your hip.



KEY POINTS: OSAME-TŌ FROM SONKYO

1. For osame-tō take five small steps backward using ayumi-ashi, p. 46.
2. Bring the tip up and over your left shoulder to your hip, *never* horizontally across your body.

Figure 43: Osame-tō via sonkyo. From sonkyo “re-sheathe” the shinai or bokutō, stand up into tai-tō, take five steps back, sage-tō, and then rei. With a bokutō, one switches from tai-tō in the left hand to sage-tō in the right and then bows.

SETUP & CARRYING OF THE BŌGU

There are a number of formalities for how one handles their bōgu.

Note: How to wear the bōgu will be covered in detail beginning on p. 87.

Setting up the Bōgu

The bōgu and shinai are setup with the shinai on the left, bōgu at the front-right of the kendōka. The sword guard of the shinai should be level with the knee when in seiza. With the bōgu still tied up, assume seiza resting the bōgu on your lap. See p. 95 on tying the bōgu for storage.



Figure 44: Assume seiza with the bōgu.

Remove the kote and lay them on the floor, perpendicular to you, in front and to the right of your right knee. The fists pointing to your right. Set the men on the kote with the *men-tate-gane* (面縦金) sitting on the wrists. The *men-himo* (面紐) should be placed neatly inside the men.



Figure 45: Setting out the kote and men.

Set the dō and tare (still tied together) on the floor in front of the men and kote, or untie the tare from the dō and place the tare on top of the dō. Either fold the *tenugui* (手拭い) and place it inside the men or lay it unfolded across the top of the men.



Figure 46: Set the dō and tare down in front of the men.

KEY POINTS: ALTERNATE SETUPS

Not all dōjōs will set up the tare and dō this way. If visiting another dōjō, simply adapt to the customs used there.

Picking up & Carrying the Bōgu

When kendōka are told to seiretsu, p. 10, at the start of a bōgu class, they need to pick up and carry their men, kote, and shinai prior to lining up.

Kneel onto your left knee beside your bōgu and put down your shinai.



Figure 47: Set your shinai down while kneeling beside your bōgu.

Pick the men up in your right hand, the **men-gane** (面金) in your palm and the chin facing away from you. Hold the **men-dare** (面垂) against the men-gane. Put the tenugui and kote in the men, the fists of the kote pointing toward you. Then pick up your shinai in your left hand and hold it at the waist.



Figure 48: Hold the men in your right hand, the shinai in your left.

Stand up from seiza with your shinai, and hold it in sage-tō. While holding your shinai and bōgu in this manner, proceed with seiretsu. When seiza is called, kneel onto your left knee, put your shinai down, reverse the process for picking up the men and kote, and then complete seiza.



Figure 49: Shinai in sage-tō, men and kote in your right hand.

When carrying the men be sure the himo are tucked neatly inside, and the men-dare are held against the men. Don't carry the men under your arm, or have it hanging at your side one-handed. Instead, hold it neatly in the palm of your hand.



Figure 50: Hold the men and men-dare in the palm of your hand.

KEY POINTS: CARRYING THE MEN

1. Don't hold the men like a football under your arm. Hold it in the palm of your hand in front of your body.
2. Be sure the men-himo, kote, and tenugui are neatly inside the men.

MOKUŚŌ: “MEDITATION”

CHAPTER PREVIEW

Mokuśō is the meditation done at the beginning and end of a practice alongside the other formalities.²⁰ The purpose of mokuśō is briefly given, followed by sections on posture and breathing during mokuśō.

THE PURPOSE OF MOKUŚŌ

Mokuśō is a form of meditation done at the start and end of a practice.

While the practice of za-zen and its influence with respect to kendō are beyond the scope of this text there are a few aspects which should be discussed.²¹ The purpose of mokuśō is: learning to breathe properly, and to bring oneself into a specific state of mind. This mindset is that of being focused, but not dwelling on one thing in particular.²² A Zen quotation on this point is:

“The moons reflection on the surface of the stream doesn’t move, doesn’t flow away. Only the water goes by.”

This is difficult to achieve. The moons reflection on the stream represents our mind, and the stream represents our thoughts and ideas. While the rippling of the stream causes the reflection on it to waver briefly, the reflection remains, unmoving.

KEY POINTS: MOKUŚŌ AT THE START & END OF PRACTICE

1. Mokuśō at the start of practice is to set the proper state of mind needed during kendō. Take this time to prepare yourself.
2. The style of breathing and the posture for mokuśō is the same as that used during kendō practice itself.
3. Mokuśō at the end is a chance to remind yourself of the proper state of mind, regardless of what occurred during practice.

²⁰ The practice of mokuśō stems from (Zen) Buddhism which, along with Shintoism, Confucianism, and Taoism, were major influences on modern kendō through their influence on its founders. Many aspects of kendō tradition originate from these four ideologies.

²¹ Herrigel (1989), Stevens (1989), Takuan (2002), Deshimaru (1991), and Leggett (2003)

²² Cleary (1991) quotes Japanese Zen master Takuan as indicating that “focusing on your breathing and your ‘hara’ is a beginners device to train the mind, but is itself causing you to dwell and focus. After a time, this tool must also be left behind.”



Figure 51: “The moons reflection on the surface...”

The following excerpt discusses mokushō:²³

"Kendo practitioners are not professional meditation practitioners. They do not take the lotus position.²⁴ They take the folded-knee posture, which was the formal sitting posture of the samurai as well as of cultured people in the Tokugawa period. Even today, cultured Japanese sit on their matted floors in the folded knee posture. But there is a subtle difference between the two postures, that taken by the cultured people and that taken by the samurai. Because the samurai were required to be alert at all times, their big toes on both feet were positioned close to each other-not overlapped or spread apart-so that they could be used to spring up in case of a sudden attack. The kendo practitioner today, therefore, uses this formal position in the dojo (unlike a judo practitioner, for example, who sits with his feet folded in front). Aside from this subtle difference, kendo meditation posture is identical with that of Buddhists; the practitioners sit in an upright position (back straight, shoulders relaxed, chin up but placed close to the throat) with the eyes closed (or half closed, the eyes then focused on the tip of the nose). Above all, they must breathe deeply, silently, and rhythmically, and preferably count numbers-for example, one to four-repeatedly. This kind of meditation is referred to as *ana-apana* in Sanskrit, *shu-hsi kan* in Chinese, and *susoku kan* in Japanese, that is, counting-number meditation. It is derived from the ancient yogic practice as a means to concentrate on numbers and thereby eliminating external distraction.

For Mahayana Buddhists, the purpose of meditation is two-fold. First, it is to develop one-pointed concentration, to empty the mind, and get rid of discursive thoughts. The kendo practitioner does the same in order to get rid of attachments. But whereas the Zen practitioner faces the wall to realize one-pointed concentration, the kendo practitioner faces the opponent to realize the same. Meditation as such is simply a ritual to establish the proper mindset.

We have said that both Shingon Mikkyo and Zen have had a considerable impact on classical kendo, but the goal of Shingon Mikkyo is to realize human-cosmos integration. Aren't the meditation schemes formulated by these two schools of Buddhism different? Only their expression is different. The ultimate goal of both schools is to cultivate direct cognition.

That which has realized it is referred to as the true self. Technically, the true self in Shingon Mikkyo is referred to as *nyojitsu chi-jishin* or 'knowing one's own mind, just as it is', cited in the *Mahavairocana-sutra*; in Zen it is referred to as *kensho*, 'knowing the true state of mind', an expression cited by Huineng, the sixth patriarch. These two terms correspond to *mushin*.

Mushin was previously described as the alternate state of consciousness. We now need to be more specific. *Mushin*, as the two terms cited above illustrate, actually refers to reconstruction of the human consciousness that which is absent of verbal fabrication, has become aware of the true self, and has developed the ability to exercise direct cognition.

²³ Kiyota (2002)

²⁴ The lotus position is where one sits cross legged, with the right foot resting on the inner left thigh and the left foot on the inner right thigh.



Thus, although meditation, whether Shingon Mikkyo or Zen, is usually practiced within the confines of a hall today, many skilled swordsman practiced meditation in isolation, outdoors, often on a hilltop. In doing so, they faced the cosmos itself. In the clarity of this natural solitude, there is no intrusion of human scheming and calculation, of convention and intellectualism.²⁵ Because the purpose of meditation is to look inside oneself, some also meditated inside a cave for prolonged periods-sometimes weeks-cutting themselves off from outside influence.

Mushin was described categorically for the sake of convenience. These categories are actually conceived of as one discipline to be realized all at once. There is no time to pass through graded and fragmented states in the development of discipline when one is faced with an opponent who is ready to attack at lightning speed. To this extent, then, notwithstanding the fact that kendo meditation is designed to set the stage to realize mushin, it is not based on a gradual doctrine. It is abrupt. Even the term mindset is not just a preparatory stage to realize mushin. Actually, a practitioner goes through the gradual stage (establishing a proper mindset) and then realizes the abrupt, just like a college student who enters as a freshman, goes through graded stages of the educational process, and finally receives his or her diploma. At that time, what was gained through the gradual stage is distilled into wisdom, not fragmented knowledge. The impact of Shingon Mikkyo and Zen on kendo is pronounced because the meditation schemes both represent stem from an abrupt doctrine.

Take the case of one-pointed concentration in the context of kendo. It will be recalled that one-pointed concentration requires the practitioner to focus on the opponent. The question is, what part of the opponent? He should focus on the opponents eyes. The eyes tell everything: the opponents degree of alertness, his intent, and, most important of all, the moment of his charge. But he should not concentrate on these items in a sequential order. The practitioner, although focusing on one point, is aware of the totality of the situation."

²⁵ According to Nitobe (1998), the samurai (侍) believed education in politics, wealth, and finance, were to be left to "lower classes" as they were not honorable trades.

MINDSET DURING ZA-ZEN

From Deshimaru (1991), "What is the right attitude of mind during za-zen?", Taisen Deshimaru replied "The three things in za-zen are posture, breathing, and attitude of mind. If correctly practiced they lead to the very principle of za-zen; hisiryo consciousness, thinking without thinking. You cannot stop thinking entirely during za-zen. You cannot stop your thoughts. Some forms of meditation teach that you must not think. Others say you must think about God, form images of God or beautiful things, or you must think about a koan or some philosophical problem. That is not the right attitude. In Zen what you must do is let your thoughts pass by. As soon as a thought arises, let it go. If money comes, or a young lady, or sex, or food, or Buddha, or God, or Zen, let it go. During za-zen you must let everything go by; but willing yourself not to think is also thinking."

POSTURE DURING MOKUJŌ

The following excerpt discusses posture during meditation:²⁶

To sit za-zen:

1. Let your posture be full of energy; otherwise it is like flat beer in a bottle opened the night before.
2. If your posture is right, it influences the nerves in the autonomic system and the old, central part of the brain. Your forebrain becomes peaceful and quiet. Your intuition grows strong.
3. Through za-zen, and only through za-zen, your muscles and tendons, at the correct degree of tension, influence your sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Their functions are opposed and complementary, and if the tension is correct, their two forces are brought into balance.
4. Your arms should not be stuck to your sides. There should be tension in your hands, and especially the fingers. The thumbs should touch and form a horizontal line: neither mountain nor valley.

²⁶ Deshimaru (ibid.)

To perform mokushō in the proper position:

Assume seiza, p. 26, with a straight posture as with shizentai, p. 25, resting your hands in your lap. Your hands should be directly in front of your *hara* (腹, “lower abdomen”) with your fingers and thumbs making the shape of a circle. Close your eyes about $\frac{3}{4}$ shut, and look toward the floor about two meters in front of you or toward the tip of your nose.

This hand position is known in Japanese as *zenjō-in* (禅定印), or *jyoin* (定印) for short, the *mudrā* (Sanskrit: मुद्रा, “gesture”) of meditation. It is also known as *hokkai-jyoin* (法界定印), or “meditation *mudrā* of the dharma realm”. Hand gestures such as this are prominent throughout many sects of Buddhism and have a variety of different meanings. This *mudrā*, and the practice of *mokushō* itself, stem from the influence of Zen Buddhism on *kendō*.

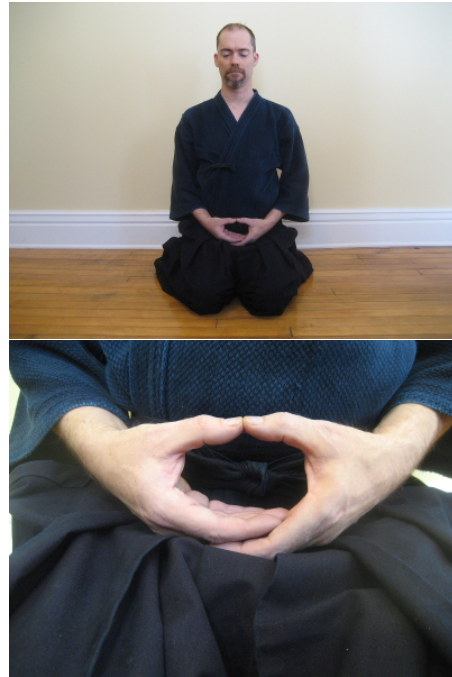


Figure 52: (Top) *Mokushō*, (Bottom) “*zenjyoin*”, the *mudrā* of meditation, held during *mokushō*. *Mudrā* are symbolic hand gestures, originating in Hinduism and Buddhism, employed in the iconography and spiritual practice of Indian Religions.

KEY POINTS: POSTURE DURING MOKUSHŌ

1. *Mokushō* has been integrated into *kendō* such that, for all intents and purposes, it can be considered a part of the formalities. Given this, it is important to assume correct posture and position during *mokushō*.
2. If one is unable to assume seiza due to injury, the seated position for *mokushō* can be adapted to fit the individual.

BREATHING DURING MOKUSHŌ

Inhalation. Breathe in slowly through your nose. As you breathe in, be sure to use your abdominal muscles and diaphragm to inhale.

1. Your entire abdomen, front, back, & sides, expands as you breathe in.
2. Visualize your diaphragm pulling the air downward, with the sensation of compressing it in your belly.

Exhalation. Breathe out slowly through your mouth using your abdomen to control your breath.

1. Your abdomen presses inward and up toward your spine.
2. Your exhalation should be as slow as you can.

Inhale when you feel you need to, but try to exhale as long as you can.

MUDRĀ IN MARTIAL ARTS

According to Muromoto (2005), “The use of *mudra* and other aspects of *mikkyō* (密教, lit. “secret teachings” refers to the esoteric practices of Shingon Buddhism) are found in many instances in many *koryū*, because *mikkyō* and Shinto were the religions of the samurai who founded those *ryū* that were created before the 1600s. Subsequent *ryū* developed after the imposition of the Tokugawa government were heavily influenced by Neo-Confucianism, and then later by Zen Buddhism. Although Zen was popularized among the warrior class in the Kamakura period, the 1300s, it did not greatly affect martial arts until the latter part of the Edo Period, with the writings of the Zen priests Takuan and Hakuin. And even at that, Edo Period (1600-1868) martial arts were equally influenced by Neo-Confucianism and even, in the latter part, mystical Shinto.”

ASHI-SABAKI: “FOOTWORK”

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THIS CHAPTER WILL INTRODUCE various types of **ashi-sabaki** (足捌き), or “footwork”, used in kendō. Emphasis is placed on the two most common types of footwork, however secondary footwork is briefly discussed.

ashi-gamae (足構え), p. 43

okuri-ashi (送り足), p. 45

fumi-komi (踏み込み), p. 46

ayumi-ashi, p. 46

hiraki-ashi (開き足), p. 46

tsugi-ashi (突ぎ足), p. 46

ASHI-GAMAE: “FOOT POSITION”

Footwork is the foundation for all techniques in kendō. Without strong footwork, your waza and even your kamae will be flawed. The following steps describe a simple method that will help you find the position needed for proper ashi-gamae.

1. Begin in shizentai, p. 25. Place your feet side-by-side touching each other.
2. Turn your left foot 90° to the left making a reversed “L” shape.
3. Turn your left foot another 90° to straighten it. Your feet should be shoulder width, the toes of your left foot beside the heel of your right, with both feet straight.



Once the feet are in the correct position, raise the heel of the rear foot *without bending the knee*.²⁷ Your weight should be distributed between the ball of the rear foot and the whole of the front foot.

DEFINITION OF SABAKI

Sabaki can be translated to both “work”, as in footwork, or as “handle, deal with”. A more general term combining both definitions would be “management”. This gives the term ashi-sabaki the broader scope of “managing the feet” (effectively) v.s. the simpler term “footwork” which is often just limited to the idea of *moving* the feet. This notion is often extended to the term tai-sabaki, or “body-management”, implying effective movement of the entire body.

Figure 53: How to assume proper ashi-gamae.

PROPER FOOT POSITION

Foot position will vary somewhat from person to person depending on size, build, gait, balance, etc. Giving measurements of exactly how far apart and where the feet ought to be placed is not possible; it can only be approximated. The “proper” positions must be modified to suit each person.

²⁷ As a guide, it is said that one should be able to fit the palm of their hand underneath the heel of the rear foot, and a piece of paper under the heel of the front foot.

Weight Distribution

It is important to have the correct weight distribution between your feet while standing in *ashi-gamae*. This ensures that you are in the optimal position to be ready to move or to attack.

When standing in the correct *ashi-gamae*, without altering your posture or lowering your rear heel, distribute your bodyweight 50 – 50 on each foot.²⁸

KEY POINTS: FOOT POSITION & WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

1. The feet should be about shoulder width apart and angled straight forward. Don't turn or twist your feet, keep them parallel.
2. The rear heel should be raised at all times without the rear knee bending; keep the knee straight, but not "locked".
3. The toes of the rear foot should be beside the heel of the front foot.
4. Your weight is distributed roughly 50 – 50 on each foot.
5. Many people will lean backward slightly putting their shoulders over their rear foot, allow their lower back to curl inward, and drop their rear heel after putting so much of their bodyweight on their rear foot. This is a symptom of not engaging your core sufficiently.
6. The sensation of correctly weighted *ashi-gamae* is that of *almost* standing completely on the toes of your rear foot. Don't lean your upper body backward while doing this to balance yourself or allow your rear heel to drop to the floor. Engage your core and you will be able to balance yourself with a straight posture.

Footwork has even been the basis of classic anecdotes teaching wayward swordsmen Zen concepts!²⁹

"A master ordered the samurai to go to the dojo and from morning to night he was to do footwork around the outer edge of the dojo. The samurai did this for one year, without ever touching a sword. Finally he said, 'I have had many teachers. But none have ever taught me as you are. Please, I wish to learn the true way of the sword!' The master took him to a deep chasm in the forest with a small log bridge and told him to cross. Seeing the deep chasm, the samurai was unable to cross. Then a blind man came along tapping his cane on the ground and walked over the bridge without hesitation. The master explained 'You have spent one year walking about the edge of the dojo which is much smaller than that log bridge. Why can't you cross?' The samurai thought for a moment, when finally he understood. He crossed the bridge and his training was complete; he had finally come to realize the true way of the sword."



Figure 54: Proper *ashi-gamae*.

²⁸ This is one particular way to distribute body weight. Older styles place 60 – 70% weight on the *forward* foot, while other advanced uses initially place 70 – 80% on the rear foot.

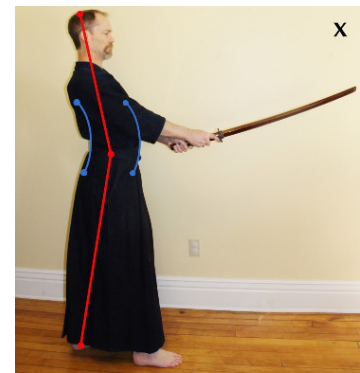


Figure 55: Incorrect posture after putting bodyweight on the rear foot; the core is not engaged, the rear heel has dropped, the lower back is arched, and the upper body is generally leaning back toward the rear foot.

²⁹ Deshimaru (1991)

SQUARE HIPS, STRAIGHT FEET

"Square hips" is synonymous with "straight feet" in that if you perform one correctly, you generally get the other automatically. So, the importance of having straight feet in the proper *ashi-gamae* is really another way of ensuring you have square hips, p. 16. It is from here, square hips & straight feet, that a *kendōka* can most efficiently generate the balanced power needed to drive themselves forward to strike.



Figure 56: “Blind men crossing a bridge”, Hakuin Ekaku, 1685-1768. The in figure caption reads: “Both inner and the floating world around us are like the blind man’s round log bridge: a mind that can cross over is the best guide.”

OKURI-ASHI: KENDŌ’S FUNDAMENTAL FOOTWORK

Okuri-ashi is the most fundamental footwork in kendō.³⁰

Performing okuri-ashi. With proper posture and correct ashi-gamae, inhale, then use your hind leg to push you forward sliding your front foot on the floor as you exhale. As you move forward in a small step, with the feeling of “standing up on your front foot”, use your front leg muscles to quickly pull up your rear foot into to correct ashi-gamae, see p. 47 and figure 61, p. 48.

KEY POINTS: OKURI-ASHI

1. Keep your hips square, p. 16, and feet straight while performing okuri-ashi. Maintain a straight posture, p. 25, core engaged, p. 15.
2. Your rear leg should be straight in order to be able to effectively generate power to push you forward.
3. Inhale while still, exhale for the duration of your movement.
4. Bring your rear foot forward quickly, don’t let it drag behind you. Use the muscles of your front leg to pull your rear foot forward; don’t drag your rear foot forward with the muscles of your rear leg.

The following excerpt discusses footwork:³¹

“Although your stride may be long or short, slow or fast, according to the situation, it is [your footwork] to be as normal. Flighty steps, unsteady steps, and stomping steps are to be avoided.

Among the important elements of this science is what is called complimentary stepping; this is essential. Complimentary stepping means that you do not move one foot alone. When you slash, when you pull back, and even when you parry, you step right-left-right-left, with complimentary steps. Be very sure not to step with one foot alone.”

³⁰ Often people will use the term suri-ashi to refer to okuri-ashi. Suri-ashi translates to “sliding footwork” and, unless stated otherwise, its use is implied in all types of footwork.

³¹ Musashi (1993)

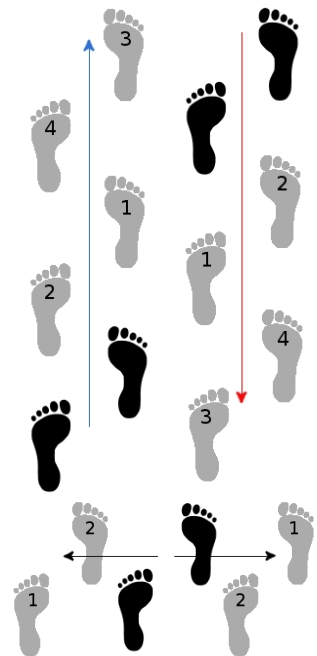


Figure 57: Okuri-ashi: forward, backward, left and right.

FUMI-KOMI: "LUNGING FOOTWORK"

Fumi-komi, short for fumi-komi-ashi, is an advanced adaptation of okuri-ashi where one takes a powerful, non-suri-ashi (摺り足) type of step. Often described as a "lunge", it is used during an attack against an opponent as it allows one to cover distance quickly. Proper fumi-komi is often associated with a characteristic "stomp", a side effect of the front foot clapping the floor upon landing.

Performing fumi-komi. While in proper ashi-gamae and with straight posture and square hips, use the hind leg to push the body forward powerfully (fumi-kiru, 踏み切る). At the beginning of the step, as the rear leg pushes, the front foot slides on the floor (suri-ashi). After the step has begun the front foot comes off of the floor *slightly* to allow the kendōka to step forward (fumi-komi) rather than slide forward. When the front foot lands at the end of the step the rear foot must be pulled up quickly (hikitsukeru, 引き付ける) using the front leg as with okuri-ashi, p. 45.

KEY POINTS: FUMI-KOMI

1. Maintain a straight posture, p. 25, and square hips, p. 16, and an engaged core, p. 15, throughout. Exhale using abdominal breathing, p. 17, as you step forward.
2. Push your whole body forward with your rear leg (fumi-kiru). Pull up your rear leg (hikitsukeru) by using your front leg. See p. 47 and figure 61, p. 48.

SECONDARY FOOTWORK

Ayumi-Ashi: "Walking Footwork"

Ayumi-ashi refers to regular "walking footwork" used to cover large distances between you and your opponent. Once the distance has been closed one would switch to okuri-ashi as shown on p. 45.

Hiraki-Ashi: "Opening Footwork"

Hiraki-ashi is a circular side-step used to move you out of your opponents centerline. This serves two purposes: removes their ability to attack effectively and shifts control of center to you.

Tsugi-Ashi: "Extending Footwork"

Tsugi-ashi, a combination of okuri-ashi and fumi-komi steps, is used to cover large distances before attacking or allows you to attack if the opponent retreats while you pressure them by moving forward.

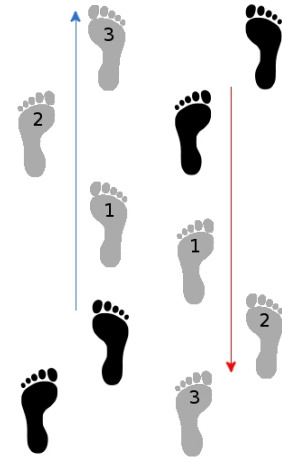


Figure 58: Ayumi-ashi: (Left) forward and (Right) backward.

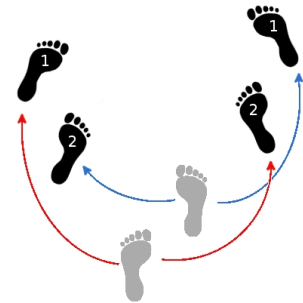


Figure 59: Hiraki-ashi: left and right.

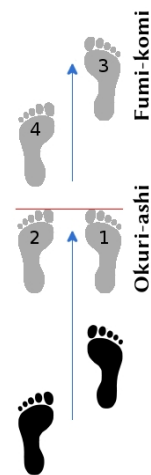


Figure 60: Tsugi-ashi style footwork.

Weight Distribution Revisited: Dynamic v.s. Static

When in *ashi-gamae* weight distribution is essentially static. However it changes while you are moving or attacking; *weight distribution is dynamic, not static*. While your rear leg pushes your weight forward during your step it should feel as though it is still supporting you throughout the movement. However after you have finished pushing forward and you are bringing your rear foot back into place, all of your weight is transferred to your forward foot until you can return to proper *ashi-gamae*.

This transfer of weight is the reason for emphasizing to “push” your body with the rear leg and to “pull” your rear leg forward with the front leg; the rear leg supports all your weight and puts you in an excellent position to push your body forward while at the end of the step your forward leg supports your weight allowing you to pull up your rear leg. This “rear leg–front leg, push–pull” applies to *all* footwork, especially *okuri-ashi* and *fumi-komi*, pp. 45–46.

KEEP THE CORE ENGAGED

Dynamic weight distribution that occurs during footwork and strikes happens naturally whenever we move, see Farley and Ferris (1998). However, it is essential that this be done without altering posture, or needlessly tensing the upper body as this will affect the ability to strike effectively. In order to accomplish this, it is essential to have and maintain a properly engaged core.

Dynamic Weight Distribution During Footwork

1. Before moving. While standing in *ashi-gamae* the weight distribution should be about 50% of bodyweight on the rear foot.³²
2. Initiating a step. As your body is pushed forward, your weight is supported primarily on the rear foot throughout the push.
3. Finishing a step. As you finish a step and the rear foot is brought back into position, your weight shifts to the front foot until you return to *ashi-gamae*.

³² See note 28, p. 44.

KEY POINTS: DYNAMIC WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

1. While you are pushing forward with your rear leg, keep the knee straight and have the sensation that the ball of your rear foot is rooted into the ground for the *full duration* of the forward push. Pulling it up early creates a jumping or hopping type movement during your footwork; this is not efficient or stable.
2. When the push is completed, and your forward foot has reached the full length of the step you are taking, all bodyweight is transferred to the forward foot. Using the thigh muscles of the forward leg, stand up straight on your forward foot while allowing your rear foot to come up off the floor and the rear knee to bend. This will naturally pull the rear foot forward without dragging it. Return to *ashi-gamae* and your initial weight distribution.
3. It is crucial to maintain an engaged core throughout this movement as this then allows you to maintain a straight posture.



Figure 61: Okuri-ashi and fumi-komi. Weight distribution is dynamic: (1) Proper ashi-gamae, core engaged with straight posture, and bodyweight distributed evenly on both feet. (2) Bodyweight is pushed forward from the hips, posture straight with core engaged, and the rear leg is straight. As the rear foot is rooted and the forward foot moving, the rear foot is effectively supporting the weight of the body throughout the push. (3) Bodyweight is transferred to the forward foot and, with straight posture and core engaged, the rear leg is pulled forward by the muscles of the front leg with the sensation of “standing up on one foot”. Once the rear foot has been returned to the correct position, weight distribution returns to the initial setup as in (1).

Giving this much detail on something as simple as weight distribution may seem like splitting hairs, however these subtleties are directly linked to a number of important areas in kendō.

The most basic is that it ensures efficient and optimal footwork. An advanced application of using weight distribution is how one uses feigned and actual movement of their body to “pressure” the opponent without losing proper ashi-gamae, posture, or readiness to strike. This is briefly introduced on p. 150, but is best discovered through practice.

KAMAE: “STANCES”

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THIS CHAPTER WILL DISCUSS the kamae or *stances* used in kendō. While there are a number of different kamae available, some of them having a number of variations, a high level of detail is given to the most fundamental of them all: chūdan no kamae. The various kamae introduced are:

chūdan no kamae, p. 49

seigan no kamae (正眼の構え), p. 52

jōdan no kamae (上段の構え), p. 53

age-tō (上げ刀), p. 54

hassō no kamae (八相の構え), p. 55

gedan no kamae (下段の構え), p. 56

waki-gamae (脇構え), p. 57

nitō kamae (二刀構え), p. 58

hanmi kamae (半身構え), p. 59

mu-gamae (無構え), p. 59

CHŪDAN NO KAMAE: “MID-LEVEL” STANCE

Chūdan is the fundamental kamae in kendō, and is referred to as *mizu no kamae* (水の構え) or the “*the kamae of water*” due to its adaptability. It is considered the basis for learning all of the other kamae in both the physical and mental sense of the term. A strong chūdan no kamae is a kendōka’s primary source of physical offense or defense.

Details on assuming chūdan will be given in the following sections:

grip, p. 50

position, p. 51

Shizentai & Ashi-Gamae

Before holding a shinai or bokutō in chūdan, first assume shizentai, p. 25, then assume the proper foot position as discussed on p. 43.

Note: According to Budden (2000), “Chudan no kamae is the kamae of water. Hold your weapon still like a pool of water, but not like stagnant water. Water with a strong under-current; watching, waiting, and always covering protect yourself by being observant and calm, alive and waiting but fully aware.”

KEY POINTS: FOUNDATIONS OF GOOD KAMAE

Posture and foot position is the foundation of good kamae: keep your core engaged, p. 15; hips square, p. 16; keep your posture straight, p. 25; feet straight, p. 43; and maintain the correct weight distribution, p. 44.

HOLDING THE SHINAI OR BOKUJŌ

This section is divided into two parts. First, the correct grip and then the correct position with respect to yourself and your opponent.

The Grip: Proper Hand Position

Left hand. With a shinai, grip the handle, the end flush with the little finger. With a bokujō, the end is outside of the fingers. The middle, ring, and little finger grip tightly; the index and thumb are closed and make a “V”, the “point” centered on the handle. See figure 65.

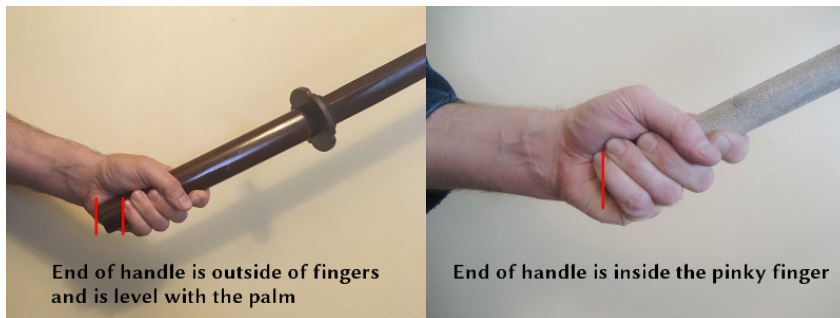


Figure 62: Grip with (Left) fingers spread, (Right) a fist. A fist causes the handle sit horizontally, spread fingers causes it sit diagonally.

Right hand. Grip the shinai or bokujō similarly to the left hand, however all fingers are closed and primarily for support; don't grip tightly. With a shinai, the index finger should be one to two finger widths from the tsuba (金戸, “sword guard”); with bokujō the index rests against it.

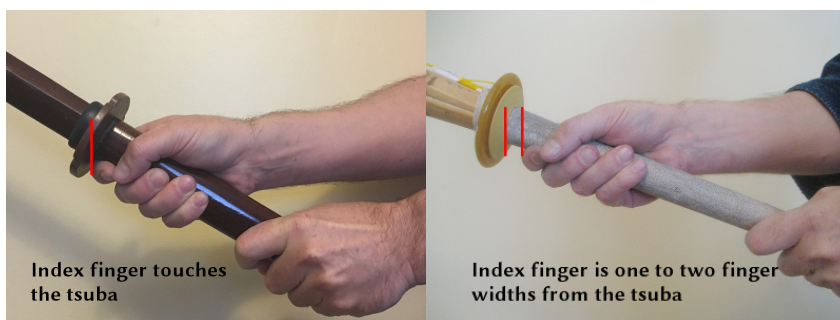


Figure 63: The left hand grip (Left) with a bokujō and (Right) with a shinai.

KEY POINTS: GRIPPING THE SHINAI OR BOKUJŌ

1. Don't grip the handle with a clenched fist; spread your fingers slightly and let the handle rest diagonally across your palms.
2. Be sure the “V” shape made by your index finger and thumb of both hands are centered on the top of the handle.
3. Keep the fingers of the right hand relaxed *but not open*.
4. Don't grip with your thumbs on the top of the tsuka (柄, “handle”).
5. Hold the tsuka with the sensation that the majority of the pressure on the handle from your grip is from your finger tips.
6. If holding a bokujō, the end of the tsuka is flush with the edge of the palm, not the baby finger, and the index finger of the right hand should touch the tsuba instead of there being space between the two.

Figure 64: The right hand grip (Left) with a bokujō and (Right) with a shinai.

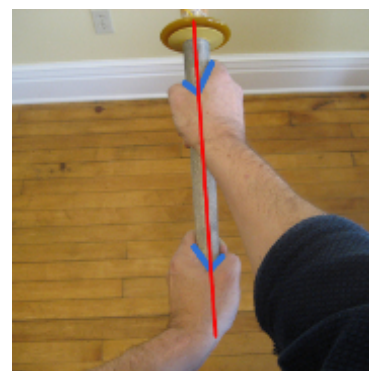


Figure 65: Forming a “V” with the hands.

The Position: Proper Position & Angle

Once you have a proper grip you must orient the shinai or bokutō so it is at the proper position and angle.

Position and angle. With the end of the handle pointing toward your navel, angle the tip toward your opponents throat.³³ The shinai or bokutō should be aligned with your centerline.

KEY POINTS: POSITION OF THE SHINAI OR BOKUTŌ

1. The end of the handle should be one fists width from the abdomen.
2. Keep about one fists width between your right forearm and the bottom of the handle.
3. The left forearm should rest lightly against your body and the right arm, just above the elbow, should do the same.

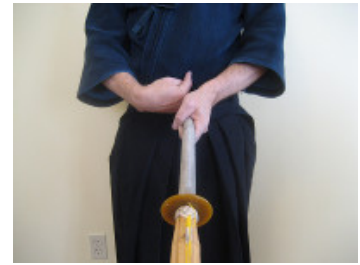


Figure 66: The shinai is held on the centerline of the body, approximately one fists width away from the abdomen, with the bottom knuckle of the left thumb pointing directly toward the navel.

³³ Some say the end of the handle, while others say the knuckle at the base of your left thumb, should point at the navel.

Chūdan no Kamae



KEY POINTS: CHŪDAN NO KAMAE

1. The shinai/bokutō should be held on your centerline; *this is crucial*.
2. Maintain a straight posture, p. 25, and proper foot position, p. 43.
3. Engage your core, p. 15, while keeping your shoulders relaxed.

Figure 67: Chūdan no kamae: the kamae of water.

ALTERNATE KAMAE

In kendō there are a number of different kamae other than chūdan. The following excerpt discusses chūdan's importance:³⁴

"The five kinds of guard are the upper, middle, lower, right-hand, and left-hand guard. What is important in this path is to realize that the consummate guard is the middle...the center is the seat of the general, following the general are the other four."

Seigan no Kamae: "Aiming at the Eyes" Stance

Seigan no kamae is a variant of chūdan often used against an opponent in one of the upper stances as it, among other things, offers better protection against attacks from this kamae. There are *migi* (右, "right") and *hidari* (左, "left") versions with *hidari* being the most common.

Seigan differs from chūdan by both the position of the tip and the position of the left fist.

In chūdan the tip is kept near the level of the opponents throat and held in the mid-line. In seigan the shinai tip is directed at the opponent's eye; the left or right for *hidari* and *migi* seigan respectively. The left fist is also held an additional one fists width in front of the navel and one fists width *above* the navel.



Seigan kamae is primarily used when against an opponent in one of the upper stances, p. 53, or in the upper two-sword stance, p. 58. One will often alternate between chūdan, *migi* and *hidari* seigan, and possibly even variants of a "one-handed stance", p. 54, when confronted by such an opponent.

³⁴ Musashi (1993)

LEFT-HANDED KAMAE

While exceptionally rare, there exists a left-handed (*hidari-te*) version of each kamae, the standard version being right-handed (*migi-te*). The right and left-handed versions of a kamae indicate which is the forward hand on the handle/grip. For example, standard chūdan is a right-handed chūdan where the right hand is forward. Left-handed chūdan would be the opposite. The left-handed variations of kamae are usually reserved for those people in which the standard version of a kamae are just not plausible, usually due to an injury or handicap of some sort.



Throughout this book the standard right-handed kamae is used in all descriptions.

Figure 68: Seigan no kamae.

Note: According to Y. Inoue (2003), it is a common error, due to previous ambiguous wording of the AJKF kata guidelines, to turn the blade sideways or to keep it pointing directly downward as you assume seigan from chūdan. The blade should be angled slightly when in seigan; not straight down, and not flat/sideways.

Jōdan no Kamae: “Upper-Level” Stance

Jōdan no kamae, also known as **hi no kamae** (火の構え) and **ten no kamae** (天の構え) or “the kamae of fire” and “the kamae of heaven” respectively, is an aggressive kamae where you must not pass up opportunities to initiate a strike and demonstrate a fearlessness of being hit.

Jōdan forgoes the defensive options available in kamae such as chūdan and puts its entire emphasis on attack; jōdan exposes nearly all targets to the opponent: the left and right forearms, the left and right sides of the torso, and the throat are all unprotected.

The following excerpt discusses jōdan no kamae waza:³⁵

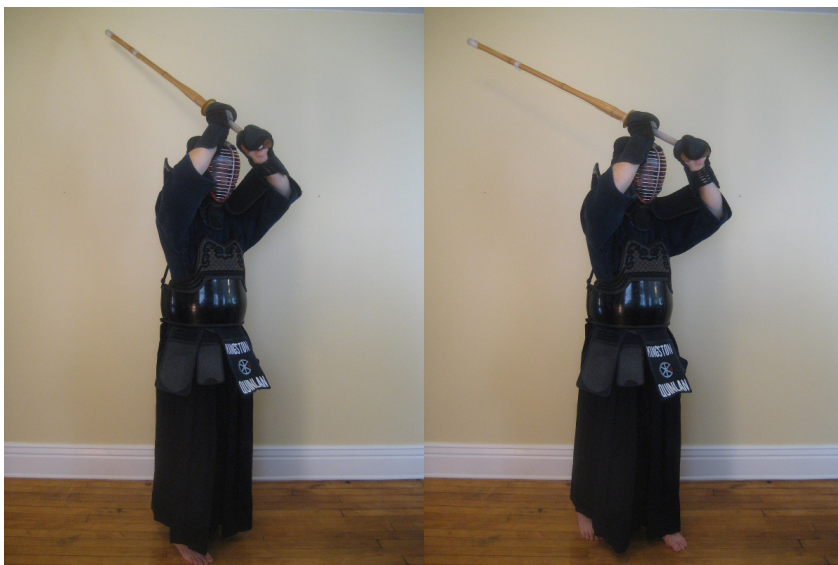
“Always with the feeling of controlling the opponent from above, try to strike him at the moment when he is about to step forward, to the rear, or is beginning a strike. Since these are always attack techniques, the spiritual element exercises more control over their success or failure than technical skill.”

The “spirit” aspect of jōdan cannot be emphasized enough. In fact, there is a common Japanese play on words used for people who do not have a sufficient spirit; the word for joke (冗談) is pronounced “jōdan”, allowing one to imply a person’s jōdan kamae is “a joke”. Also called kakashi (“scarecrow”, 案山子) jōdan which implies that the kamae is empty posturing compared to the “real thing”.

There are two primary variants of jōdan: *migi* and *hidari* jōdan.

With *migi* jōdan the shinai is raised overhead at a 30°–45° angle with the left hand in the centerline. The left hand is approximately one fist width in front of the forehead and one fist width above.

In *hidari* jōdan, the left foot becomes the forward foot. The shinai is raised overhead at a 30°–45° angle as with *migi* jōdan, however it is also turned to the right by about 30°–45°. The left hand moves off of the centerline slightly to sit around the left eyebrow and the right hand sits between the right eyebrow and the right collarbone.



Note: According to Budden (2000), “Jōdan can be defined as a kamae of total attack. Having a strong spirit and thinking nothing of defense, you have only to cut down with the sword.”

³⁵ AJKF (1973)

ETIQUETTE & USING JŌDAN

When assuming jōdan, one purposefully exposes all of their targets and assumes an attitude of “come try and hit me!”; this could be misinterpreted as arrogance. It is proper etiquette to say *shītsurei-shimasu*, “I’m being impolite”, or *go burei shimasu*, “I’m being rude”, before assuming jōdan against a senior. It is also proper etiquette to receive permission to use a non-chūdan kamae from your sensei prior to doing so in the dōjō.

Figure 69: (Left) *Migi* jōdan no kamae and (Right) *hidari* jōdan no kamae.

Age-Tō: “Raised Sword”

Age-tō is a left or right *katate* (片手, “one-handed”) variant of jōdan shown here only for completeness. The shinai is held over head in one hand with the other at the waist.

Age-tō, in modern kendō, is rarely used. It is often only seen as a temporary position; an extended pause after a katate strike while preparing for another, some will use it as a means to block an opponent's strike, or sometimes, a kendōka using jōdan, will pull one of their hands off of the shinai assuming age-tō in response to their opponent's pressure. This is very different compared to it being used as a primary/consistent kamae.

Age-tō, when it does make an appearance, has often been used as a counter to somebody using hidari jōdan.

The following excerpt discusses age-tō:³⁶

“This single-hand technique can be likened to a missile. It is a technique designed to enable the kendōist to strike his opponent with the first stroke from a distant interval.”

³⁶ Warner and Sasamori (1964)



Figure 70: (Left) A right handed age-tō kamae. (Right) An opponent in hidari jōdan no kamae.

Hassō no Kamae: “Eight Phases” Stance

Hassō no kamae is referred to as *mokuyō no kamae* (木の構え) “the kamae of wood”. Hassō is rarely used in modern kendō save for the kendō kata.

The following excerpt discusses hassō:³⁷

“From chudan no kamae, assume a two-hand left Jodan no Kamae and step forward with your left foot, the tsuba at the level of your mouth, and the cutting edge (hasaki) toward your opponent. Do not extend or contract your arms and keep your shoulders relaxed. Point your left foot forward and the end of your right foot slightly out, the heel slightly raised.

Hassō no kamae is also called the kamae of wood - moku no kamae. Like a large tree rising high into the sky, you assume a majestic and dignified stance to overcome your opponent.

Hassō no kamae allows you to observe your opponent and change to an attacking posture in response to any forward movement from your opponent.”

Note: According to Budden (2000), “Hasso is the kamae of standing like a big tree thrusting upward to heaven, quiet yet firm, with roots deep under the ground. Cut by going through the jodan position like the rush of a falling tree, unstoppable.”

³⁷ Ozawa (1997)



Figure 71: Hassō no kamae: the kamae of wood, shown here with a bokutō as this kamae is, except for rare occurrences, unused in modern kendō save for kendō no kata.

Gedan no Kamae: "Lower-Level" Stance

Gedan no kamae is the low positioned kamae and is referred to as **chi no kamae** (地の構え) or the "kamae of earth". Even though it may look defensive, spiritually it is in fact an aggressive one. You must constantly threaten to invade your opponents space, forcing them to attack or to move revealing an opening. The shinai is held lowered, in the center of your body, with the tip pointing at the opponents kneecaps.

Gedan is rarely used in modern kendō and is usually only seen in kendō kata.

The following excerpt discusses gedan:³⁸

"From chudan no kamae, lower the kensen to a position slightly below your opponents knees, as if you were going to attack his hands or feet.

Gedan no kamae is effective as a defensive kamae, since your opponent will be afraid of receiving a thrust (tsuki) and at the same time is prevented by your kensen from easily executing a strike or thrust himself.

Should your opponent attempt to make a strike or thrust, remain in gedan no kamae and thrust your weapon up aggressively."

Note: According to Budden (2000), "Gedan is the kamae of ground or sand: earth attitude but performed with a very strong spiritual bearing. It should have the same feeling as jodan and chudan but is more a kamae of defense in waiting, inviting."

³⁸ Ozawa (1997)



Figure 72: Gedan no kamae: the kamae of earth. Gedan, like hassō and waki, is essentially unused in modern kendō save for kendō no kata. However, it can often be employed as a *temporary kamae* as a way to pressure the opponent as part of a ruse or deception. The duration of this is fleeting and is not the same as one adopting this posture as their kamae.

Waki-Gamae: "Side" Stance

Waki-gamae is referred to as *kane no kamae* (金の構え) "the kamae of metal". This kamae is not seen in modern kendō except during kendō kata.

The following excerpt³⁹ discusses waki-gamae:

"From chudan no kamae, step back with your right foot and bring the kensen down behind you, so that your weapon is pointing down to the right. The important point is to assume a kamae which prevents the blade from being seen by your opponent.

Your left foot should be pointing forward and the end of your right foot pointing slightly out, the heel slightly raised.

Waki-gamae is also called the kamae of metal – kane no kamae. Although in terms of form this does not seem to be an attacking kamae, you can in fact attack immediately from waki-gamae.

Waki-gamae enables you to prevent your opponent from knowing what weapon you hold. You can hold this kamae for a short time or a long time, depending on your opponents movement."

³⁹ Ozawa (*ibid.*)

Note: The idea of metal refers to the fact that something of value, i.e., the type and length of your weapon, is hidden from sight much like metal is hidden from sight within some type of ore. According to Budden (2000), "Waki-gamae is a kamae in which you don't show your opponent your strength or your weapon. You can react as you wish."



Figure 73: Waki-gamae: the kamae of metal, shown here only with a bokutō as this kamae is essentially unused in modern kendō save for kendō no kata.

Nitō Kamae: “Two Sword” Stance

Nitō kamae is a kamae where two shinai are used; the **daitō** (大刀, “long sword”), and the **shōtō** (小刀, “short sword”).⁴⁰ The daitō is the primary striking weapon in nitō kamae, however if the daitō is being actively suppressed by the opponent, or if one uses the daitō to suppress an opponents shinai it is possible to land a **yūkō-datotsu** (有効打突, “effective strike”) with the shōtō.

There are two general variants of nitō: regular (daitō in the right hand) and reversed (daitō in the left hand), each with two variations on foot position. There are alternate grips as well with the daitō, however the non-standard grips are limited to **tsuba-zeriai** (鐔迫り合い), p. 100.

Nitō has a set of five separate stances however the most commonly used kamae are nitō jōdan and nitō chūdan kamae.

⁴⁰ The long and short bokutō are known as the *tachi* and *kodachi* respectively.

NITEN ICHI RYU & KENDŌ

It is important to note that nitō kendō is not the same as the original niten ichi ryu, much like ittō kendō is not the same as the original sword schools it evolved from; they are modernized applications.



Figure 74: (Left to Right) Low, middle, and high grip positions of the daitō.



Figure 75: Ashi-gamae variations for nitō/reversed nitō jōdan no kamae.

KEY POINTS: NITŌ: KAMAE & GRIP VARIATIONS

Nitō's two general variants are used according to the user's preference.⁴¹ The middle and high grip variations are limited to use in tsuba-zeriai, however the variations in footwork can be used freely at any time.

⁴¹ Nitō has five kamae: chūdan, jōdan, gedan, and left or right waki. When discussing nitō it is assumed one is using nitō jōdan.

Hanmi Kamae: "Half Body" Stance

Hanmi kamae are used with the **kodachi** (小太刀) in the kendō kata. Hanmi translates to "half body" indicating ones torso is only "half exposed" to the opponent by pulling the left shoulder back. As such a hanmi kamae minimizes striking areas exposed to the opponent.

There is a difference between the focus of the tip for the kodachi and the **tachi** (太刀). With the tachi, the line of extension from the tip directed toward the specified area is how we determine correct position whereas with the kodachi the tip itself is level with the specified area. This is an important distinction.

Note: When assuming a kodachi kamae (hanmi or not), the left hand is placed on the hip. The index finger is on the forward side of the hip and the thumb is on the back side. The index and thumb rest on the upper set of the uniforms belts above the hip. When breaking kamae, the left hand is lowered to rest on the thigh. If one is wearing a sheathe for the kodachi the opening at the top of the sheathe is held instead of placing the thumb and index finger on the hip.

Opponents Kamae	Kodachi Kamae	Level of the Tip
Jōdan no kamae	Chūdan hanmi	Level with opponent's face
Gedan no kamae	Chūdan hanmi	Level with opponent's chest
Chūdan no kamae	Gedan hanmi	Level with opponent's knee

Table 1: Kodachi hanmi kamae and where to align the tip of the kodachi v.s. various tachi kamae.

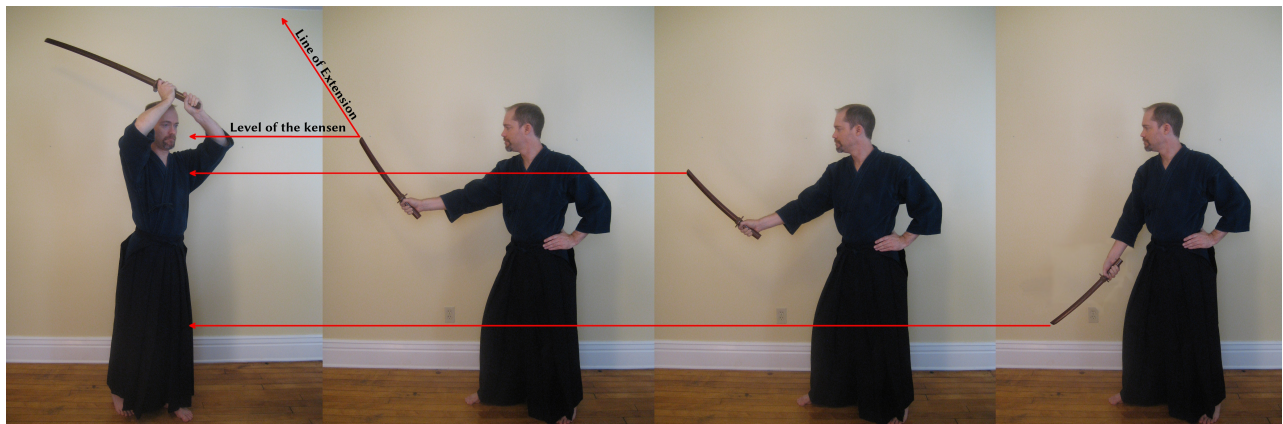


Figure 76: Tip position for kodachi hanmi kamae. With a kodachi hanmi kamae, the tip is held level with the target area on the opponent instead of its line of extension being directed toward it.

Mu-Gamae: "Void" Stance

Mu-gamae is translated as "empty stance", "no stance", or the "void stance". For the purposes of this text the focus will be on the spiritual and philosophical kamae rather than the physical stance. In this context, mu-gamae refers to the state where ones spirit and presence is enough to face an opponent; theres no need for an overt physical kamae.

The action of taking **gedan hanmi no kamae** (下段半身の構え) in the third short sword kata, is meant to express mu-gamae.



Figure 77: Miyamoto Musashi, founder of Niten Ichi Ryu, is often depicted in mugame.

KENDŌ-GU: “KENDŌ EQUIPMENT”

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THERE ARE A NUMBER of different components to a kendōka's equipment, all of which must be used and maintained properly. With respect to both safety issues and the appropriate appearance of the kendōka demanded in kendō, the maintenance of one's equipment is an integral part of practicing kendō. The following items are covered:

bokutō, p. 62

shinai, p. 63

hakama (袴) & keiko-gi (着), p. 71

bōgu, p. 83



KENDŌ & SAFETY

Kendō is one of the safest martial arts that involves physical contact with the opponent, see Schultzel et al. (2016). However, this level of safety presupposes a number of things.

1. Equipment is worn correctly and securely for the duration of the practice.
2. All components and fittings are currently in good working order.
3. All components and fittings are regularly inspected for damage.
4. A kendōka never knowingly uses any equipment that is damaged or loose in any way.

If the protective armour is not worn correctly or falls into disrepair, it will no longer be able to protect the wearer from strikes by the opponent. If the shinai is not kept in good repair, then every strike performed with it has the potential to seriously injure the opponent even if wearing their own equipment correctly. It is crucial that all equipment be worn correctly and that it is kept in good repair in order to prevent needless injury.

A common adage in kendō is “you can’t do real kendō unless you know that your opponent is completely safe”.

Figure 78: A kendōka in full bōgu with shinai.

THE BOKUȚŌ: "WOODEN SWORD"

The bokuȚŌ is the wooden sword used in kendō, primarily during the *ni-hon kendō no kata* (日本剣道の形) and *kihon bokuȚŌ waza* (基本木刀技), however it can also be used to practice basics. The bokuȚŌ resembles an actual sword much more closely than a shinai making the bokuȚŌ an important link between the use of an actual sword and shinai kendō.

Various locations and components of the bokuȚŌ are as follows:

1. *Kensen* (剣先). The tip of the bokuȚŌ.
2. *Mono-uchi* (物打). The upper portion of the bokuȚŌ, approximately 25cm as measured from the kensen, used for striking.
3. *Omote* (表). Not a specific "part" of the bokuȚŌ, omote, or "outside", refers to the left hand side of the bokuȚŌ.
4. *Ura* (裏). Not a specific "part" of the bokuȚŌ, ura, or "inside", refers to the right hand side of the bokuȚŌ.
5. *Shinogi* (鎧). The ridge on the side of a blade and running along its length. The shinogi is very strong and hence is used for deflecting or manipulating the opponent's sword. In general, this should also transfer to deflections in modern kendō with a bokuȚŌ or shinai.
6. *Tsuba*. The round sword guard.
7. *Tsuba-dome* (鐔止め). The rubber ring that holds the tsuba in place.
8. *Tsuka*. The handle of the bokuȚŌ.
9. *Tsuka-gashira* (柄頭). The bottom of the tsuka.

BOKUȚŌ SIZE & WEIGHT

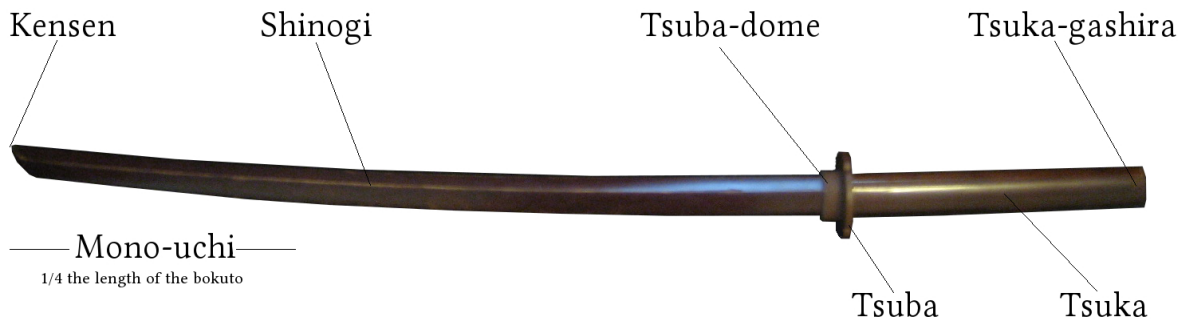
Save for the type of wood, there is little difference between bokuȚŌ. According to AJKF (2002), standard length for kendō bokuȚŌ is approx. 102cm for tachi, 55cm for kodachi. Common differences for non-kendō bokuȚŌ are weight and thickness. There is no regulated weight, only length, making it acceptable to use non-standard bokuȚŌ as long as they meet length requirements and have a tsuba affixed with a tsuba-dome.

BOKUȚŌ MAINTENANCE

BokuȚŌ require little maintenance:

1. Ensure the tsuba and tsuba-dome are undamaged and that they both can be securely attached to the bokuȚŌ.
2. Ensure the bokuȚŌ is not cracked or damaged.

If the bokuȚŌ has splinters, sand them down before use. If the tsuba/tsuba-dome is damaged, replaced before use. If the bokuȚŌ is cracked, do not use it; it must be replaced.



KEY POINTS: THE PURPOSE OF USING A BOKUȚŌ

The bokuȚŌ serves as a link between a real sword and the shinai. Learning correct and effective use of the bokuȚŌ will in turn lead to correct and effective use of the shinai. This is a crucial aspect of kendō.

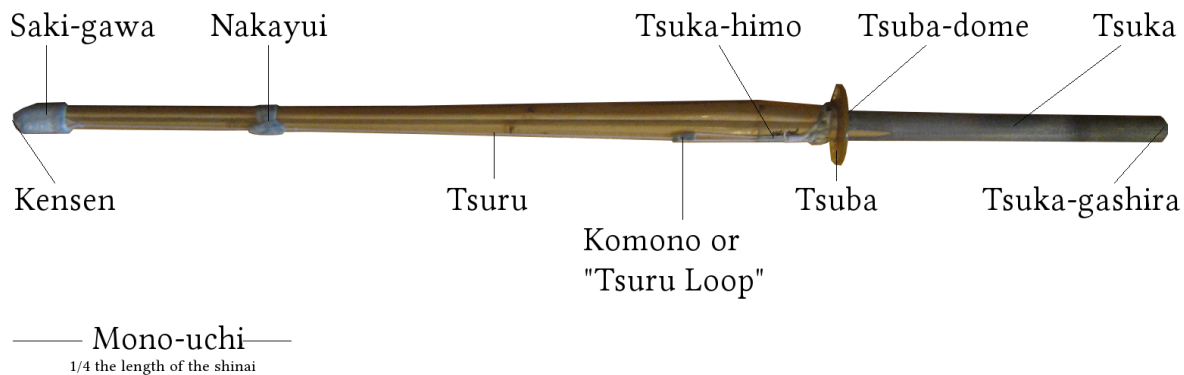
Figure 79: BokuȚŌ components.

THE SHINAI: "BAMBOO SWORD"

The shinai is the bamboo practice sword used in kendō. It is constructed out of four bamboo slats, which are held together by three pieces of leather and a string. The shinai is constructed in such a way that it is flexible, with the ability absorb a lot of force, as well as being rigid. This flexibility ensures one will not injure ones opponent, while the rigidity allows it to emulate a real sword.

Various locations and components of shinai are as follows:

1. **Kensen**. The tip of the shinai.
2. **Saki-gawa** (先革). The leather cap on the tip of the shinai.
3. **Mono-uchi**. The upper portion of the shinai, approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ the total length, used for striking. Also called the **datotsu-bu** (打突部).
4. **Nakayui** (中結). The leather tie $\frac{1}{4}$ the length of the shinai from the tip.
5. **Jin-bu** (刃部). The blade portion of the shinai.
6. **Tsuru** (弦). The string along the top of the shinai.
7. **Omote**. The "outside"/left hand side of the shinai.
8. **Ura**. The "inside"/right hand side of the shinai.
9. **Komono** (小物). A small leather bit used to tie the tsuru. Often a simple loop is tied in the tsuru itself instead of using a komono.
10. **Tsuba**. The round sword guard.
11. **Tsuba-dome**. The item that holds the tsuba in place.
12. **Tsuka**. The handle of the shinai.
13. **Tsuka-gawa** (柄革). The leather covering for the tsuka.
14. **Tsuka-gashira**. The bottom of the tsuka.
15. **Tsuka-himo** (柄紐). A leather string on the top of the tsuka used in anchoring the tsuru.



PROPERLY SIZED SHINAI

For adults, a rule of thumb is that those shorter than about 165cm (5'5") use size 38 shinai and those above use 39. People significantly shorter, or a petite build, use smaller shinai. The length of the tsuka can help find the proper size. Sit the tsuka-gashira in the elbow and the side of the index finger, from the middle knuckle to the tip, should rest on the underside of the tsuba. A gap indicates the shinai is too large. If the fingers are cramped, the shinai is too small. Using the hands to measure length, the tsuka ought to be roughly three fists plus two finger widths long.



All shinai, regardless of size, must comply with the specifications on p. 170.

Figure 80: Shinai components.

Preparing a New Shinai for Use

Pre-sanding. Shinai slats have a bit of a sharp edge when new. The idea of pre-sanding these edges is to make them more rounded. This is to (1) allow the slats to slide across each other more readily, and (2) a rounded edge is less likely to dent or fray upon impact, reducing the occurrence of splinters. *Lightly sanding the edges with a shinai knife or sandpaper is recommended.*

Pre-oiling/treating the slats. The common ideas behind oiling or treating the bamboo is to (1) help prevent the slats from drying, (2) oiling helps ensure the shinai maintains a legal weight for tournament use, p. 170, especially after sanding away damaged material.

Oils such as walnut oil, mineral oil, or any light cooking oil will seal the pores of the bamboo by absorbing into the surface layer.⁴² Rubbing beeswax or paraffin wax on the slats instead of oil will also seal the pores. *Pre-oiling and light re-application after any sanding is recommended.*

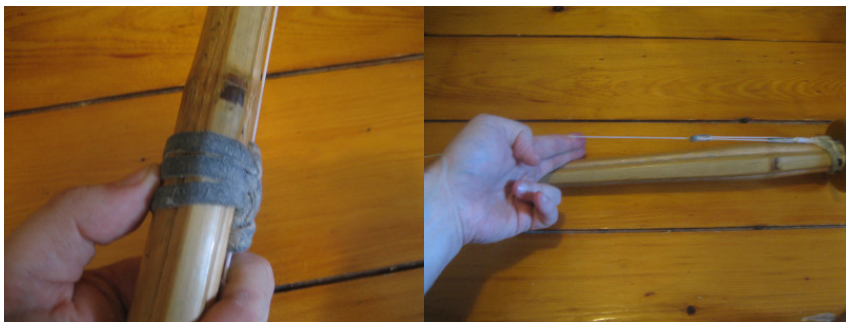
KEY POINTS: OILING & SANDING A SHINAI

1. Apply a coat of oil and allow it to fully absorb. Repeat 1–2 times per day for about three days, or until it takes several hours to absorb.
2. Bamboo sands *very* easily. A shinai knife can easily damage the slat if not careful. If using sandpaper use 200 grit or finer; heavier grits remove material too easily and leave the bamboo rough.

Maintaining the Shinai

The shinai must be kept in working order to ensure safety. A good habit is to check the slats and fittings for damage and to tighten the tsuru and nakayui *before each practice*. The following are general guidelines.

- (1) If you can move the bands of the nakayui by rubbing your thumb along it, it must be tightened.
- (2) The nakayui of a carbon shinai must be tightened before every use.
- (3) If you can *easily* put two fingers stacked vertically between the tsuru and the slats it needs tightening.



KEY POINTS: DAMAGED OR LOOSE SHINAI

1. Loose shinai can lead to serious injury. *Never* use, or allow a fellow kendōka to use, a loose or damaged shinai.
2. When checking the tension make it a habit to inspect all of the fittings for any damage. *Never* use a shinai that has damaged fittings.



Figure 81: (Top) Un-sanded slats have pointed edges, (Center) after light sanding the edges are rounded. (Bottom) Use a cloth to rub oil onto the slats.

⁴² Some say not to use cooking oils as they will go rancid. While true, the lifespan of a shinai is far less than the time it takes for oil to go rancid.

Figure 82: Rules of thumb for shinai tension.

How to Tie the Tsuru to the Saki-gawa



Figure 83: Tie the tsuru to the saki-gawa.

How to Attach the Komono or Tie a "Tsuru Loop"

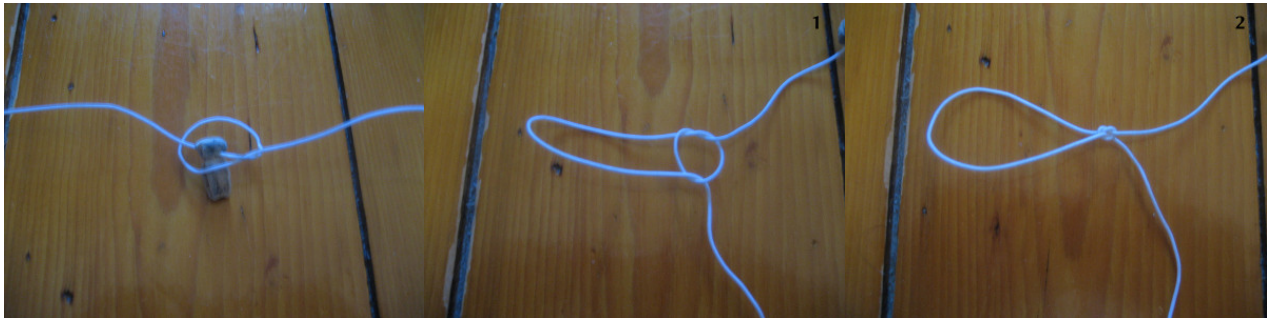


Figure 84: Attach the komono or tie a "tsuru loop".

How to Tie the Nakayui

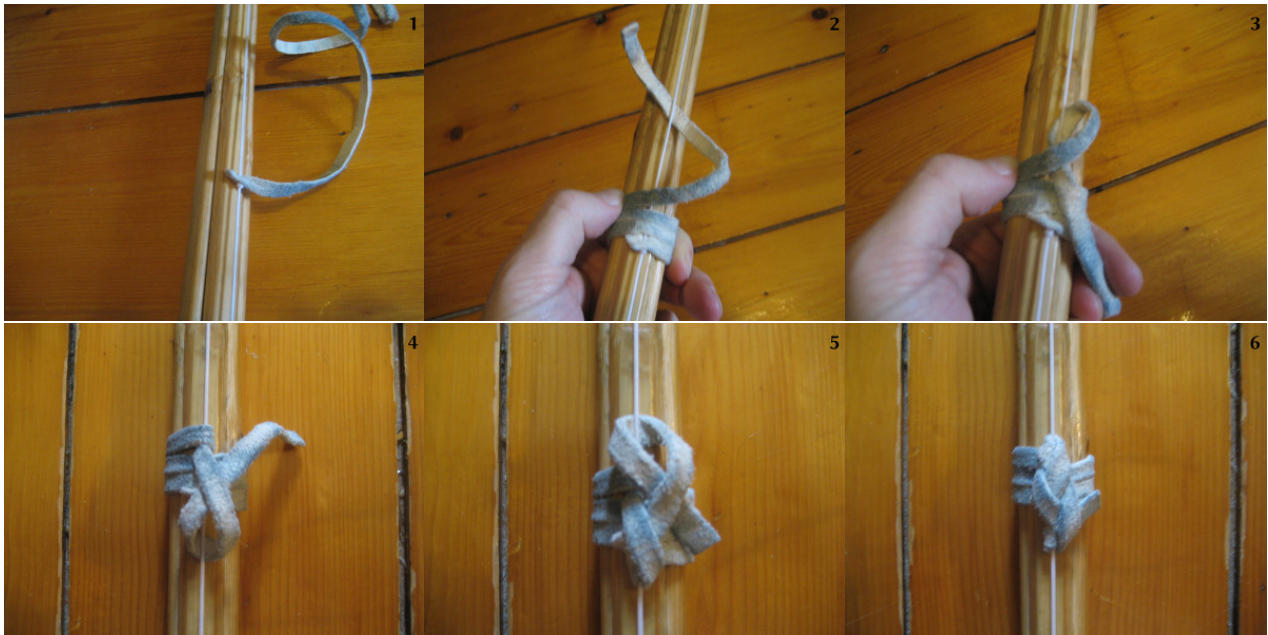
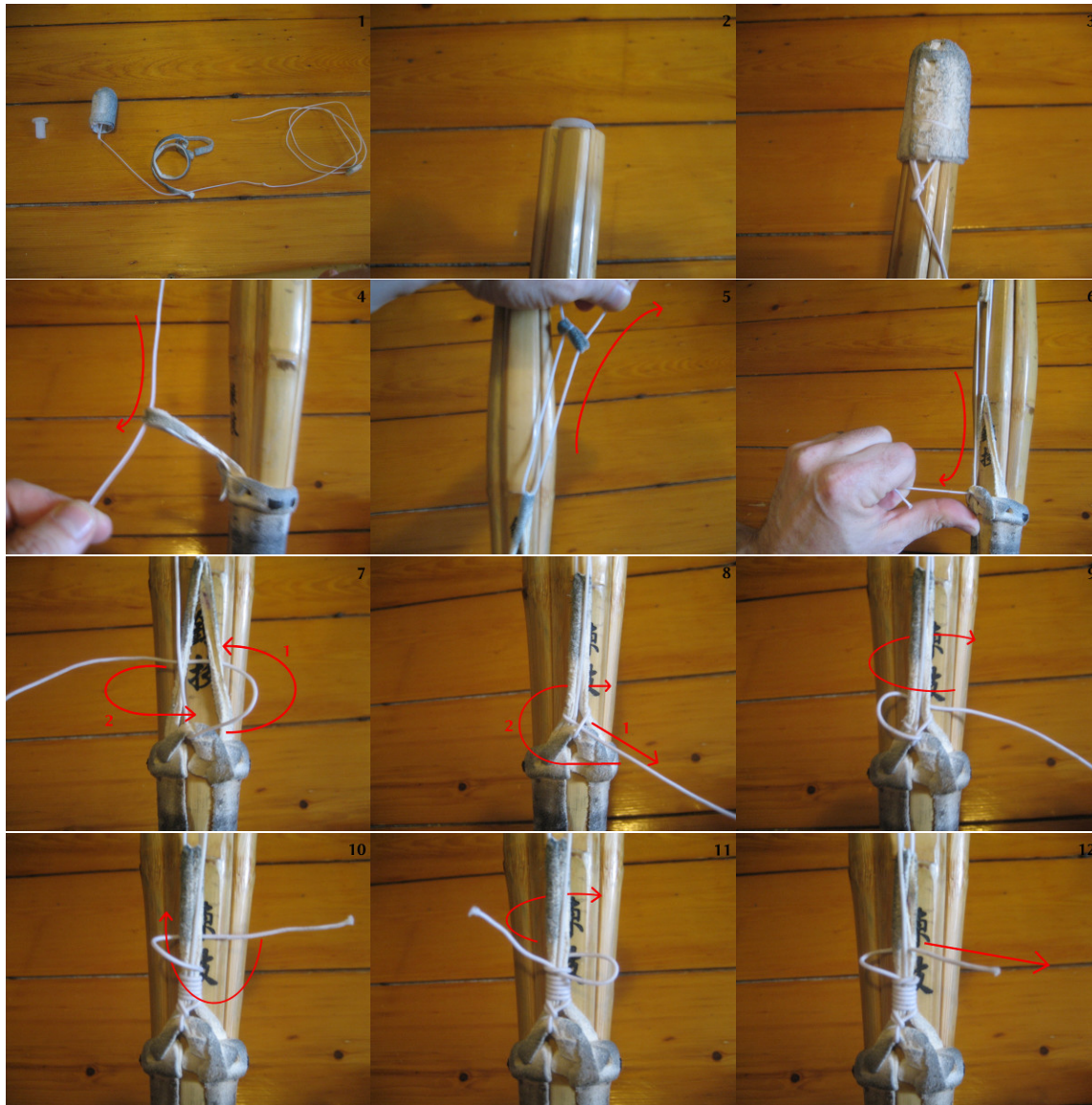


Figure 85: Tie the nakayui. (Top) Wrap the nakayui around the shinai three times and secure it with a loop. (Bottom) Tie the nakayui in place by making three more loops.

How to Tie the Tsuru to the Tsuka

**KEY POINTS: TYING THE SHINAI**

Tying the components of the shinai will seem daunting at first, even with instructions. The process is actually quite easy and is often best understood once it has been shown to you directly.

Figure 86: How to tie the tsuru. (Top Row) Put the plastic spacer in the shinai, then replace the saki-gawa. (Second Row) Pull the tsuru through the tsuka-himo, then through the komono, then through the lower part of the tsuka-himo. Pull tight. (Third Row) Keeping tension, make a loop around the tsuka-himo and thread the tsuru through it. Pull tight. Wrap the tsuru around the tsuka-himo in the opposite direction of the previous loop. (Bottom Row) Wrap the tsuru around several times, make a loop and thread the tsuru through to tie it. Pass the tsuru through the tsuka-himo. Cut off any excess.

Repairing Splinters

When splinters appear in the shinai it must be sanded until smooth again. This is done by disassembling the shinai and using sandpaper or a specialized shinai repair tool, sanding along the grain 5cm above and below the splintered area. It is also a good idea to rotate the slat which does the striking from time to time as this will extend the life of the shinai. If a slat has cracked it must be replaced.



KEY POINTS: ROTATING THE STRIKING AREA

1. Alternate which slat is used for striking by rotating the tsuka-gawa 90° before reassembly. This ensures all slats are used equally.
2. Regular maintenance is crucial to ensure your shinai is safe to use; cracks & splinters can cause serious injury.

Replacing Damaged Components

Eventually all shinai become damaged and parts will need to be replaced. Replacements for the saki-gawa, nakayui, tsuru, and the tsuka-gawa can be purchased new, however these parts can also be salvaged from shinai that have been damaged in other areas. This includes salvaging slats from one shinai to replace damaged slats in another.

It is unsafe to use shinai that are damaged; replace the shinai immediately and put it aside for later repair or to salvage components from.

THE STRUCTURE OF BAMBOO

Bamboo fibers have a dense outer layer and a softer inner layer. The more the outer layer is sanded away, the weaker it becomes. Bamboo sands easily, so it's important to be careful. It's important to rotate the slats so the strongest areas receive the most impact. This increases the lifespan of your shinai.

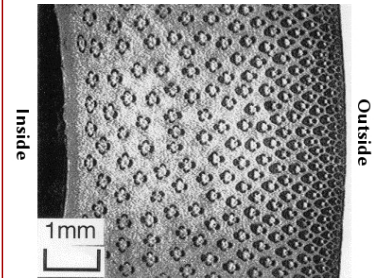


Figure 87: (Left) sandpaper and (Right) a shinai tool are used to remove splinters.

Figure 88: (Left) A cracked bamboo slat and (Right) a cracked carbon slat. Bamboo cracks and splinters are easily visible on inspection. When a carbon slat is cracked the black, internal carbon fiber can be seen. In both cases the shinai is no longer safe to use; it must be replaced.

NEW OR USED PARTS?

A fittings replacement package can be purchased at any kendō retailer if needed, usually for somewhere around \$20. Given a new basic shinai costs on the order of \$30–\$40, repair kits are more convenient than economical.



Salvaging undamaged parts from other shinai is the most economical way to get replacement fittings.

Salvaging Components of one Shinai for use in Another

There are a few tools that will be very useful for shinai repair: a shinai knife or some sandpaper to remove splinters, a small saw, and a set of needle-nose pliers.

It is recommended that you do your repairs over a cloth or towel to catch any sharp bits of bamboo.



Figure 89: Basic shinai repair toolkit.

Untie the nakayui and then untie the tsuru at the base of the tsuka-gawa. Remove the tsuru, saki-gawa, and nakayui and remove the [saki-gomu](#) (先ゴム) from the tip of the shinai. Inspect each to ensure they are safe to continue using; if damaged, they must be replaced. Next, pull the tsuka-gawa off the bottom of the shinai and inspect this for any damage; replace as needed. Keep any undamaged fittings from your damaged shinai as you can use these salvaged parts when repairing future shinai.



Figure 90: Disassemble the shinai.

KEY POINTS: INSPECTING THE FITTINGS OF A SHINAI

1. Inspect each component of the fittings for any rips, tears, holes, or fraying. If any are damaged they must be replaced.
2. Carbon shinai require a special saki-gomu. If it is damaged, you must replace it with a saki-gomu *specific to carbon shinai* before using the shinai.



Figure 91: Saki-gomu for a carbon shinai.

Replacing Broken Slats with Salvaged Slats

The shinai slats are loosely attached to one another by a small metal square set into small grooves on the inside of the tsuka. Carefully separate the slats and be sure not to lose the metal square.

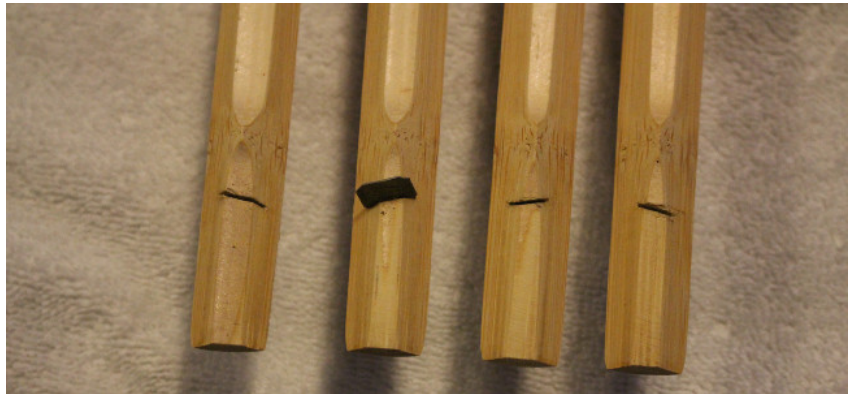


Figure 92: The slats are held together by a small metal square.

Once separated, inspect the slats for any damage. Dispose of any slats that are cracked, and use the shinai knife or sandpaper to sand down any splinters on the remaining slats.

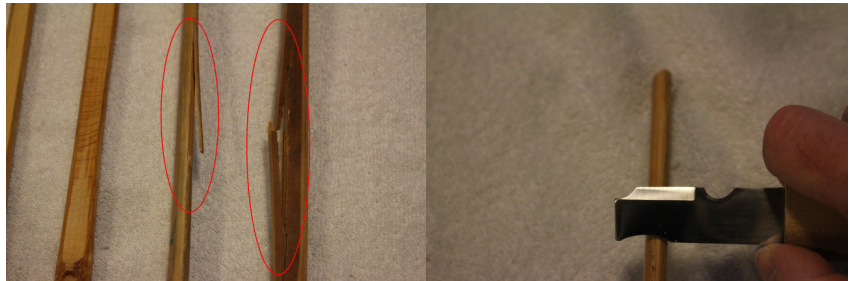


Figure 93: Discard any cracked slats and remove any splinters on those kept.

Replace the damaged slats with those salvaged from another damaged shinai. You will notice that the grooves for the metal square do not line up between the different slats. A new groove will have to be cut into the slats for the square to sit in.



Figure 94: New grooves must be cut into the replacement slats.

Place the square in one of the slats you will be using. Then, bring one or more of the new slats into the position it will sit at in the reassembled shinai. Make sure the bottoms of the slats are lined up evenly, and then squeeze the slats against the square.



Figure 95: Align the new slats with the

Squeezing the replacement slats against the square will score the bamboo slightly. This marks where the new groove must be cut made. Make sure each slat sits in the position, relative to the other slats, that it will be when the shinai is fully assembled, i.e. make sure you mark the groove with the slat sitting at the top, bottom, left, or right sides of the square.

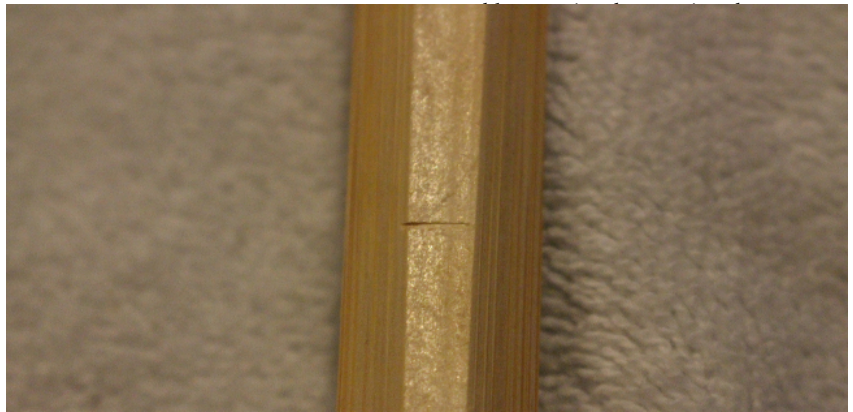


Figure 96: Use the square to mark the

Use a small saw to cut into the mark on each slat, creating a new groove on each.



Figure 97: Use a small saw to cut each new groove.

Once the new grooves are cut into the slats, replace the square and put each slat into place. If they do not fit together closely enough, the grooves may need to be cut deeper into the bamboo. Once they fit together snugly, replace the tsuka-gawa and then re-attach the rest of the fittings. The joints of the bamboo will almost always be misaligned. This tends to make salvaged shinai have a shorter lifespan than those made from the same stock. This makes it even more crucial to check your shinai regularly for damage.



Figure 98: Reassemble the shinai.

KEY POINTS: SALVAGED SLATS & GENERAL MAINTENANCE

1. Salvaged slats almost always have shorter lifespans than new ones making it important to check for any damage before, during, and after each use.
2. Shinai maintenance is crucial for safety and it saves you from having to buy new equipment as frequently.
3. Once proficient, a shinai can have slats replaced, sanded, and oiled, the fittings replaced & re-tied, and be ready to use all in about ten to twenty minutes.

HAKAMA & GI: THE KENDŌ UNIFORM

The hakama and keiko-gi, hereafter gi, are the traditional clothes worn during a kendō practice. As kendō is a martial art descending from a Japanese military class, as well as being a modern dō, appearance is an integral part of the practice of kendō.

Showing proper attention to one's appearance while practicing shows respect for yourself, your sensei and peers, all kendōka who have trained before you, and perhaps most importantly to the meaning of the art you practice.

Gorin Gojo & Bushido 五倫五常 武士道

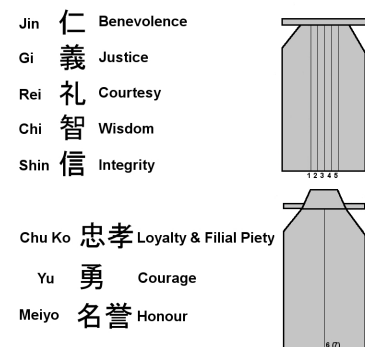


Figure 99: The hakama's pleats symbolize a number of ideals from Confucianism and Bushidō (Bannister (2011), Holt (2014)). The five front pleats represent the five cardinal Confucian values (*gojo*). The two back pleats are said to represent *chu* & *ko* which give rise (Wikipedia (2001)) to the *gorin*, the Confucian five bonds of filial piety. Others indicate the rear pleats represent *yu* and *meiyo* from Bushidō.

Wearing the Gi, Obi, & Hakama



Figure 100: The gi, obi, and hakama.

Keiko-Gi: "Practice Jacket"



Figure 101: Wearing the keiko-gi.

Tie the inner then the outer pairs of **himo** (紐) in bows. The outer bow should lay horizontal, with loops of equal length.

Note: If your bow lays vertically then simply reverse how you loop the himo while tying it and it will sit properly.

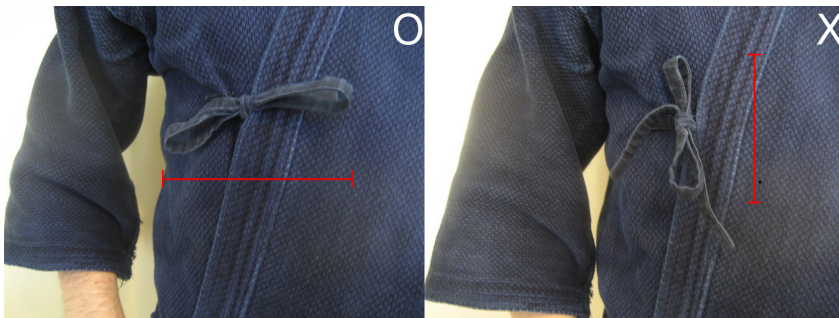


Figure 102: (Left) Correctly tied himo lay horizontally, (Right) incorrectly tied himo lay vertically.

KEY POINTS: WEARING THE GI

1. The outer bows should lay horizontally, not vertically.
2. Ensure your gi closes at the collar bone; don't let it gape open.
3. If clothing is worn under the gi it should not be visible.

Obi: "Belt"

Tie the **obi** (帯) as indicated in figure 103. Be sure that it is neat, secure, and at the proper level on your waist.

Note: This is only one of many methods for wearing the obi. See *Various Methods to Tie the Obi and Hakama (Japanese)* (2003) for more.

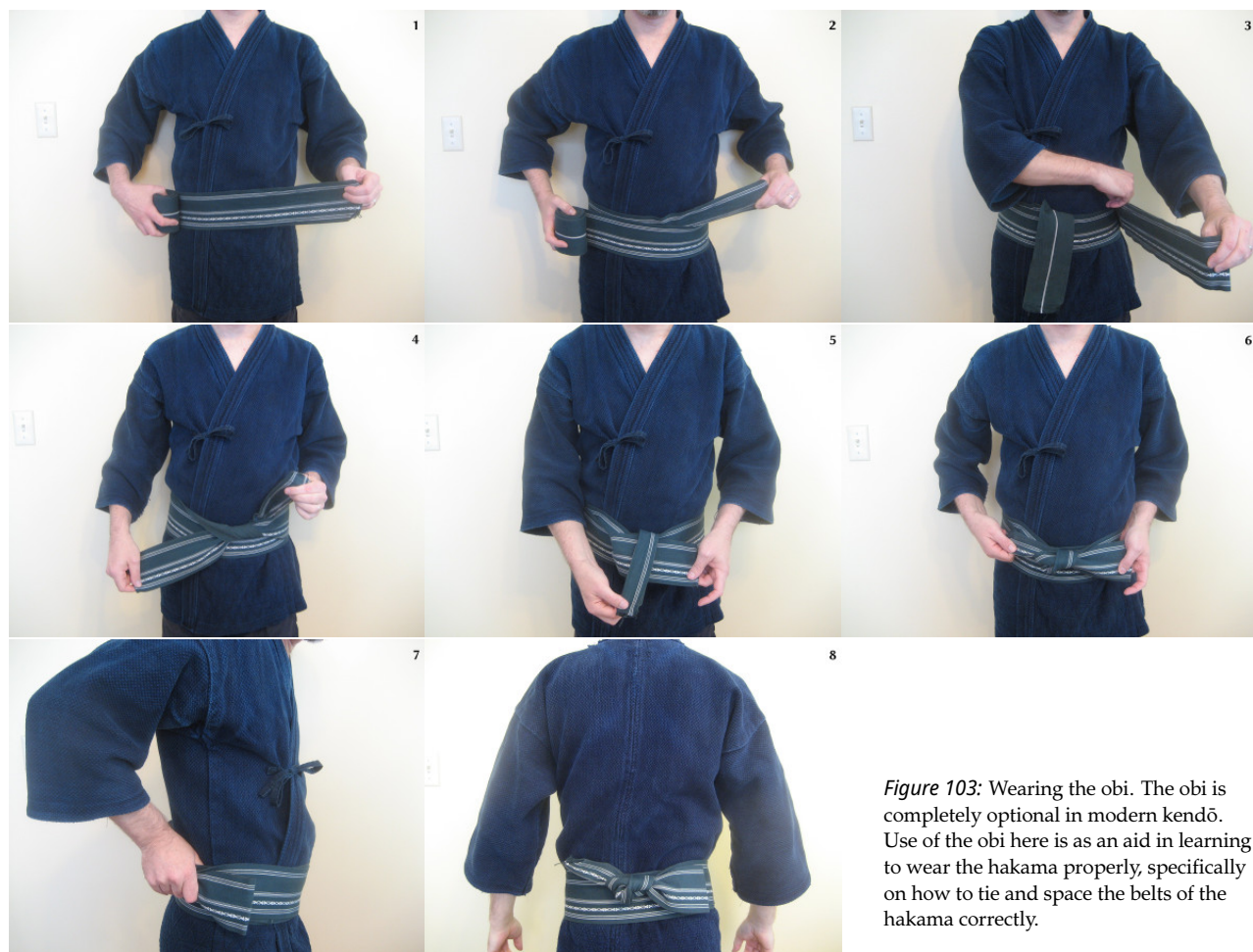


Figure 103: Wearing the obi. The obi is completely optional in modern kendō. Use of the obi here is as an aid in learning to wear the hakama properly, specifically on how to tie and space the belts of the hakama correctly.

KEY POINTS: THE OBI

1. The obi is completely optional. It is included here to help show how to tie the belts of the hakama correctly in the following section.
2. The obi is the sash that allowed the sword to be worn on the hip in the iconic fashion; the sheathe was inserted between the belts of the hakama and the outer layers of the obi.
3. The method that a modern kendōka “draws” or “sheathes” their shinai, pp. 32–35, is a stylization of how an actual sword worn in an obi is drawn from the hip; not exactly the same, but close enough to emulate the original root motions.

Hakama: "Split pants/skirt"

Step into the hakama with your left foot, then the right. Next, pull the waistband of the hakama up to your waist. If wearing the obi, the hakama waistband should sit such that it is flush with its upper edge.



Figure 104: Hakama sit at the waist.

Bring the long belts from the front of your waist to your back and cross them over one another above the knot of the obi. Then, on a downward angle, bring them back to the front at the bottom edge of the obi.



Figure 105: Wrap the belts around.

Cross the belts, right then left, in front of you at the bottom edge of the obi. Turn the belt which is coming from right-to-left upward, then bring both belts behind you.



Figure 106: Cross the belts in front.

As you bring the belts behind you, keep them below the bottom of the obi. Once behind you, tie the belts in a bow.



Figure 107: Tie the belts behind you.

Pull up the backside of the hakama and put the small spatula attached to the *koshiita* (腰板) in behind the long belts sitting above the obi. Bring the small belts from the back to the front keeping them on top of the descending long belts.



Figure 108: Bring the small belts to the front.

Cross the short belts, right-then-left, in front of where the long belts had crossed. Bring the short belt which is coming from the left under then up and behind the crossed long belts in the front of your waist.



Figure 109: Bring one short belt up and behind the long belts.

Make the lower belt into a "backward 7" then bring the upper belt over the top then up through the loop.



Figure 110: Tie the belts in a knot.

Pull the knot tight, then tuck the excess belt in behind the lower set of long belts on each side. Tuck the excess length into your "pocket".



Figure 111: Tuck away excess belt length.



KEY POINTS: WEARING THE HAKAMA

1. When putting on the hakama, tradition is to step into it with your left foot first then the right. When removing it, step out of it with your right foot first then the left.
2. The belts of the hakama must be tied neatly and securely.
3. After you tie the long belts of the hakama, figures 104 – 107, ensure the gi is still neat and tidy at your back. Take the time to straighten out any wrinkles or bunching, and straighten out any bulges.
4. The hakama should come to a level just above the foot covering the bones of the ankle.
5. The bottom of the hakama should be angled somewhat, being higher at the rear than it is in the front.
6. It is considered improper if there is a space or gap between your neck and the collar of the gi or between your lower back and the koshiita.
7. The bottom of the “V” at the neck of the gi and the knot for the belts on the front of the hakama should be aligned on your centerline.

Figure 112: (Left & Center) Properly worn gi, obi, & hakama. (Right) The “V” of the gi’s neckline and the knot of the belts on the front of the hakama should both be aligned with your centerline. The hemline of the hakama should be sloped not horizontal; the hemline should be higher at the back and lower at the front.

Folding the Gi & Hakama

Folding your hakama and gi after each practice is necessary to keep them looking neat. This also ensures the pleats in the hakama are not lost.

Note: The method given here is only one method in which to fold the gi and hakama. Subtle changes will be found among different kendōka, but the general outline will be common to all.

Folding the Gi

Lay the gi out neatly on a flat surface. Bring the right-hand sleeve across the front of the gi until the cuff reaches the right shoulder.



Figure 113: Lay the gi out and fold the sleeve over the chest.

Fold the sleeve in half by folding it back onto itself. Repeat both folds for the other sleeve.



Figure 114: Fold both sleeves.

Fold the bottom of the gi upward to the mid point. Fold the gi upward again. This folds the gi into thirds and is the final step.



Figure 115: Fold the bottom of the gi upward two times.

KEY POINTS: FOLDING THE GI

Folding the gi makes it compact for easy transportation in the limited space of a bōgu bag and keeps it wrinkle free and looking neat.

Folding the Hakama

With practice the hakama can easily be folded in a few minutes.

Hold the hakama open with the koshiita under your chin. Pull the inseam to the right and then close the hakama. Lay the hakama on a flat surface, face down. Move the belts out of your way and then flatten the hakama out. Folding the inseam properly makes a huge difference with this step.



Figure 116: Pull the inseam to the right.

There are two pleats on the back of the hakama, one pleat on top of the other. Move the “top” pleat aside from the “bottom” one down the length of the hakama, exposing the bottom pleat.



Figure 117: Expose the rear pleats.

Straighten the bottom pleat along the length of the hakama being sure that it is centered. Bring the top pleat back on top of the bottom one and straighten it in the same way as the bottom. Make it is centered along its entire length as well.



Figure 118: Straighten the rear pleats.

Carefully turn the hakama over so that the front is now upward; be sure to keep the rear pleats intact while doing this. There are five pleats on the front. Similar to the back some sit on top of others. Move aside the top pleats to expose the pleats underneath.



Figure 119: Turn the hakama over.

Straighten the exposed pleats in the same way as the pleats on the back side of the hakama. Bring the top pleats back to the center and straighten those.



Figure 120: Straighten the front pleats.

Run your hand down the length of the hakama to help flatten any bulges. This also helps remove dirt or lint. Fold the outer edge of the hakama in toward the center. Be sure this fold is the same width down the entire length of the hakama.

The width of this fold should be such that the crease it makes is directly in line with where the belts attach to the hakama itself. Repeat this fold on the other side of the hakama. Again, be sure it is the same width along the entire length.



Figure 121: Fold the outer edges inward.

Carefully slide your hand underneath the bottom of the hakama being careful not to disrupt the pleats underneath. Flip the hakama forward folding it up about one quarter its length.

Fold the hakama up again another quarter of its length. Repeat this fold a third time. The hakama should now be folded into quarters.



Figure 122: Fold the hakama into quarters.

Folding the Belts of the Hakama

Turn the hakama over again so that the koshiita is facing up and separate the two sets of belts. Take one of the long belts and fold it in half onto itself.



Figure 123: Fold the long belt in half.

Fold the same belt in half onto itself once again. Take the folded belt and lay it diagonally across the center of the hakama.



Figure 124: Fold it in half again.

Fold the other long belt in the same manner and lay it diagonally across the center of the hakama. The folded belts should make an "X". Take one of the small belts and lay it over the center of the "X". Here the belt on the left side is done first.



Figure 125: Make an "X".

Now bring the short belt underneath the center of the "X". Now fold the short belt diagonally over the top of the left descending arm of the "X". Had the right-side short belt been used initially it would be folded over the right descending arm.



Figure 126: Bring the belt under and behind the "X".

Bring the belt under and back over this same part of the "X" two times, i.e., wrapping the belt around this portion of the "X". Repeat this for the second short belt.



Figure 127: Wrap each belt around two times.

Bring the short belt on the left diagonally across the center of the "X" to the right and through the loop made on the lower descending arm of the "X" on the right. Repeat this step for the short belt on the right side by bringing it through the loop on the lower arm of the "X" on the left.



Figure 128: Bring the belts through the loop on the opposite side.

The hakama are now folded. If both hakama and gi are folded correctly they ought to make about the same sized rectangle.



Figure 129: Properly folded hakama.

KEY POINTS: FOLDING THE HAKAMA

1. Folding the hakama allows for easy transport, keeps the pleats intact, and the hakama wrinkle free.
2. It is improper to wear a disheveled uniform, or wrinkled hakama.

Washing the Gi & Hakama

Keeping your hakama and gi clean is a necessity as with any type of sports equipment. This is explained in the following excerpt:⁴³

“Proper care of the keiko-gi and hakama is an essential part of Kendo. During keiko, these garments will absorb body perspiration and become soiled and smelly. Obviously, this is unhealthy for the wearer and offensive for others in the dojo.”

⁴³ Ozawa (1997)

SOAKING IN VINEGAR?

The dye used on the hakama and gi tends to readily bleed out, especially when new. There is a widespread belief that soaking your uniform in vinegar will bind the dye to the material. This is true *only* for silks and nylons; it will have no effect on cotton or synthetic hakama and gi.

Washing the Gi

Wash your gi in cold water with a mild detergent.

Washing the Hakama

1. Hakama should always be hand washed.
2. Fold the hakama as indicated beginning on p. 78. Fill a basin with enough cold water to submerge your hakama. Mix in mild detergent if needed.
3. Place your hakama in the water. Unfold the hakama if space permits. Let the hakama soak for about twenty minutes.
4. Drain the dirty water after the hakama have been soaked and, using clean water, rinse the remaining detergent from the hakama.
5. Remove your hakama from the basin and hang them to dry.

Drying the Gi & Hakama

Gi. Hang the gi in a well ventilated area by putting a rod or shinai through the arms. The gi can also be dried in a dryer.

Hakama. Always hang the hakama to dry. Hang in a well ventilated area using the small inside loops. Use clothes pins to keep it aligned.



Figure 130: Hanging the hakama to dry.

Figure 131: Hanging the gi to dry.

THE BŌGU: "PROTECTIVE ARMOUR"

As kendōka advance in their training they may begin wearing bōgu.⁴⁴

Description of the Bōgu

The bōgu is the protective armour worn by a kendōka during practice.

Men. The men is the helmet worn by the kendōka.



⁴⁴ The time period required for a kendōka to be considered ready to begin wearing bōgu is different among dōjōs. For adults, it usually ranges from as little as three months up to one year of practice before bōgu may be used.

Figure 133: Parts of the men.



Figure 132: An extra padding insert for the men. If the men is slightly too big, or the padding is worn out, a padding insert can be placed inside the men. This piece of equipment is optional.

Kote. The kote are gloves worn to protect the hands and forearm.



Figure 135: Parts of the kote.



Figure 134: A kote support pad. If needed, extra padding can be worn on the wrist underneath the kote. This is useful if one's kote have become worn, or if one has a pre-existing bruise, sprain, or other injury. This piece of equipment is optional.

KEY POINTS: PADDING & BRACES IN KENDŌ

1. Padding, such as a kote pad, and in particular support braces, e.g., knee, ankle, or elbow brace, *should only be worn if you require them*, i.e., you have an injury. If worn they should be secure, pose no risk to yourself or others, and are preferably *unseen*.
2. Braces and support pads may be worn at tournaments if permission is received from the head judge or court judge.

Dō. The dō is the torso/abdomen protector.



Figure 137: Parts of the dō.



Figure 136: There is another loop on the inside of the dō used to hang the bōgu for ventilation.

Tare. The tare is the waist protector.

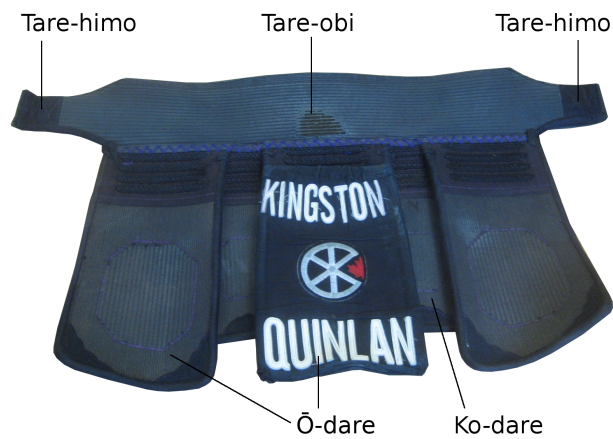


Figure 138: Parts of the tare.

Note: Some references, e.g., Ishiwata and Bond (2001), use the term *hara-obi* (腹帯) or “gut belt” for tare-obi and *waki-himo* (脇紐) or “side straps” for tare-himo.

Preparing the Bōgu for Use

Attaching the Dō-Himo

Attach the four **dō-himo** (胴紐) to the **dō-chikawa** (胴乳皮); the two long himo on the upper left and right dō-chikawa and the two short himo on the lower left and right.



Figure 139: Attach the dō-himo.

Attaching the Men-Himo (Kanto/Kansai Style)

Wrap the men-chikawa (面乳皮) around the fourth men-yoko-gane (面横金) from the bottom. Pass the loop end of the himo over both ends of the men-chikawa and then pass the opposite end of the himo through the slits of the men-chikawa.

The himo *can* be attached directly to the men-gane (面金) if you do not have men-chikawa however the himo are more likely to fray at the attachment point.

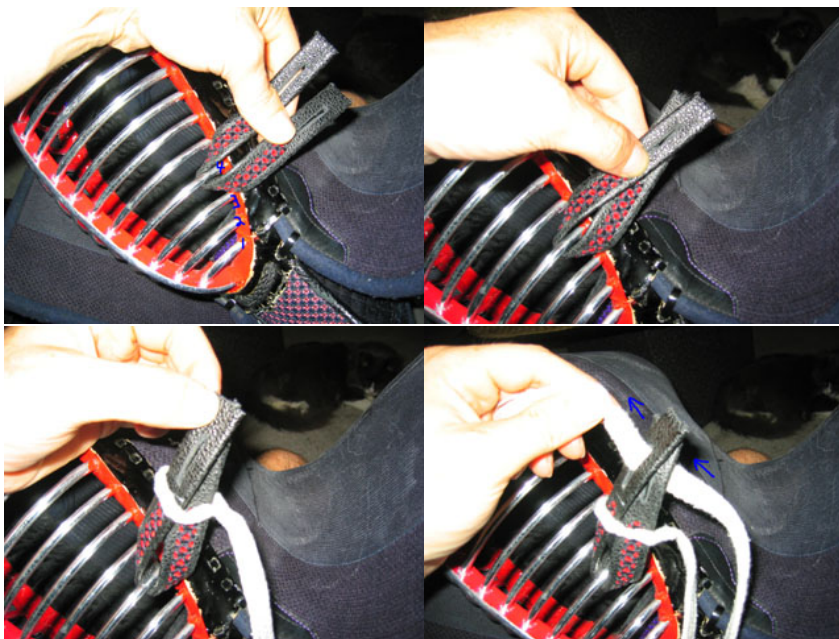


Figure 140: Placing the men-chikawa.

Pull the slack of the men-himo through the slits. Repeat this for the himo on the other side.

The himo for kansai style are attached similarly with a specialized men-chikawa at the top of the men-tate-gane.



Figure 141: (Left) Attached men-himo for "kanto" style. (Right) Attached men-himo for "kansai" style..

With kanto style, bring the left himo around the back of the men and, on an upward angle, around to the right side and then thread it through the space between the men-tate-gane and the uppermost men-yoko-gane. Bring the excess himo back to the left side. Repeat this with the himo from the right side. When finished, both himo will be threaded through the top of the men, and they will make an "X" at the back of the men.



Figure 142: Lace the men-himo.

Preparing the Men

Method #1. Use the men-himo to hold the men-dare along the side of the men pulling them forward so they overlap slightly on the front. The crease made in the men-dare should approximate your jaw line. Tie the himo tightly to hold everything in place.



Figure 143: Molding with the himo.

Method #2. Tie the men-himo at the back of the men as if it is being worn, and then firmly sit the men inside of the *dō-kawa* (胴皮). The crease made in the men-dare should approximate your jaw line.



Figure 144: Molding using the dō.

Preparing the Kote

Crease the wrist area of both kote by bending it forward, back, left, and right repeatedly.

Then wearing one kote, lightly stretch and widen the area between the thumb and index finger.



Figure 145: Breaking in the kote.

Putting on the Bōgu

Bōgu is always put on, adjusted, and taken off in seiza.

Note: Put on, remove, and adjust your bōgu in as little time as possible; don't keep others waiting.



Figure 146: Sitting in seiza with shinai to put on the bōgu. The shinai is on the left with the tsuba level with the knee. Here the tare and dō are already worn and the rest of the bōgu, men and kote, are set down at the front-right of the kendōka. There should be enough room to perform za-rei between the bōgu and the shinai.

Wearing the Tare

Bring the **tare-obi** (垂帯) to your waist. Bring the **tare-himo** (垂紐) to your back, crossing them at the base of the koshiita, and pulling them tight. Be sure the tare-himo are not twisted.

Bring them back to the front and tie them in a bow underneath the central **ō-dare** (大垂) in the front of the tare. Push the bow up and behind the **ō-dare** and **ko-dare** (小垂). Straighten out the hakama if needed.



Figure 147: Wearing the tare.

KEY POINTS: WEARING THE TARE

Tie the tare securely so it does not move or twist during practice.

Wearing the Dō

Holding the dō to your chest, bring the long dō-himo attached on the upper right side of the dō across your back to the left, and pull it through the **mune-chikawa** (胸乳皮). Wrap the himo around the mune-chikawa creating a loop.



Figure 148: Pull the right himo through the left mune-chikawa: make a loop.

Create a second loop with the excess and pull this through the first one. Pull the slack of the original loop tight around the new loop by pulling on the shoulder portion of the himo. Tuck any excess himo behind the dō-mune. Repeat this for the other side.



Figure 149: Create a second loop and pull it through the first, then tighten the slack of the original loop.

Tie the short himo in a bow behind you, making sure the loops and the excess himo or of the same length. Grab the himo on either side of the bow and pull outward to tighten the bow.

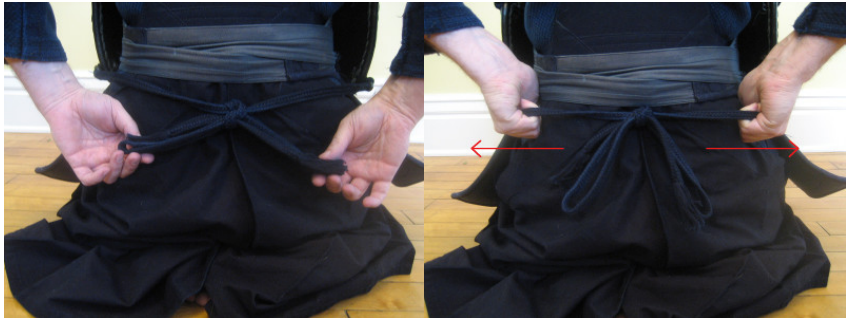


Figure 150: Tie the short dō-himo in a bow behind you.

KEY POINTS: WEARING THE DŌ

1. The bottom of the dō should cover the large stitching at the bottom edge of the tare-obi and the top of the dō-mune should sit somewhere around the sternum, below the neckline of the gi.
2. Tie the dō securely so that it does not come undone during practice.
3. The loops and excess string on the top knots should be equal length with the loops pointing outward. The loops and excess string on the rear knot should be equal length, the bow sitting horizontally.



Figure 151: (Top) A band of large stitches at the base of the tare-obi. (Bottom) The bottom of the dō just covers this stitching.

Wearing the Tenugui: "Hand-Towel"

The tenugui is worn underneath the men primarily to absorb perspiration during practice. There are many methods for wearing the tenugui. Find the method which is the most comfortable and quickest for you.

The two most basic methods are described below here.

Method #1: Making a Cap

1. Place the tenugui flat on the floor in front of you.
 2. Fold the tenugui in half from top to bottom.
 3. Fold the sides of the tenugui diagonally across the center.
 4. Turn the tenugui over.
 5. Fold the sides diagonally over the center again making a triangle.
 6. Fold the triangle up inside the pocket made by the folded tenugui.
- This creates a "cap" which is put on the head, and pulled down so that it covers the ears. The thick part should be on the forehead.

CORRECTLY FITTED TENUGUI

Regardless of which method you use, it is important that you learn to put on the tenugui with a proper fit. If it is too tight it can become very uncomfortable during practice under the compression of the men or men-himo. If it is too loose, it will move around underneath the men; if it slips forward it can make it difficult to see, and if it slips back it will not cover your forehead allowing perspiration to get in your eyes. In either case, too tight or too loose, the men will have to be removed and the tenugui adjusted.



Figure 152: Wearing the tenugui. This method creates a "cap" that the kendōka wears on their head.

Method #2: Wrapping Around the Head

1. Pull the the top edge of the tenugui overhead to the base of the skull.
2. Wrap each side of the tenugui across the forehead, over the ear, to the opposite side of the head.
3. Fold the front over itself and onto the top of the head. Ensure that the folded portion does not stick out the back of the men.



Figure 153: Another method of wearing the tenugui.

Note: Kanto is an eastern area of Japan, kansai is western.

Wearing the Men

Method #1: Kanto Style

Place your chin securely in the men, followed by your forehead. Bring the men-himo to the back of your head and pull them tight. Keeping the himo tight, tie them securely in a bow.



Figure 154: Tie the himo in bow.

The knot should sit directly behind the level of your eyes.⁴⁵ Make sure the loops and the excess himo are the same length and are no longer than 40cm.

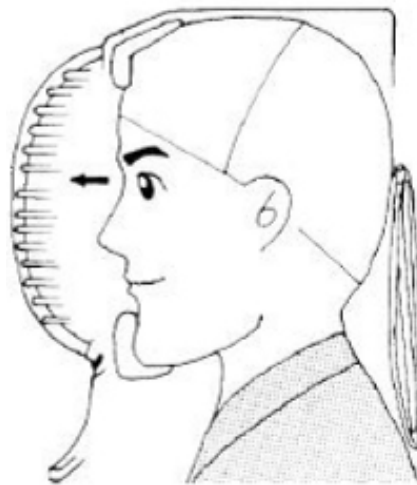


Figure 155: Himo tied at eye level.

Straighten the himo on the sides of the men so that they don't twist, and that there is no space between the two upper himo. On both sides of the men grab the men-dare below the lower set of himo and pull it forward and away from your head. This creates space necessary for both ventilation and safety.



Figure 156: Neaten the himo.

KEY POINTS: WEARING THE MEN

1. The himo on the sides of the men must be flat with no gaps between them. The rear loops and excess string should be the same length.
2. Pull the men-dare forward and away from the ear.

⁴⁵ Ishiwata and Bond (2001)

Method #2: Kansai Style

Kansai style requires longer himo, 8 shaku compared to 7, and a special men-chikawa.

Place your head in the men, chin first, holding both himo. Bring the himo to the back of your head and cross them at eye level. Bring them to the front of the men at chin level.



Figure 157: Cross the himo at the back.

Cross the himo in front of your chin, and bring them again to the back. Pull the himo tight to secure the men. Cross the himo again behind the eyes and, laying them below the himo already on the side of the men, bring them to the front.



Figure 158: Cross at the front and back.

Keeping tension, pull each himo through the space above the top men-yoko-gane. Bring them to the back, below the himo already present; tie in a bow at eye level. Be sure the loops and excess himo are the same length ($\leq 40\text{cm}$).



Figure 159: Pass the himo through.

Straighten out any twists or gaps between the himo, then from below the lower set of himo pull the men-dare forward and away from the head to create a space for ventilation.

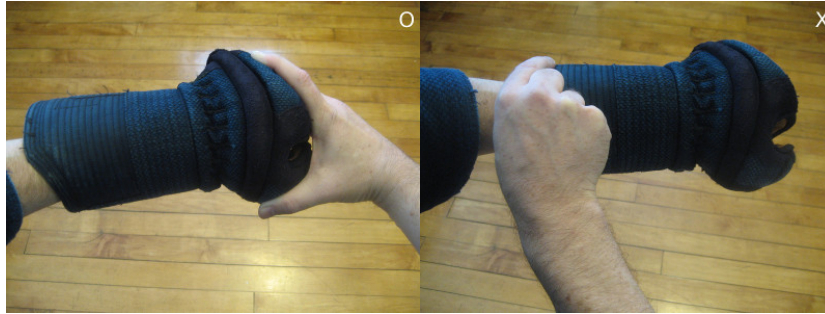


Figure 160: Adjust the himo and men.

Wearing the Kote

There are a few things to note when wearing the kote:

1. Kote are put on in a specific order: first the left kote, then the right.
2. When putting the kote on, always push it on via the **kote-gashira**, (小手頭).⁴⁶ Don't pull it on via the **tsutsu** (筒).



⁴⁶ Ishiwata and Bond (2001)

Figure 161: (Left) Proper and (Right) improper method of putting on the kote.

Note: According to Tokeshi (2003), the tradition of putting your right kote on last and removing it first comes from the fact that the samurai wanted to keep their right hand “free” until the very last possible moment in case they needed to respond to a surprise attack.

3. Kote are removed in a specific order: first the right kote, then the left.
4. When removing the kote always pull it off via the forearm portion (tsutsu), not by the fist.⁴⁷



⁴⁷ Ishiwata and Bond (ibid.)

Figure 162: (Left) Proper and (Right) improper method of removing the kote.

KEY POINTS: WEARING THE KOTE

Don't tighten the himo on the kote such that the kote are tight against your arm. The kote offer the best protection if the forearm portion is somewhat loose.



Figure 163: Another optional piece of equipment is the “kote shita” or kote mitten/glove. These washable gloves are worn under the kote so that any sweat or grime is absorbed by the glove instead of the kote, extending the lifespan of the kote. The image shown here is a specific brand name version of the “glove” style v.s. a “mitten” style.

Removing the Men & Kote

In seiza remove the kote and place them on the floor in front of you and to your right, thumbs together and the fists pointing to your right.



Figure 164: Remove your kote.

Untie the men-himo and bring them to the front of your men and gather them up neatly; don't remove the men before doing this. Holding the gathered himo in your hand, loosen the men by pulling the sides away from your head. Take the men off, head then chin, and hold it in your right hand with the men-gane in your palm.



Figure 165: Remove the men.

Holding the men place the himo inside and remove the tenugui. If you need to wipe perspiration from your face hold the men in front of it while you do so. Wipe the inside of the men with the tenugui to remove excess perspiration.

Set the men on the kote, the men-tate-gane laying on the wrists. Fold the tenugui and place it in the men or lay it open across the top. Push the men and kote forward and to your right, as in figure 146 on p. 87.



Figure 166: Remove the tenugui.

Removing the Rest of the Bōgu & Packing Up

Method #1: Simple Storing of the Bōgu

After removing your dō and tare, lay the tare in front of you on your lap, the *zekken* (ゼッケン), facing upward and the tare-obi toward your stomach. Wrap the entire length of both tare-himo neatly around the ō-dare one at a time, being sure to keep them both flat.



Figure 167: Lay the tare down face up.

Lay the dō face down onto the front of the tare, the tare-obi aligned between the upper and lower dō-himo. Bring the upper set of dō-himo under the tare and cross them. Bring one himo to the top of the dō and one himo to the bottom. Tie the himo together on the back of the dō. Bring the bottom set of dō-himo to the front of the tare, passing them both underneath the ko-dare. Tie the bottom set of himo.

Set the men inside the dō with the tsuki-dare at the top of the dō. Set the kote in between the men-dare and men proper. Place the folded tenugui in the men.



Figure 168: Simple storage of the bōgu.

KEY POINTS: TYING THE BOGU FOR TRANSPORT

1. This is a very common method for packing up the bōgu as it allows for it to be easily carried and transferred to a bōgu bag.
2. A common variation of this method is to wrap the tare-himo around the edge of the tare-obi instead of the ō-dare.



Figure 169: Wrapping the tare-himo around the edge of the tare-obi instead of the ō-dare is another common method of tying up the tare for storage.

Method #2: Hanging the Bōgu

Tie the tare to the dō as in method #1 but using *only* the long himo.

Unlace the men-himo from the men-gane leaving them attached via the men-chikawa. Gather them together and fold the himo at approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ their length to make a loop out of both himo. Thread this loop through the uppermost space of the men. Pull the loop through the men-gane. With the remaining himo on the right form another loop by folding them again. Make these two sets of loops equal in size and tie them together at the top of the men. There are now four individual loops.



Figure 170: Make two sets of loops.

Thread one loop into a kote through the forearm opening and out the gap between the kote-himo and the palm. Open the loop bringing it over the fist. Repeat this for the other kote. Pull the remaining loops through the mune-chikawa on the inner side of the dō-mune. Set the men inside the dō with the kote between the men and the men-dare.

Tie the short dō-himo around the back of the men to secure it. The bōgu can now be hung up by the men-himo pulled through the loop on the inside of the dō.



Figure 171: Attach the men & kote to the dō.

KEY POINTS: HANGING THE BOGU

Hanging the bōgu is most useful if it must be put in a specific place to get proper ventilation or if space is an issue.

Stowing Bōgu in a Bōgu Bag

The following are recommended ways for stowing bōgu in a bōgu bag.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Association (2003)

Method #1. Tie the bōgu as shown on p. 95 and then place in the bōgu bag. The hakama and gi can be placed inside the men or they can be put in the bag first and the bōgu can be placed on top of it.

Method #2. Tie the bōgu as above, but place the kote inside the men.



Figure 172: Stowing in a bōgu bag. (Left) Method #1 and (Right) method #2.

KEY POINTS: STOWING THE BŌGU IN A BŌGU BAG

The bōgu bag is for transportation only. Do not leave sweaty bōgu in it to dry as bacteria will begin to grow causing it to smell.

Basic Bōgu Care & Maintenance

The following simple steps will extend the lifespan of your equipment.

Tenugui. Rinse and dry the tenegui thoroughly after each practice.

Men. Use a damp cloth or tenugui to wipe away any dirt or grime and be sure the men is aired out and dried thoroughly after each use. Inspect the himo to ensure they are in good condition, replacing as needed.

Tare. When packing up the tare flatten out any creases in the tare-himo to help prevent tearing or fraying.

Dō. Check both sets of himo to ensure they are in good condition, replacing as necessary. Also be sure the various dō-chikawa are securely attached to the dō. Tighten them if they are loose, replace if torn or damaged.

Kote. With use the palms will crease slightly. Gently stretch these creases after use before allowing them to dry. The kote-himo will loosen over time and the tsutsu will deform into a triangular shape. When this occurs, reform the kote and retie the himo. If the palms develop any tears or holes have them patched as soon as possible. Be sure the kote are aired out and dried thoroughly after each use.

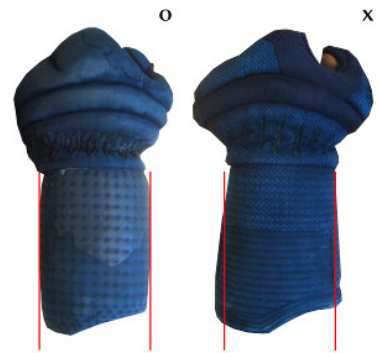


Figure 173: (Left) Properly shaped kote, (Right) a deformed kote. When the kote deform they may offer less protection.



Figure 174: (Top) The kote palms become creased after use, (Bottom) gently smoothing out creases in the kote palm leather before drying.



Samurai in full armour with sword, circa 1860. The parallels between historical armour and the bōgu in modern kendō are obvious.

MAAI: "DISTANCE & SPACING"

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THIS CHAPTER DISCUSSES THE various **maai** (間合), or roughly "distance & spacing", used in kendō. Maai is fundamental to performing basic strikes and waza correctly and so must be understood thoroughly. There are four different maai which will be discussed:

issoku ittō no maai (一足一刀の間合), p. 99

tō-ma (遠間), p. 99

chika-ma (近間), p. 100

tsuba-zeriai, p. 100

ISSOKU ITTŌ NO MAAI: THE "ONE STEP, ONE SWORD" DISTANCE

Issoku ittō no maai refers to the distance at which one can successfully attack their opponent by taking only one step. *Generally* this is the distance at which the two kendōkas shinai cross at the saki-gawa. This is not always true as issoku ittō no maai will change from person to person.⁴⁹

TŌ-MA: "FAR DISTANCE"

Tō-ma refers to a distance longer than issoku ittō no maai. When at tō-ma you can neither receive or deliver a strike. When you want to strike you must first move into issoku ittō no maai.

The following excerpt discusses tō-ma:⁵⁰

"Beginners should perform keiko from tō-ma with skillful ashi-sabaki that includes the backward kicking action. When keiko is performed from tō-ma, it cultivates an ability to become less self-conscious as well as develop muscles used in kendo. For beginners to make progress it is particularly important that they do not focus too much on the kote-saki from chika-ma, but perform keiko with large relaxed movements using their whole body."

MORE THAN DISTANCE

The common translation for maai is simply distance, however a better translation of the term is distance & spacing. Distance implies a measured length between two points while spacing has a more generalized, multivariate meaning. Maai encompasses both of these ideas.

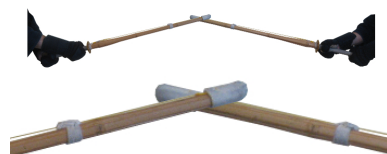


Figure 175: Generalized issoku ittō no maai. Basic issoku ittō no maai is roughly the distance where the kensen cross.

⁴⁹ According to Ozawa (1997), "true issoku itto no maai varies according to age, sex, strength, ability, build, length of shinai, opportunity to strike, etc. This is the ma which cannot be taught, but rather which we have to learn by ourselves through keiko."



Figure 176: Generalized tō-ma. Tō-ma is a distance approximately one step further away than issoku ittō no maai.

⁵⁰ Ozawa (ibid.)

CHĪKA-MA: "SHORT DISTANCE"

Chika-ma is shorter than issoku ittō. This is dangerous as both kendōka can easily strike due to the small distance, which tends to make posture and spirit equally small.

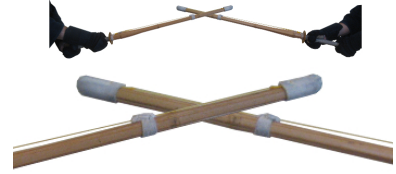


Figure 177: Generalized chika-ma. Chika-ma is a distance closer than issoku ittō.

TSUBA-ZERIAI: "MATCHED TSUBAS"

Tsuba-zeriai isn't a specific maei but is rather a *position*. However as it has to do with distance from your opponent it is discussed here. Tsuba-zeriai occurs when kendōka move into close range such that their tsubas are "joined" together and actively attempt to create an opening to strike.⁵¹

⁵¹ Tsuba-zeriai is a compound word made up of tsuba, (鍔) "sword guard"; se(ri), (迫り) "urge on"; and a(i), (合い) "match, union". The term se(ri) makes the "attempt to create an opening to strike" an implicit part of tsuba-zeriai.

Performing tsuba-zeriai. There are a few key ideas for tsuba-zeriai. The first is to keep the tsubas at the proper angle as in figure 178; the shinai should be crossing at about 30°–45°, tsuba to tsuba. Second, the left hand of you and your opponent should be separated, and your right hand meets the opponent's near the abdomen. This spacing gives room to maneuver and create openings. While you will inevitably move, or be moved, from this position it is important that you attempt to return to it. When the distance between the left hands or the distance between your body and the right collapses, all one can usually do is push v.s. attempt to strike. Against an experienced opponent, keeping the proper tsuba-zeriai spacing, this give *them* opportunities to strike.

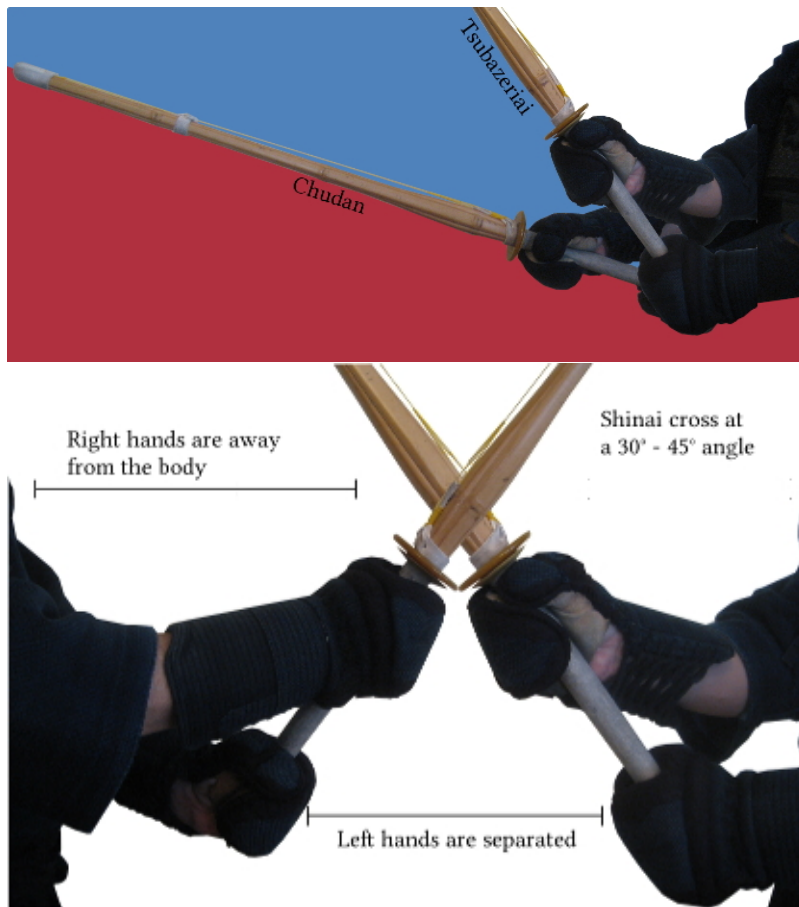


Figure 178: Moving from chudan no kamae to the tsuba-zeriai position.

SUBURI & UCHI-KOMI: “BASIC SWINGS & LUNGING STRIKES”

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THIS CHAPTER IS CONCERNED with the various methods of performing and practicing a proper strike. The first part of the chapter gives a description and the locations of the valid targets in kendō and instructions on how to strike them. This is followed with discussion on moving while striking, coordinating your strike, and controlling the strike. A selection of advanced strikes are listed for completeness.

men, p. 103	adding footwork, p. 107
kote, p. 105	ki ken tai ichi (気剣体一致), p. 107
dō, p. 106	te-no-uchi (手の内), p. 108
tsuki (突き), p. 107	advanced strikes, p. 109

The remainder of the chapter discusses a number of the core exercises a kendōka will use to practice their strikes, known as suburi (素振り) or “fundamental swing practice”. The number of variants for these exercises are many, but it is safe to assume that the suburi listed here are considered standard in most dōjōs. The following is a list of the different types of suburi and striking exercises which will be discussed:

jō-ge buri (上下振り), p. 113	ichidan suburi (一段素振り), p. 115
naname buri (斜め振り), p. 114	haya suburi (速素振り), p. 116
sandan suburi (三段素振り), p. 114	uchi-komi (打ち込み), p. 117
nidan suburi (二段素振り), p. 115	kiri-kaeshi (切り返し), p. 119

DATOTSU-BUI: “TARGETS AREAS”

There are four target areas in kendō consisting of the head, men; the forearm, kote; the throat, tsuki; and the abdomen, dō; with a number of variants for each. Figure 179 shows the **datotsu-bui** (打突部位) or “target areas”.

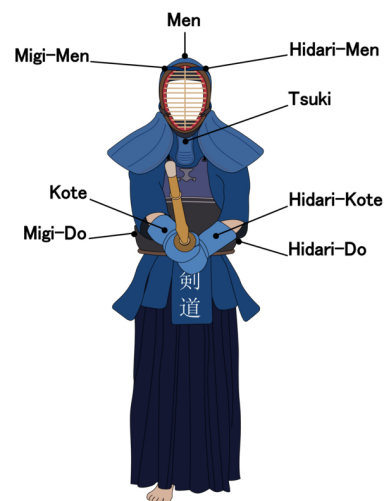


Figure 179: The datotsu-bui (target areas) in kendō.

Shōmen: "Centered/Frontal Men". Shōmen is the most fundamental of targets and is the basis for learning other targets. Shōmen is the direct center of the men.

Sayū-Men: "Left & Right Men". Sayū-men (左右面) is a strike to the areas to left or right of shōmen above the opponents temple. When striking sayū-men, the shinai travels a path angled anywhere from 30°–45°.

Yoko-Men: "Sideways/Horizontal Men". Yoko-men (横面) is an advanced horizontal katate strike to the left or right side of the men.

Migi Kote: "Right-side Kote". Migu kote, usually the forward hand on the shinai is the standard target. It can be a straight or angled strike depending on position.

Hidari Kote: "Left-side Kote". Hidari kote, usually the rear hand on the shinai, p. 52, becomes valid if the opponent is in a non-chūdan kamae.

Migi Dō: "Right-side Dō". Migu dō is an angled strike to the opponent's right dō and is the standard dō target. When striking, the shinai travels an angled path, 30°–45°, toward the opponent's dō.

Gyaku Dō: "Reverse Dō". Hidari dō, or gyaku (逆, "reverse") dō, is a strike to the opponent's left dō but is usually not considered a valid target unless there's an obvious, i.e., overtly exposed, opportunity. This usually happens when somebody uses the shinai to block migu dō as in the san-pō-mamori (三方守り, "three point defense") position, p. 161.

Tsuki: "Thrust". Tsuki is the only thrust attack in kendō. Tsuki has a stigma of being dangerous making it not uncommon to find kendōka uncomfortable using it despite it being a part of kendō kihon (基本). There are two general types of tsuki: katate tsuki and morote (諸手) tsuki, morote being the simpler.

KEY POINTS: TARGET AREAS IN KENDŌ

These are the only target areas in kendō and it is crucial that one learns to strike them accurately. While missing from time to time is unavoidable, learning to strike these targets accurately keeps your opponent safe. This is a major factor in being granted the privilege to begin sparring with another kendōka using a shinai, i.e., demonstrating you can strike correctly and safely.



Figure 180: Shōmen target.



Figure 181: Sayū-men targets.

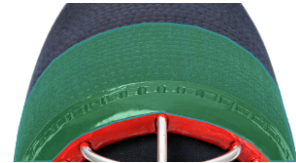


Figure 182: Men strikes must occur on the rawhide portion and/or the textured band of the men-buto as this is the area which offers proper protection.



Figure 183: Kote target (migi).



Figure 184: Migu and hidari dō targets.



Figure 185: Tsuki target.

BASIC TARGET STRIKING

How to Strike Shōmen

Striking shōmen. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and swing the bokutō overhead along your centerline to the point where you can clearly see your opponents men from below your left fist. Swing the bokutō forward along your centerline and bring it to rest with your right arm extended just below shoulder level, your left fist just below your sternum. As the bokutō hits shōmen, you must hold it with te-no-uchi, p. 108, and then relax. With strong *kiai* (気合い), call out the target the moment the bokutō comes to rest.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING BASIC SHŌMEN

1. Raise the left hand fully overhead without tensing your shoulders.
2. Extend your arms naturally, straightening both elbows.
3. Upon striking, the right hand should be just below shoulder height and the left hand at or just below the sternum. Picture striking a duplicate of yourself and cutting well into the target. For men, this is usually somewhere around the nose.
4. At the moment of impact, the grip is tightened (te-no-uchi) and then immediately relaxed. See p. 108.
5. Maintain a straight posture, relaxed shoulders, and keep your core engaged. Exhale throughout the entire swing.
6. The “mantra” for beginners is “big, slow, and accurate”. All strikes should be large overhead strikes, done slowly enough that you remain relaxed, accurately aimed, and stopped at the correct position.

LEARNING TO STRIKE

Striking can be broken up into separate components, and each component is a precursor to learning the next step. Eventually all of these steps are put together as a whole and one then performs an actual strike. In this text, learning to strike is broken up in the following way:

1. Allowable target areas.
2. Swinging at the targets: “big, slow, smooth, and accurate.”
3. Striking while moving with basic footwork.
4. Controlling the strike: te-no-uchi.
5. Coordination between your body, sword, and spirit: ki ken tai ichi.
6. Basic exercises for swing practice: suburi.
7. Striking while moving with fumi-komi.
8. Follow-through on a strike: zanshin.
9. Completing zanshin: turning to face the opponent.



Figure 186: Striking shōmen.

How to Strike Sayū-Men

Note: For the remainder of this text the direction indicated for left or right sided strikes refers to your opponent's left or right as in figure 179, p. 101.

Striking sayū-men. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and swing the bokutō overhead, along your centerline, keeping your shoulders relaxed. Turning your right hand to the left (right), swing the bokutō at an angle of 30°–45° from center toward your opponents right (left) men. With kiai, strike the right (left) men holding the bokutō with te-no-uchi, p. 108.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING BASIC SAYŪ-MEN

1. As with shōmen picture striking a duplicate of yourself and cutting well into the target; for sayū-men the strike should hit above the temple, but cut down to about nose level.
2. Extend the arms forward naturally, straightening both elbows; don't hyper-extend the joint.
3. The primary up-down motion of the strike is your left hand; the right hand acts as a "steering wheel", not an "accelerator".
4. When striking sayū-men your right hand directs the angle of the strike, freely moving to the left or right of your centerline as needed. The left will rotate to the left or right, directed by the right hand, however the left hand *does not move off of your centerline*.

CONSECUTIVE STRIKES

When strikes are repeated consecutively, for example sayū-men, it is called "renzoku sayū-men" or "repeated/continuous left and right men". Renzoku sayū-men is of particular importance due to its use in kiri-kaeshi, p. 119.

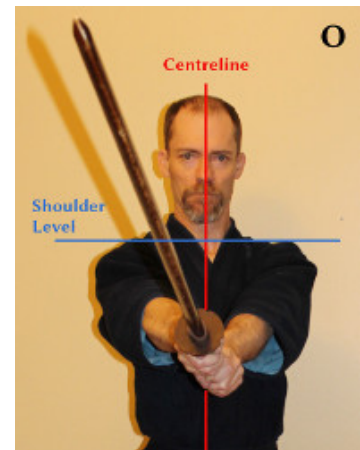


Figure 187: Hidari sayū-men. The left hand swings up and down along the centerline while the right hand controls the angle.

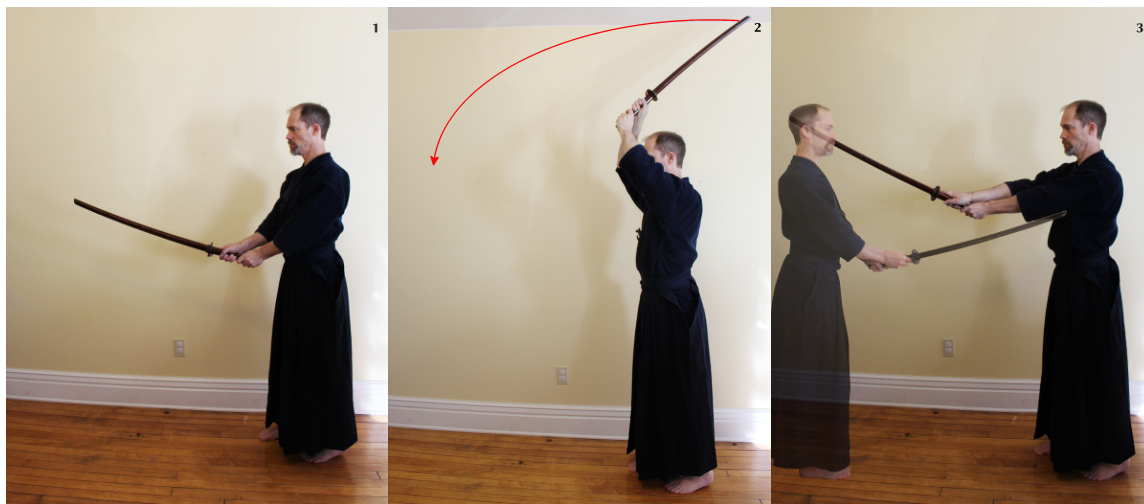


Figure 188: Striking migi sayū-men.

Powering Your Swing: "Right-Hand" v.s. "Left-Hand"

The primary up–down motion of a strike is made with the left hand; right-handed strikes are easily seen with sayū-men. Symptoms of this are:

1. The right hand is lifted above the head but not the left; the left hand often ends up at face level.
2. The left hand is "pushed" off of center. Sometimes the right hand will be pulled off center as well.
3. The left hand is not pulled low enough, often stopping at throat level.
4. Because the left hand isn't lowered enough, and pushed off of the centerline, the left elbow and wrist bend at strange angles. This also causes the shoulders to tense and become distorted.

How to Strike Kote

Striking kote. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and swing the bokutō overhead keeping center. Swing forward stopping just above being parallel to the floor. Upon striking use te-no-uchi, p. 108, and call out the target with strong kiai.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING BASIC KOTE

Kote is similar to a men strike on the up and downward swing. Don't twist/turn the bokutō or strike kote at an angle; strike along the centerline.

RIGHT HAND V.S. LEFT HAND

Beginners tend to pull and push the bokutō using their right hand, the left being dragged with it. While both hands are involved in te-no-uchi and both arms reach forward when striking, the left hand is the primary drive for moving the bokutō while the right hand helps stabilize the swing, steer the bokutō for angled targets, and helps stop the bokutō during te-no-uchi.

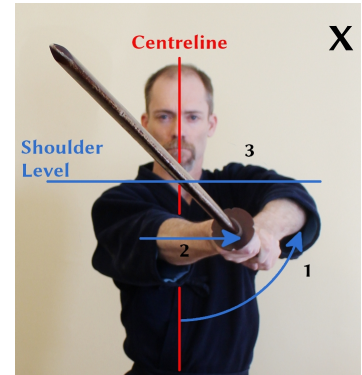


Figure 189: A right-handed hidari sayū-men. (1) The left hand is too high and off center, the left elbow bends awkwardly. (2) The right hand is pulled off center. (3) The left shoulder has tensed upward.



Figure 190: Striking kote.

How to Strike Migi Dō

Striking migi dō. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and swing the bokutō overhead keeping center. Turn your right hand to the left and swing forward, over the shoulder, at an angle of 30°–45°. With te-no-uchi, p. 108, strike dō with strong kiai.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING BASIC DŌ

1. Swing toward the dō at an angle of 30°–45°, not 90°. Don't let the bokutō drop below your shoulder before swinging forward.
2. Keep the bokutō centered during your upswing.

Note: The front of the dō is not a valid target, see figure 184. Many people end up striking here since they over anticipate the “cut across” motion done during zanshin, p. 118. The mono-uchi must make contact with the left or right side of the dō first; it makes contact with the front of the dō while you finish your cut, *not* as you begin it.



Figure 191: Striking migi dō.



Figure 192: (Left) Correct path of the blade when striking dō; the tip moves forward from over the shoulder. (Right) Incorrect path; the tip first drops below the shoulder, then moves forward from the side.

How to Thrust for Morote Tsuki

Morote tsuki. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and holding the bokutō with te-no-uchi, p. 108, extend your arms and thrust toward tsuki with strong kiai.

KEY POINTS: BASIC THRUST FOR TSUKI

1. Don't over extend your arms. Eventually footwork will enable you cover the majority of the distance to the target.
2. Don't raise your hands, "flattening" your bokutō, as you thrust.
3. Control the depth of your thrust; too deep a thrust is potentially unsafe for your opponent.

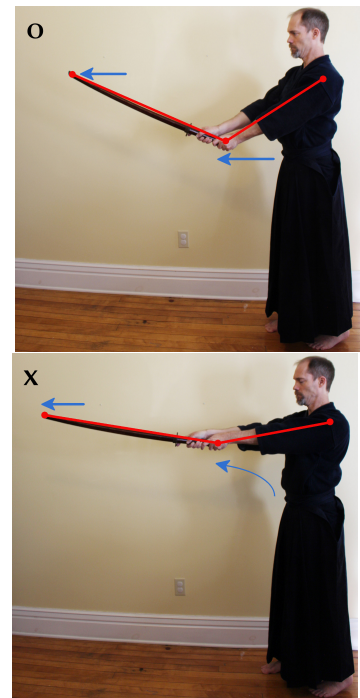


Figure 193: (Top) Tsuki keeps a chūdan like angle during the thrust. (Bottom) The left hand improperly rises up during the thrust, flattening the bokutō.

Figure 194: Thrusting morote tsuki.

ADDING FOOTWORK & COORDINATING THE STRIKE

Once the basic targets are understood it is time to add footwork to the strike. The most basic is okuri-ashi.

The difficult part about adding in footwork to one's strike is coordinating the swing and movement of the feet. Coordinating the feet, hands, swing, and kiai during a strike is essential to proper striking and is referred to as ki ken tai ichi, which is discussed in detail on p. 142.

The basic coordination of any strike, using any basic suri-ashi style footwork, is that at the moment a strike lands the rear foot finishes its motion; the strike, kiai, and finished step must all occur *at the same moment*.

KEY POINTS: STRIKE COORDINATION

1. Basic strikes use suri-ashi, usually okuri-ashi, style footwork.
2. The strike must land at the same time that the rear foot finishes moving, and at the same time one voices their kiai. It is incorrect for the strike to land before the step finishes or for the step to finish before the strike lands; the two must occur *as one*.

BASIC STRIKE COORDINATION

One of the most crucial aspects of kendō is that of coordinating the swing of the bokutō with the movement of the feet. The strike should land on the target at the same moment that one makes a basic step and at the same moment that one calls out the name of the target; all three happen together. This is known as ki ken tai ichi. For basic strikes, using okuri-ashi and stepping forward, the bokutō should land on the target at the same time the rear foot is finishing the step. When stepping backward, the bokutō should land on the target at the moment the front foot is finishing the step. On top of this one must call out the name of the target as the bokutō comes to a stop on a target.

TE-NO-UCHI: CONTROLLING THE STRIKE

Te-no-uchi is a term used frequently when discussing proper strikes. It is how one transfers power from the body to the tip of the sword, maintains control, and efficiently stop your swing. Te-no-uchi primarily is in the hands and wrists, but also involves the forearms, elbows, and shoulders.

The motion for te-no-uchi is often described as “squeezing a towel”; a towel is wrapped around the tsuka and, upon striking, is “wrung out” in a twisting motion. This is partly correct: the fingers tighten in a squeezing motion, the wrists arc slightly, and the thumbs turn slightly inward. See figure 195. However the “towel” one must imagine is an extremely delicate; the image of wringing out a wet dish towel is not appropriate. Te-no-uchi is a *small, subtle squeezing motion, not a large twisting motion*.

Te-no-uchi involves more than just squeezing with the hands but includes use of the forearms, elbows, and shoulders. At the moment a strike connects the hands squeeze, but the forearms also tense slightly while at the same time straightening the elbows to reach forward. This makes a whip-like motion in the tip, creating power, but it also *roughly* aligns the tip, arms, and shoulders. Immediately after impact, te-no-uchi is relaxed and the sword is held in a the usual position to “cut” the target. The squeezing of the hands and tensing of the forearms, followed by relaxation, also act as a “brake” to stop the swing on the target. This makes a strong, accurate, and stable strike.

Te-no-uchi, followed by relaxing into the “cutting position”, figure 196, is a crucial part of emulating a real cut and is a part of zanshin (残心), p. 118.



KEY POINTS: TE-NO-UCHI

1. Te-no-uchi is small and subtle; don't over exaggerate it.
2. Focus on the feeling of “flicking” the tip forward.
3. The most crucial aspect is to immediately *relax* upon hitting.

NEWTON'S THIRD LAW

Newton's third law states that “when one body exerts a force on a second body, the second body simultaneously exerts a force equal in magnitude and opposite in direction on the first body.” This means the opponent will “push back” on your shinai with equal and opposite force to your strike. If you cannot support this force, your strike will literally be pushed away, causing it to “slip off” the target. Te-no-uchi transfers power to your weapon, acts as a “brake” to stop the strike, and makes you mechanically stable to support the counter force.

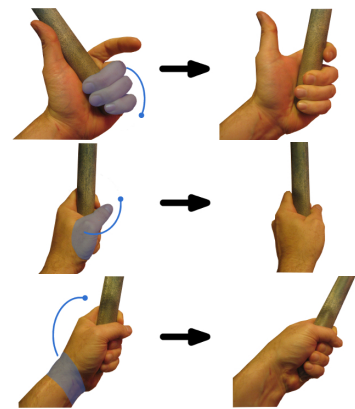


Figure 195: The hand movement for te-no-uchi, artificially broken down into three separate components. Highlighted in blue, (Top) the little, ring, and middle fingers squeeze pivoting the shinai forward, (Middle) the thumb squeezes turning slightly inward, (Bottom) the wrists arc forward slightly. In reality all three movements occur simultaneously and create a very subtle “squeezing” and “screw-like” motion of the hand. This motion is done without altering your grip or hand placement on the tsuka.

Figure 196: (Left) At the moment of impact the squeezing motion of te-no-uchi makes a whip-like motion causing a rough, momentary alignment of the tip, arms, and shoulders. (Right) Te-no-uchi is relaxed and the weapon is held at the usual position to “cut” into the target.

ADVANCED STRIKES

This section gives a *very* brief introduction to some of the advanced strikes used in kendō.

Chisai Waza: “Small” Strikes

Once a kendōka is accustomed to striking with large, overhead swings a different method of striking is soon introduced known as *chiisai* (小さい) or “small” strikes.

Small strikes are used as they are a much faster method of striking, the draw-back being small strikes require an excellent grasp of *te-no-uchi* in order to hit with sufficient power.

Kendōka do not usually practice *basic* suburi using small strikes; they are generally reserved for striking practice using *fumi-komi*, sparring with an opponent, or used during tournament.⁵²

Striking small men. Engage your core, p. 15, and with abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and begin your *fumi-komi* step. As you begin to move, push the *bokutō* forward as if you were performing *tsuki* while lifting the hands upward slightly; this pushes the *kensen* forward and up. Once the *kensen* is above the *men*, use your wrists with *te-no-uchi* to strike the target with strong *kiai*. Time the strike such that it is coordinated with your *fumi-komi* footwork correctly.

KEY POINTS: SMALL STRIKES

Use the left hand to drive the sword forward, striking through the wrists with *te-no-uchi*; don't “pull” the *kensen* backward then “push” it forward.

Yoko-Men

Striking yoko-men. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and from *chūdan* advance your left foot using *hiraki-ashi*, release your right hand, swinging the *bokutō* overhead with your left hand. Finish your step, pull your right hand to your hip, and swing the *bokutō* in a circular motion to the opponents right *men*.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING YOKO-MEN

Yoko-men, rooted in French fencing techniques and brought to Japan in the late 1800s and early 1900s, is a strike falling out of use. It should not be used unless taught and/or permission given to use it.

COMMON & RARE STRIKES

Some advanced strikes are more common, while others can be quite rare.

Common: Small strikes.

Uncommon: *Kata-te tsuki*, *gyaku dō*.

Rare: *Yoko-men* from *chūdan*, *katate* strikes from *jōdan* or *nitō*.

⁵² This is not to say that drills and exercises are not done to practice this type of strike.

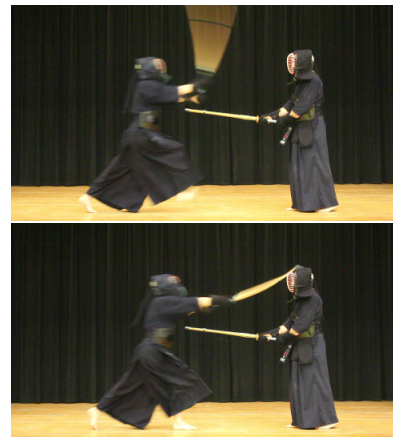


Figure 197: Small men using *fumi-komi*.



Figure 198: *Yoko-men*.

Gyaku Dō

Striking gyaku dō. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and swing the bokutō over your right shoulder. Swing the kensen down and to your left, at approximately 30°–45°, pivot your hips to the left, and with te-no-uchi strike your opponents left dō with strong kiai. Gyaku dō cuts from dō level down to about knee level.



Figure 199: Gyaku dō.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING GYAKU DŌ

Gyaku dō is usually only used when the opponent *overtly exposes* their left dō. It was traditionally looked upon as a poor target as a Japanese soldier's equipment covered that area of the body, however this has since changed in modern kendō with the popularization of a type of blocking known as san-pō-mamori, p. 161, which leaves gyaku dō exposed.

Katate Tsuki

Thrusting katate tsuki. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and initiate a thrust using both hands. About half way through the thrust remove your right hand and pull it toward your right hip; this adds power and stability to the thrust. As you pull your right hand to your hip, with strong kiai, complete the forward thrust with your left hand.



Figure 200: Kata-te tsuki.

KEY POINTS: THRUSTING KATATE TSUKI

1. One-handed tsuki is usually used against a player who uses a jōdan or nitō kamae due to the increased thrusting range.
2. Accuracy, control over the thrust, and stability of the body are of the utmost importance with katate tsuki.

Katate Men from Hidari Jōdan

Striking katate men from jōdan.

Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and in one continuous motion (1) straighten the bokutō onto your centerline and use the left hand pull it downward, as you use your left wrist to arc the kensen forward, (2) at the same time use the right hand to “throw” the bokutō forward toward the target, and (3) pull your right hand straight down to your hips and strike men with strong kiai using te-no-uchi.



Figure 201: Hidari jōdan katate men.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING KATATE MEN FROM JŌDAN

There are numerous technical methods and styles for one-handed strikes from jōdan; this is one of many.

Katate Kote from Hidari Jōdan

Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and in one continuous motion (1) straighten the bokutō onto your centerline and use the left hand pull the bokutō downward, as you use your left wrist to arc the kensen forward, (2) at the same time use the right hand to “throw” the bokutō well forward toward the target, and (3) pull your right hand straight down to your hips and strike kote with strong kiai using te-no-uchi.



Figure 202: Hidari jōdan katate kote.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING KATATE KOTE FROM JŌDAN

There are many different techniques for striking katate kote. This is the most basic version, straight, using the same striking style as above for men.

Striking Men from Nitō

Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and using your left arm pull the bokutō downward into your centerline while at the same time using your wrist and elbow to snap the bokutō forward, striking men with strong kiai using te-no-uchi. As you strike with the daitō, pull the shōtō upward to protect your men.



Figure 203: Hidari-ashi, gyaku nitō shōmen.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING MEN FROM NITŌ JŌDAN

1. Nitō requires a fair amount of strength and a firm understanding of te-no-uchi in order to manipulate the bokutō correctly.
2. Both bokutō move in tandem; one moves down, the other moves up.

Striking Kote from Nitō

Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and using your left arm pull the bokutō downward into your centerline while at the same time using your wrist and elbow to snap the bokutō forward, striking kote with strong kiai using te-no-uchi. As you strike with the daitō, pull the shōtō upward to protect your men.



Figure 204: Hidari-ashi, gyaku nitō kote.

KEY POINTS: STRIKING KOTE FROM NITŌ JŌDAN

As with hidari jōdan katate kote there are many methods for striking kote dependent on your opponent, their kamae, and the style of nitō being used. This is the most basic variation; straight.

SUBURI: "ELEMENTARY SWING" PRACTICE

Suburi combines striking a target, or just swinging the shinai or bokutō, with some form of ashi-sabaki. Suburi is probably the most common and effective method used to hone one's ability and understanding of the basics of striking in kendō.

Depending on the type or level of the practice, suburi can be used to focus on the technical aspects of the swing, others on cardio and endurance, some are for strength building, and some include all of the above. Regardless, the core purpose of suburi is to learn correct form while swinging in a relaxed manner and to learn te-no-uchi.

The number and type of different kinds of suburi is vast to sat the least. This section gives only a few of the most common types.

IMPORTANCE OF SUBURI

Suburi is a simple drill which allows one to hone their basics by examining and correcting errors in technique, posture, footwork, muscle tension, and breath control to name only a few. Many kendōka who reach a "plateau", see p. 157, or are struggling with a certain aspect of their practice will often benefit from focusing on basic suburi.

KEY POINTS: BASIC SWING PRACTICE

1. Focus on using your left hand to move the bokutō up and down.
2. Keep the left hand centered during the entire swing.
3. Keep your arms and shoulders relaxed, keep your core engaged, and breathe using your abdomen. Don't duck your head during your swing; maintain correct posture.
4. Be sure to use te-no-uchi with each strike.

Jō-ge Buri: "Up-Down Swing"

Jō-ge buri is a very basic swinging exercise that teaches how to swing in a large, smooth motion, along the centerline.⁵³

⁵³ Beginners often learn this exercise before learning to swing at targets.

Jō-ge buri. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and, keeping your shoulders relaxed, swing over your head along your centerline until you touches your lower back while stepping forward using okuri-ashi. Swing back up over the head, maintaining center, and swing downward until the kensen reaches the level of your knees; finishing your swing the moment you finish your step.



Figure 205: Jō-ge buri.

Naname Buri: “Diagonal Swing”

Naname buri is a variation of jō-ge buri in which one swings the bokutō forward in a circular arc at a 30°–45° angle instead of a straight up-down motion. Some variations use left and right alternating hiraki-ashi instead of forward and backward okuri-ashi.



Figure 206: Naname buri with hiraki-ashi

Sandan Suburi: “Three Step” Suburi

Sandan suburi. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale from chūdan and (1) swing overhead, maintaining center and step forward using okuri-ashi, (2) strike the intended target with kiai. (3) Step back using okuri-ashi and assume chūdan.



Figure 207: Sandan shōmen suburi.

KEY POINTS: SANDAN SUBURI

1. Raise your bokutō overhead before you begin your step forward.
2. Be sure to use te-no-uchi and have strong kiai with each strike.
3. Assume correct chūdan as you step back.

Nidan Suburi: “Two Step” Suburi

Nidan suburi. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and from chūdan and (1) step forward using okuri-ashi, swing above your head and strike the intended target with kiai. (2) Step back using okuri-ashi and assume chūdan.

Note: Nidan suburi is a very important exercise to as it closely emulates strikes used against an actual opponent.



KEY POINTS: NIDAN SUBURI

1. Begin your step forward slightly before you swing overhead.
2. Swing up and down as a single motion, not two separate steps.

Figure 208: Nidan shōmen suburi.

Ichidan Suburi: “One Step” Suburi

Ichidan suburi. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and swing overhead, step forward using okuri-ashi and strike the target. Swing overhead, step backward using okuri-ashi, and strike again. Strike each target with strong kiai.



KEY POINTS: ICHIDAN SUBURI

Don't “bounce” between strikes; pause slightly on each hit.

Figure 209: Ichidan shōmen suburi.

Haya Suburi: "Fast" Suburi

Haya suburi. Raise the bokutō overhead. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and using "hopping" okuri-ashi, step forward and strike with strong kiai. Step back lifting up to the starting position.

Note: Haya suburi can be very demanding and it's common for people to conserve energy by altering footwork or not striking fully. It is essential to maintain footwork, extend your arms fully, pause on your target, maintain proper posture, etc...

KEY POINTS: HAYA SUBURI

1. Maintain proper ashi-gamae and the rhythm of okuri-ashi.
2. Briefly pause on each target; finish your strike before raising up.



Figure 210: Three shōmen haya suburi strikes.

UCHI-KOMI: "LUNGING STRIKE"

Uchi-komi combines suburi, okuri-ashi, fumi-komi, and explicitly adds physical movement for zanshin after striking.

Benefits of uchi-komi. Strikes become quicker and more intense, stronger, correct breathing is emphasized, arm movements becomes relaxed, movement becomes more agile, the body becomes more stabilized, proper distance is learned, and use of the shinai becomes more dexterous.

Performing uchi-komi. Assume kamae. Breathe in deeply through the nose and slowly release your breath out of the mouth. Utter a strong kiai and continue to exhale with a feeling of pressure in the abdomen, see p. 17. With correct posture and square hips, lunge forward powerfully with fumi-komi, p. 46, striking the target such that it hits the target as your front foot lands on the floor. At the moment you make contact with the target use your diaphragm to voice a powerful kiai. Use regular okuri-ashi, p. 45, to follow through with your strike, zanshin, p. 118, cutting through the target.

KEY POINTS: UCHI-KOMI

1. When lunging, don't raise your front foot high off the ground.
2. Maintain a straight back leg, straight posture, and square hips.
3. With fumi-komi your strike must land as the *front foot* hits the floor, not as the rear foot is pulled up, *hiki-tsuke* (引き付け).
4. Don't let your hind leg drag behind you, pull it up to you quickly.
5. During zanshin maintain strong kiai.
6. Use te-no-uchi with each strike and focus on coordinating your strike, footwork, kiai, and follow-through into a smooth motion.

Note: Uchi-komi is how the majority of strikes are done in during bōgu practice, sparring, tournament, etc.

UCHI-KOMI COORDINATION

During a strike using fumi-komi the shinai connects with the target as the *front foot* lands, not the rear foot. This timing is different from that used with okuri-ashi in basic suburi, however one still utters their kiai through abdominal breathing the moment they strike.

KIAI PRIOR TO STRIKING

Kendōka are usually encouraged to kiai before every strike when doing uchi-komi. This initial kiai is often "Yah!" or "Ei!", which traditionally indicated "mental alertness" or "the moment of attack" respectively, Budden (2000). In modern kendō, this kiai is used to ready one-self mentally, engage your core through proper breathing, apply pressure on your opponent, etc...

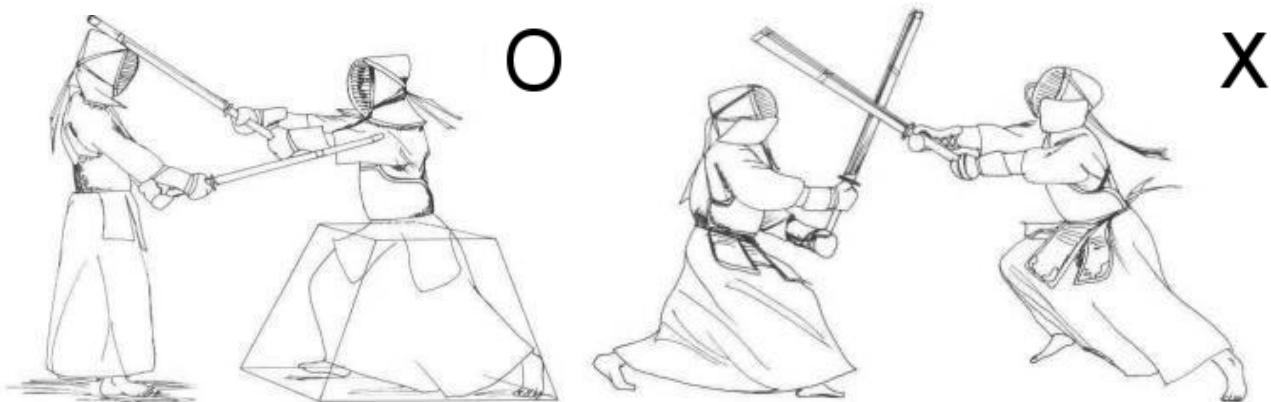


Figure 211: From Craig (1999), (Left) proper posture & footwork and (Right) improper posture & footwork during uchi-komi.

PHYSICAL ZANSHIN: BASIC “FOLLOW-THROUGH” OF A STRIKE

At this point it is necessary to discuss what zanshin is during uchi-komi. Zanshin here refers to the *physical* follow-through; the mental/spiritual one is discussed on pp. 138 and 148.

This movement is how kendōka emulate a cut and protect themselves after striking. Each target has different forms of follow-through, but all share a common base. In the most basic description, a kendōka shows zanshin by moving past their opponent and turning around to face them in kamae.

Uchi-komi shōmen with zanshin. Strike men using fumi-komi. Upon striking, relax your te-no-uchi into the “cutting position” as in figure 196, p. 108 and, using okuri-ashi, continue moving forward. Maintaining your kiai, your gaze on the opponent, and the position of the shinai, pass the opponent on either the right or left side. Once sufficiently past, stop and turn to face them in kamae. At this point your kiai ends.

KEY POINTS: PHYSICAL ZANSHIN

1. Upon striking hold your shinai in the cutting position; don't pull your hands up, hiki-age (引き上げ), after hitting.
2. Quickly pass your opponent using okuri-ashi.
3. Maintain your gaze on the opponent! Don't turn your back on them.
4. Maintain kiai until you are fully turned and back in kamae.
5. Have the feeling of “cutting through” your opponent during zanshin.

Uchi-komi sayū-men & kote zanshin. The zanshin for these targets is similar to shōmen. In general you pass on the same side the strike landed on, i.e., if you hit a target that is on your left, “go through” toward your left.

Uchi-komi (migi) dō zanshin. This can be done two ways: (1) on hitting, pass the opponent on the same side that you strike them on. (2) On hitting, step to your right, pulling the shinai across the front of their dō, passing with them on your left.

Uchi-komi tsuki zanshin. On striking tsuki, pull your hands back to chūdan and step backward to issoku ittō no maai.

Hiki-waza zanshin. Hiki-waza (ひき技), p. 132, zanshin is done in migi jōdan for men targets and at the “cutting position” for other targets. With hiki-men strikes, it is important not to do hiki-age until *after* you have cut.

TURNING HITS INTO CUTS

A major part of striking is emulating a cut; simply hitting a target is not enough. During uchi-komi one strikes the target the moment the front foot hits the floor. But it is as we bring up the rear foot that we can emulate a cut, as long as the strike is held on the target in the cutting position. Then, as the rear foot is brought forward, the whole body and sword move forward emulating a slice. It is crucial not to perform hiki-age, pulling the sword up from the target, during zanshin.

WATCHING THE OPPONENT

Zanshin means to be continually aware or alert in order to deal with the opponent's attack or potential counter-attack. The simplest way to be aware of your opponent is to never take your eyes off of them; this includes during your follow-through after a strike. As you pass your opponent keep your eyes on them; never blindly turn your back to them.

KIAI DURING ZANSHIN

When you strike a target, for example men, kendōka vocalize their kiai by yelling “Men!” at the moment the strike lands. This kiai must continue during zanshin until you have turned to face your opponent. Kiai should be a loud and continuous; “Meeeennn!” v.s. “Men! Men! Men!”

ZANSHIN V.S. EXERCISES

The movements described here are just basic *building blocks* and ought to be considered more an exercise than realistic physical zanshin. Alternate movements will not be discussed, but it's important to note the definition of zanshin from FIK (2017) to score an effective strike is the attacker must show mental and physical readiness for their opponent's potential counter-attack. This says nothing about specific movement, only that it must follow the principles of the katana and be done with correct posture.

COMPLETING YOUR CUT: TURN TO FACE YOUR OPPONENT

Once you pass your opponent you must turn to face them. Which way depends on how you initially pass the opponent.

If you strike your opponent and pass with them on your right, then you turn by pivoting to your right. Equivalently, if you pass with them on your left then pivot to your left. To turn, pivot on your rear foot, stepping toward the opponent.

As you turn, don't leave your shinai in the cutting position. This leaves you open to attack. Here are two methods which help minimize vulnerability while turning.

Method one. From the cutting position, bring your hands down to chūdan and angle the kensen upward so the shinai is nearly vertical. Look toward your opponent and as you turn, lower your kensen down to chūdan timing it such that you reach chūdan as you finish your turn.

Method two. From the cutting position, look toward your opponent and angle your kensen so that it points behind you and toward them. As you turn, step toward your opponent and have the feeling of pressing your kensen toward them, bringing your shinai to chūdan as you finish.

KIRI-KAESHI: "RETURNING CUTS"

Kiri-kaeshi is a partnered drill consisting of strikes using both fumi-komi & okuri-ashi, while the opponent receives, parries, and maintains distance. It is often the first and last exercise done during a practice.

The following excerpt discusses kiri-kaeshi:⁵⁴

"Beneficial Effects of Kiri-Kaeshi. Improves posture, breathing, the strike becomes strong and reliable, the shoulder joints become flexible, develops the skill of te-no-uchi, facilitates arm movement, posture becomes firm and solid, improves ashi-sabaki, the appropriate ma for executing a strike is made clear, and develops correct use of the cutting edge. Kiri-kaeshi is excellent for restoring confidence lost in keiko or matches."⁵⁵

Beneficial Effects of Receiving Kiri-Kaeshi. Improves posture, facilitates movement, when your partner strikes the cutting edge becomes clear, maai becomes clear, and develops shinai grip in te-no-uchi."

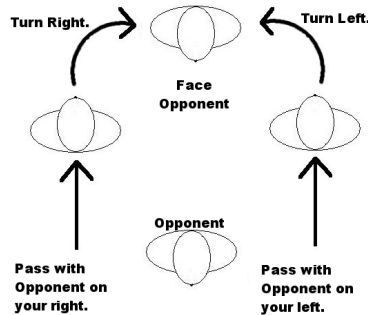


Figure 212: Turning properly.

Note: Whether you pass on the right or the left will depend on which target you have hit, but also on the reaction and movements of your opponent.

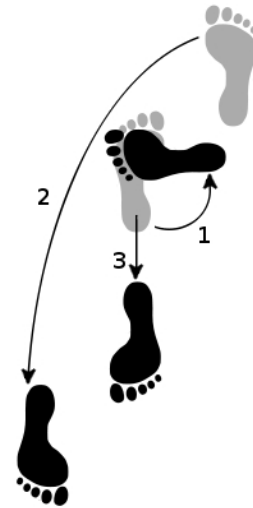


Figure 213: Turning to the left to face the opponent. Pivot on your rear foot and, as you turn, step toward the opponent.

Note: According to Dann (1978), Naganuma Shirozaemon is credited for standardizing the practice fundamentals of kiri-kaeshi, circa 1716.

⁵⁴ Ozawa (1997)

⁵⁵ This is often why kiri-kaeshi is done at the start and the end of practice.

Performing kiri-kaeshi. Engage your core, p. 15, and using abdominal breathing, p. 17, inhale. Begin to exhale and with kiai move from tō-ma, p. 99, to issoku ittō no maai, p. 99. Then, with strong kiai, strike your partners shōmen using fumi-komi. As you move forward from striking, perform tai-atari (体当り), p. 133. Swing your shinai overhead in a large swing and with strong kiai strike your partners left men using okuri-ashi. Raise your shinai overhead in a large swing and with strong kiai strike your partners right men. Continue alternating sayū-men for a total of four strikes while moving forward then five strikes while moving back, each using okuri-ashi. After the fifth backward strike take one more large step back to issoku ittō no maai. Kiai and then repeat the shōmen, tai-atari, four alternating sayū-men forward, five backward, and again return to issoku ittō no maai. Kiai and then strike shōmen again and follow through fully with zanshin. Maintain your kiai until you turn to face your partner, p. 118.



Figure 214: Targets are labeled according to the opponent's left and right making sayū-men strikes in kiri-kaeshi begin on the opponent's left, your right.

KEY POINTS: PERFORMING KIRI-KAESHI

1. Raise your shinai all the way above your head on each strike.
2. Throughout the exercise maintain straight posture, p. 25, square hips, p. 16, an engaged core, p. 15, and use abdominal breathing, p. 17.
3. Keep your shoulders relaxed but extend your arms when striking.
4. Each strike and step ought to finish together.
5. Strike shōmen with fumi-komi, sayū-men with okuri-ashi.
6. *Advanced:* Breathe in at tō-ma then on one breath with continuous kiai, strike shōmen, tai-atari, strike all nine sayū-men, move to issoku ittō, and strike shōmen. Breathe in again at the second tai-atari, then finish the remainder of kiri-kaeshi.

KIRI-KAESHI: HOW FAST?

Kiri-kaeshi is done at different speeds dependent on the skill level of the practitioner and the intent of the current practice. If the speed for kiri-kaeshi is not explicitly stated prior to the exercise then it is the *receiver who determines the pace, not the attacker*. The receiver must adjust the pace to a level where the kakari-te is challenged, but still able to do it correctly; this pace will be different for different people making awareness of the receiver crucial.

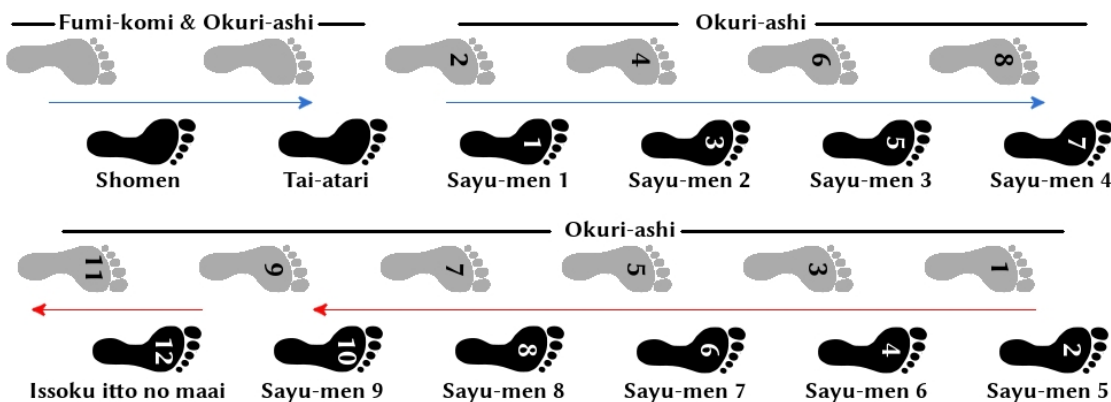


Figure 215: (Top) The attacker uses fumi-komi & okuri-ashi for the shōmen and tai-atari, and okuri-ashi for four sayū-men. (Bottom) Okuri-ashi is used for five backward moving sayū-men and to step back to issoku ittō no maai.

Receiving kiri-kaeshi. Open shōmen as your partner moves to issoku ittō. After striking, they will perform tai-atari; lean in providing *slight* resistance then step back to issoku ittō using okuri-ashi. Receive their sayū-men starting on your left:

Method one. Allow beginners to strike your sayū-men by keeping your shinai lowered and to the side.

Method two. Receive their sayū-men strikes with your shinai as shown in figure 216. This is the most common method.

Using ayumi-ashi, step backward with each forward sayū-men and step forward for each backward one.⁵⁶ After the final shōmen, step to the side.

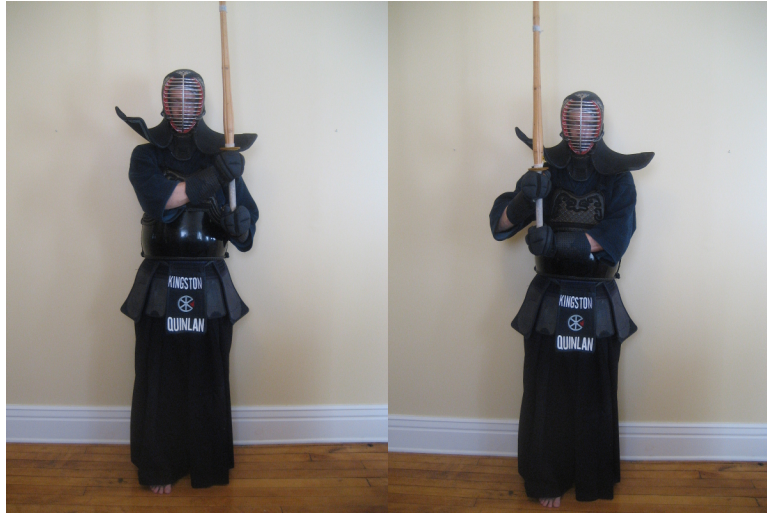


Figure 216: Receiving the opponents kiri-kaeshi with the shinai. (Left) Receiving strikes to the left men and (Right) receiving strikes to the right men.

KEY POINTS: RECEIVING KIRI-KAESHI

1. Use okuri-ashi to receive tai-atari, ayumi-ashi receiving sayū-men.
2. When receiving sayū-men with a shinai be sure to move it from shoulder-to-shoulder to ensure the strike is parried properly.
3. Motodachi (元立ち) must time their parry and step to coincide with kakari-te's strikes; coordinate your ki ken tai ichi with kakari-te's.
4. Throughout the exercise maintain straight posture, p. 25, square hips, p. 16, an engaged core, p. 15, and use abdominal breathing, p. 17.

⁵⁶ The ayumi-ashi steps when receiving are: (backward) left, right, left, right, then (forward) right, left, right, left, right. Note that while stepping backward the foot you step with matches the side you are receiving a strike while moving forward they are opposite.

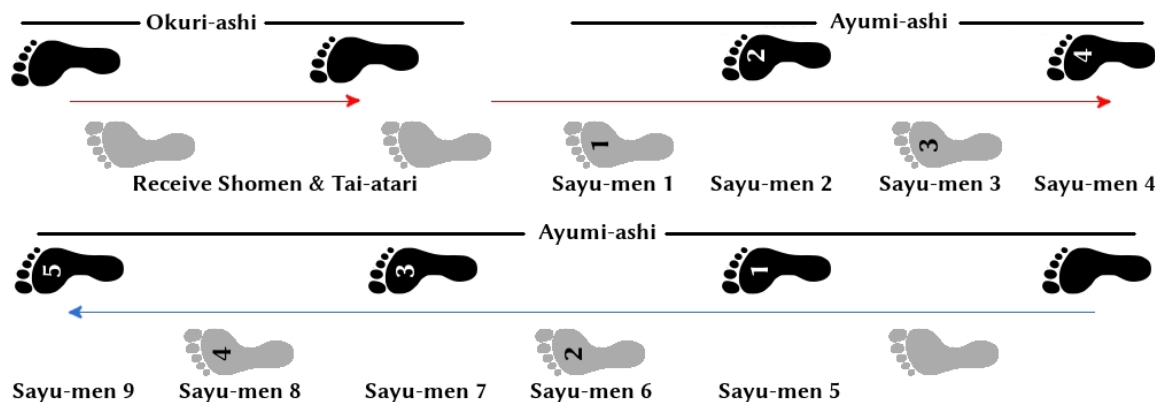


Figure 217: (Top) Motodachi moves backward from the tai-atari with okuri-ashi, ayumi-ashi during the sayū-men strikes. (Bottom) moving forward with ayumi-ashi.

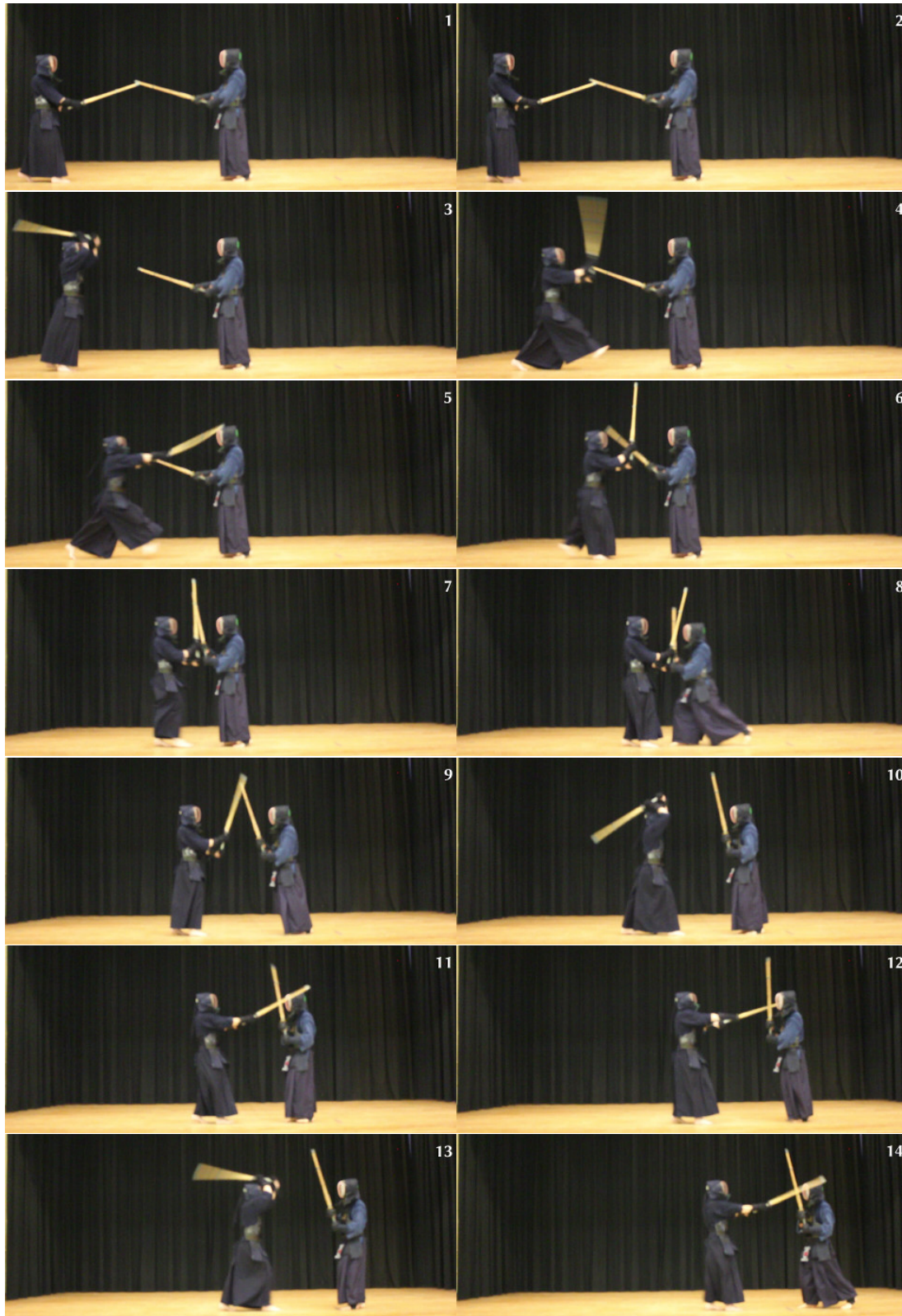


Figure 218: Kiri-kaeshi.

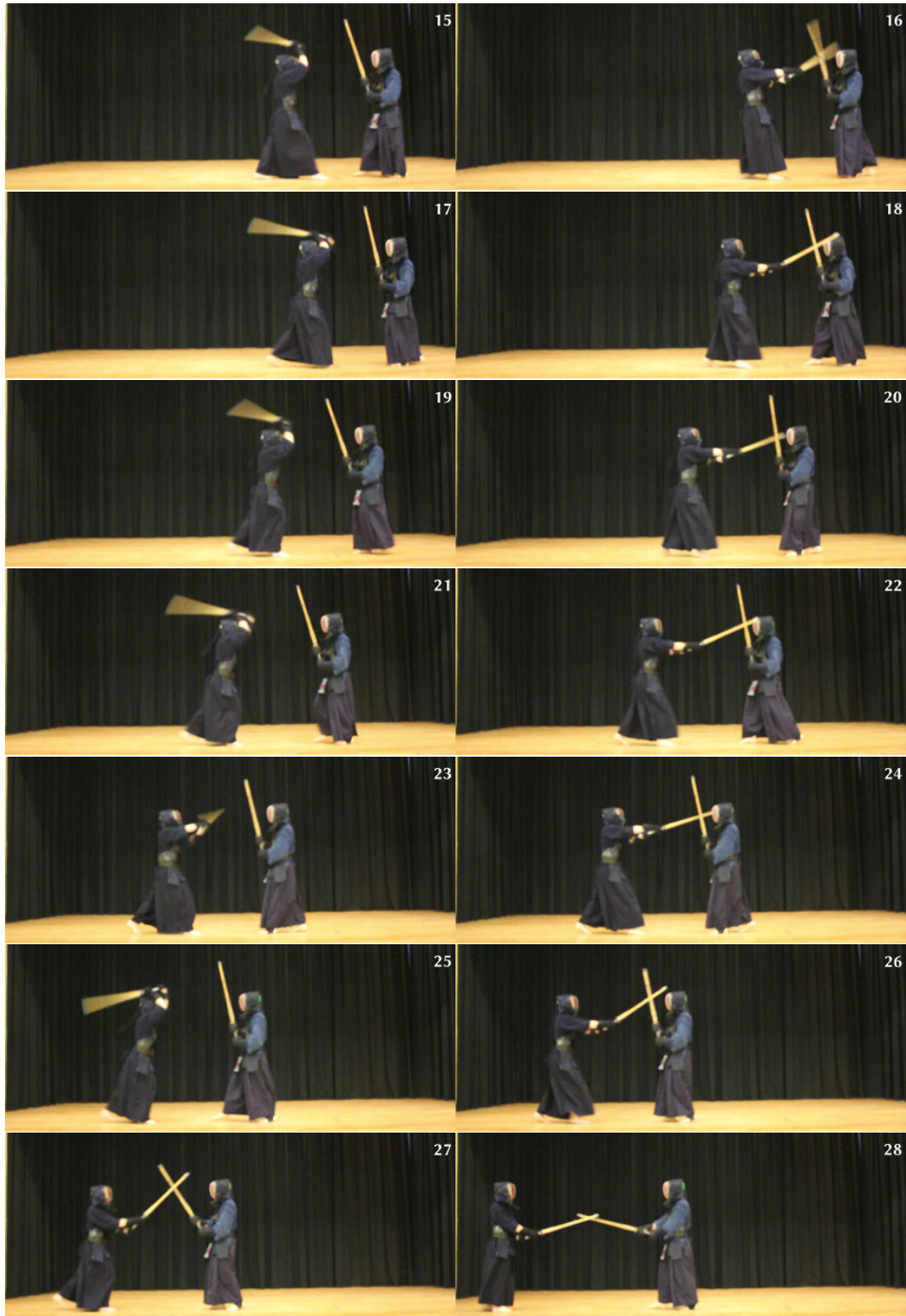


Figure 219: Kiri-kaeshi.

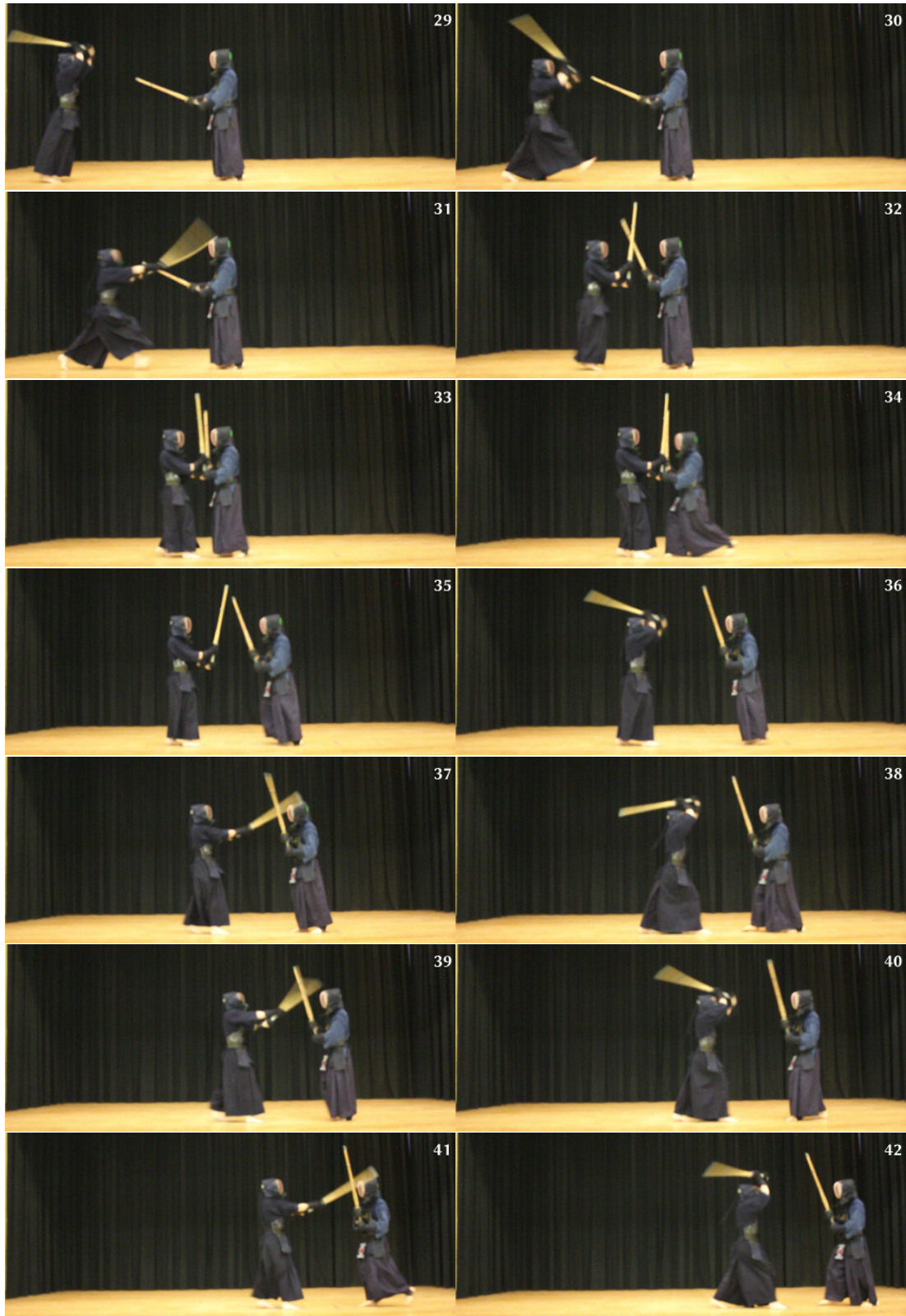


Figure 220: Kiri-kaeshi.

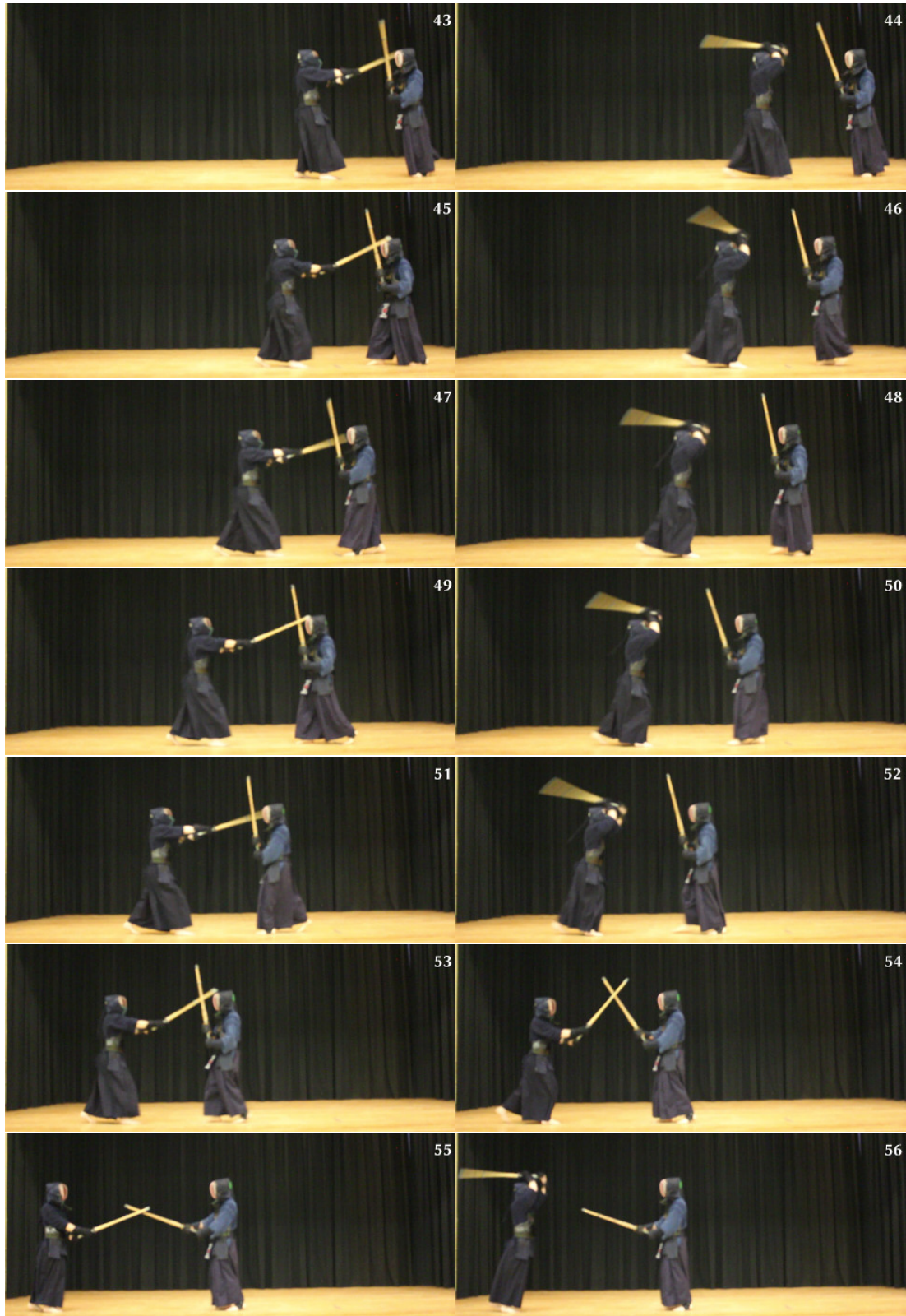


Figure 221: Kiri-kaeshi.

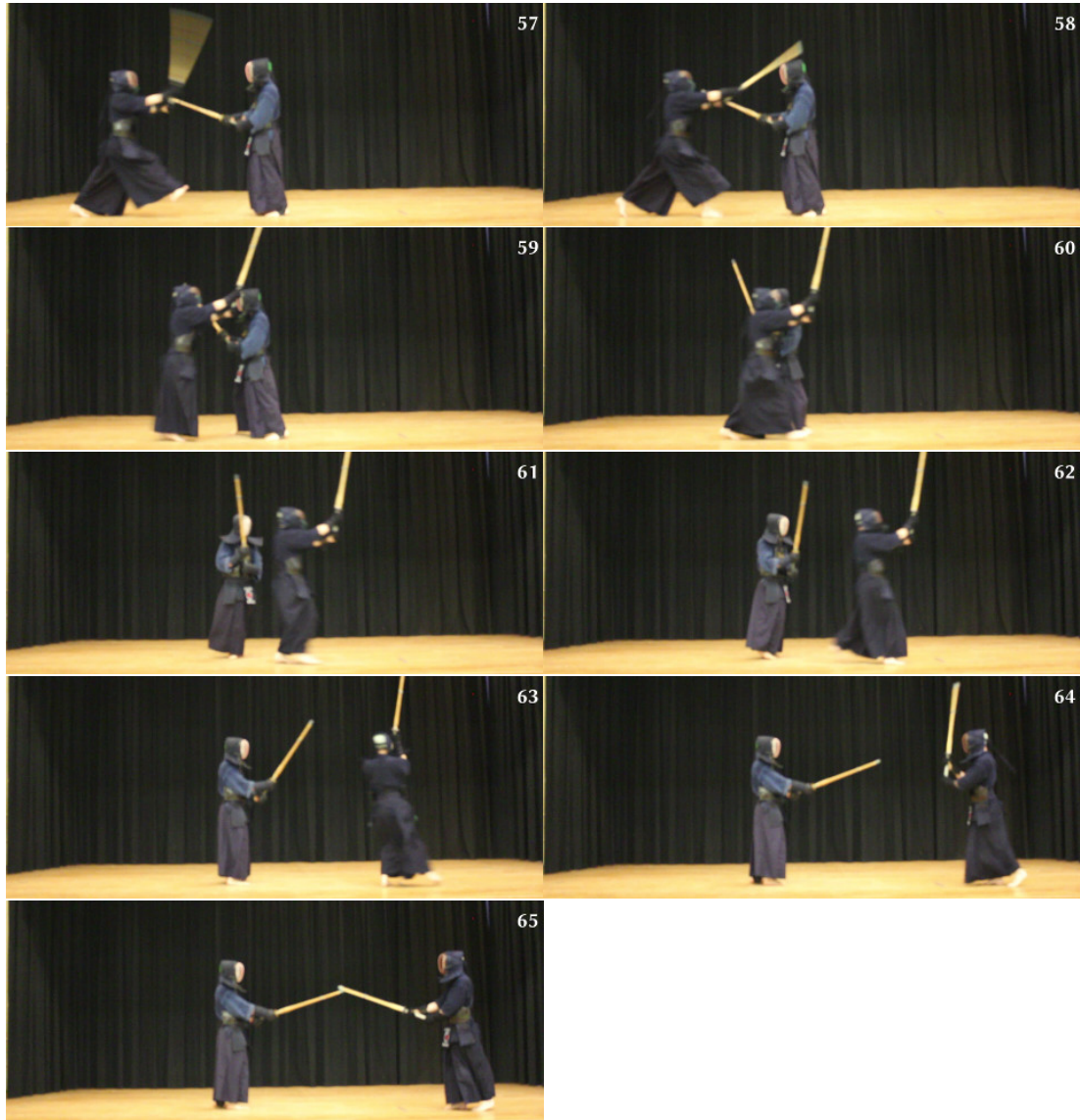


Figure 222: Kiri-kaeshi.

WAZA: “TECHNIQUES”

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THIS CHAPTER GIVES BRIEF details on various waza. Waza are grouped in two categories: **shikake waza** (しかけ技) and **ōji waza** (応じ技). Waza from tsuba-zeriai, p.100, and tai-atari are also briefly discussed.

Note: Big and small strikes were discussed on pp. 103–109. While uchi-komi and all waza can be done with either type of strike, most of the waza shown here are done using small strikes.

SHIKAKE WAZA: “TECHNIQUES TO INITIATE AN ATTACK”

Tobi-Komi: “Burst Into”

Tobi-komi (飛び込み) waza are where one initiates a strike when the opponent shows weak spirit.

Note: The idea of *sūtemi* style striking is essential when learning shikake waza. This is elaborated on p.149.

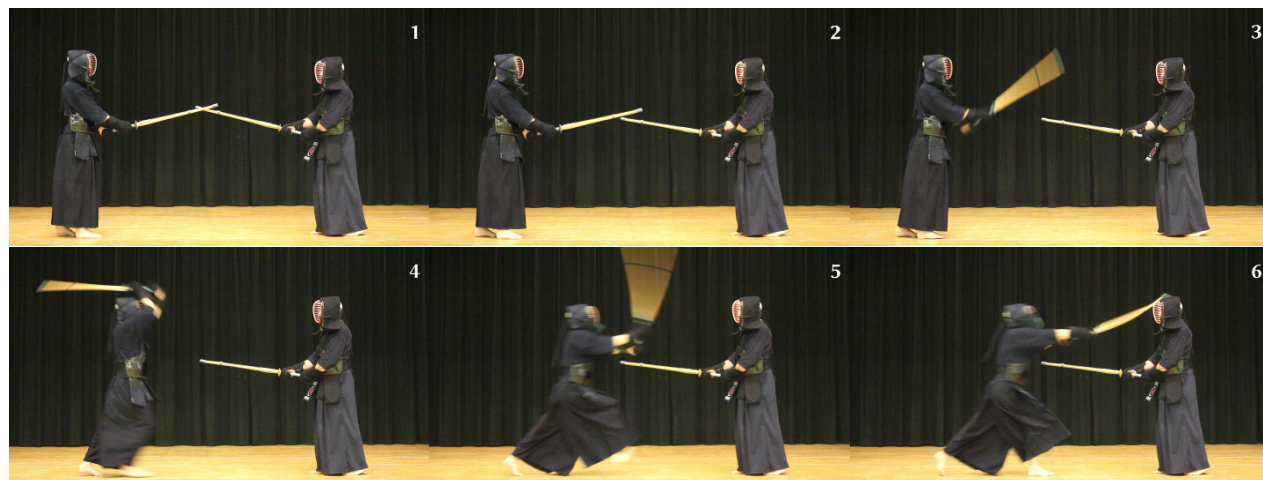


Figure 223: Tobi-komi men.

KEY POINTS: TOBI-KOMI WAZA

Tobi-komi waza are used when an opponent shows weak spirit or when they yield a **sūki** (隙) under pressure from your own spirit. Maintain spirit and strike swiftly to capitalize on the opening.

Note: Tobi-komi waza is the most basic but also the most important waza in kihon kendō. It is crucial to be ready to use this waza immediately should the opportunity arise.

Katsugi: "Shouldering" the Sword

Katsugi waza (担ぎ技) is used to "surprise" the opponent, creating an opening by first shouldering the shinai. A strong spirit is essential.

Note: The surprise from using katsugi waza is usually only effective against an opponent once; don't over use this technique.

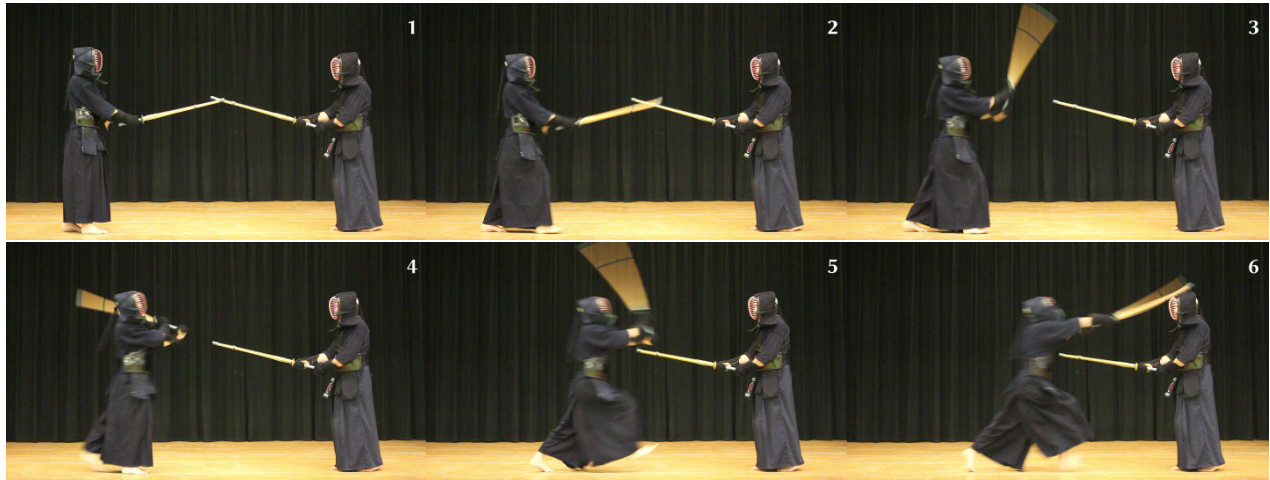


Figure 224: Hidari katsugi men.

KEY POINTS: KATSUGI WAZA

Use okuri-ashi to shoulder the sword, fumi-komi to attack.

Nidan/Sandan: "Two Step/Three Step"

There are two ideas for using multiple strikes: (1) attack with a second strike *only* if the first one fails, (2) *intentionally* use a strike to distract or to break the opponent's kamae, creating an opening to strike again.

Note: Nidan or sandan waza refers to the number of times a kendōka strikes at the opponent not the number of steps a strike is broken into as with nidan or sandan suburi, p. 114.



Figure 225: Nidan waza: Kote→men.

KEY POINTS: NIDAN & SANDAN WAZA

Return to proper ashi-gamae *before* you move the shinai for the next strike; don't raise up while you bring up your rear foot

Harai: "Sweeping"

Harai (払い) waza physically pushes an opponents kamae up, down, left, or right creating an opening to strike.

Note: Harai waza creates an opening by momentarily taking control of their centerline.



Figure 226: Omote harai-otoshi, men

ŌJI WAZA: "TECHNIQUES TO RESPOND TO AN ATTACK"

The following excerpt discusses ōji waza:⁵⁷

"Rather than wait for your opponents strike, it is important to force one through aggressive attack."⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ozawa (1997)

Debana: "Coming Out"

Debana (出ばな) waza is where one strikes as the opponent begins to initiate. This requires a strong connection in order to read intent.

⁵⁸ Forcing the opponent to strike via your "aggressive attack" does not necessarily mean your physical attack, but can also refer to a spiritual one from applied pressure.

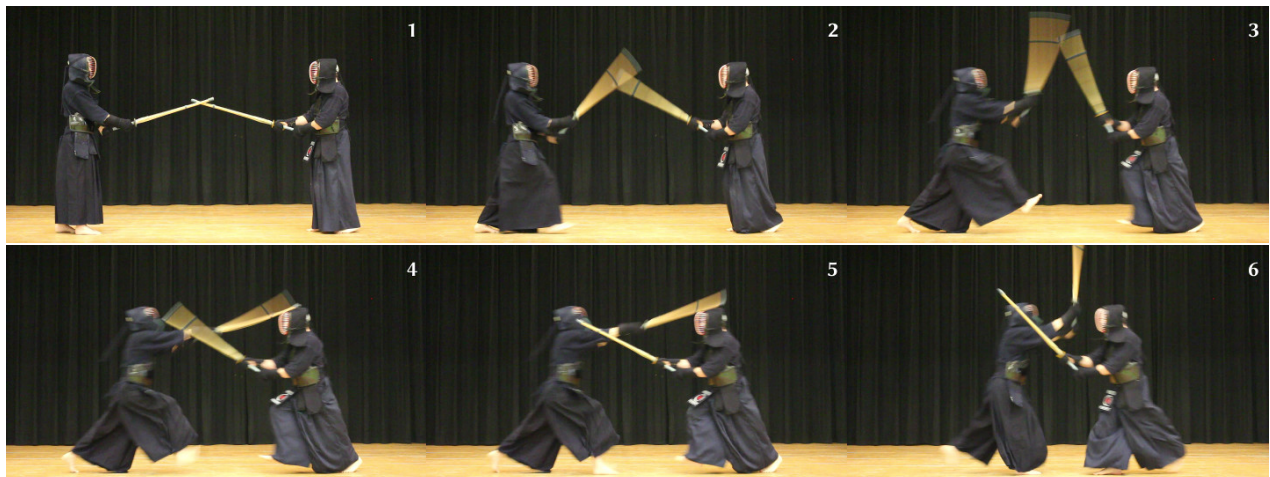


Figure 227: Kote, debana men.

Suriage: "Rising Slide"

Suri-age waza (すり上げ技) deflects the opponents shinai via a "rising-slide" motion as they strike creating an opening.

Note: Suriage waza can be done using the ura or omote side of the shinai.

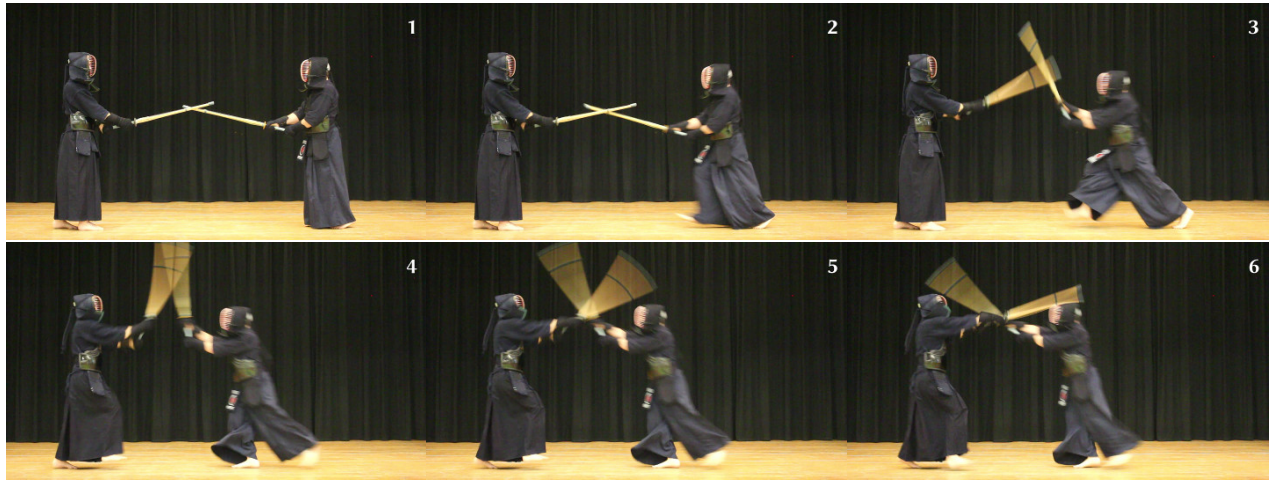


Figure 228: Men, suriage men.

KEY POINTS: SURI-AGE WAZA

Don't *hit* their weapon, push it aside by sliding yours along theirs, your right hand making a "crescent moon" motion.

Using the Shinogi

While the blade of a sword is very sharp, it is also brittle; it would be damaged, or dulled, very quickly if it were used to hit or manipulate the opponent's weapon. The shinogi is the thick, raised ridge on the side of a sword making it ideal for deflections and manipulation.

While shinai technically do not have shinogi, shinai kendō stems from the use of real swords and the intent should be to use the shinai in a similar fashion. This includes deflecting and manipulating the opponent's weapon as though the shinai did have a shinogi. This may seem like ideological nitpicking, however use of the shinai as though it had a shinogi is also very practical; it leads to much more optimal shinai movements, minimizing unnecessary movements, making waza faster and more efficient.

KEY POINTS: USING THE SHINOGI

Perform waza as though your shinai had a shinogi; use the shinogi to receive, deflect, or manipulate the opponent's weapon.

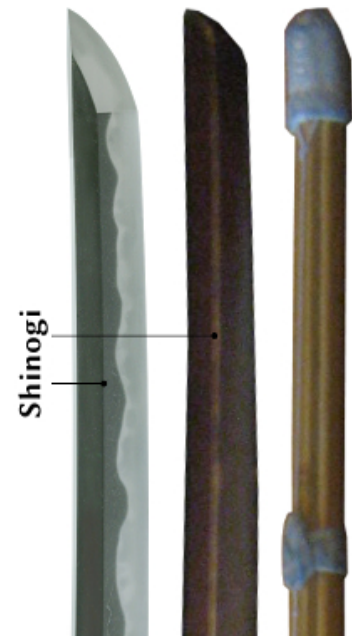


Figure 229: The Shinogi. (Left) The shinogi on a real sword, (Center) the shinogi on a bokutō, (Right) the shinai. While a shinai does not have an actual shinogi, it is important to use it as though it did.

Uchi-Otoshi: “Knocking Down”

With uchi-otoshi (打ち落とし) one strikes an incoming attack downward.

Note: Uchi-otoshi will often literally put the opponent's body completely off-balance as you disrupt their strike.

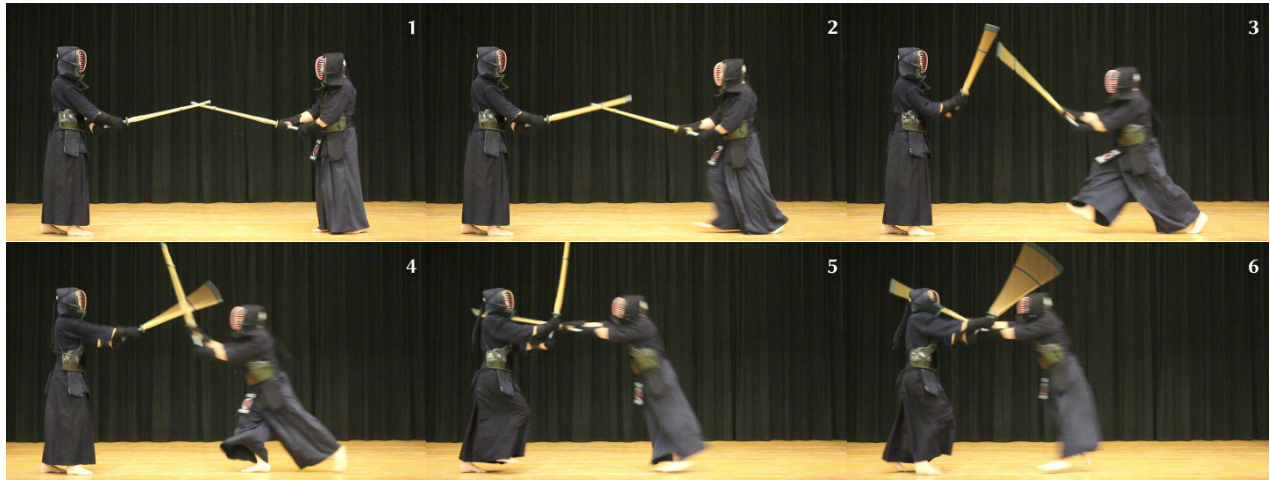


Figure 230: Men, uchi-otoshi men.

KEY POINTS: UCHI-OTOSHI WAZA

Uchi-otoshi is often used to redirect an attack without counter-attacking, allowing you to regain control of the encounter.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Uchi-otoshi, in combination with hiraki-ashi style footwork, p. 46, disrupts a strike and moves you to an advantageous position, forcing a disruption in the opponent's pressure.

Kaeshi: “Return”

With kaeshi (返し) waza block and immediately counter.

Note: Kaeshi waza can be done with either the ura or omote side of the shinai.

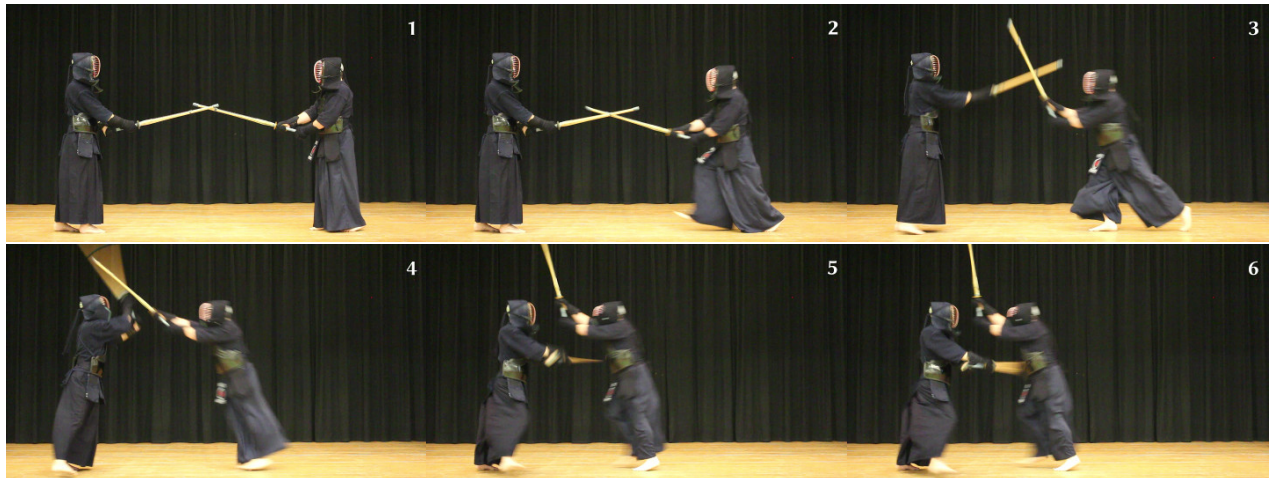


Figure 231: Men, kaeshi dô.

KEY POINTS: KAESHI WAZA

Kaeshi waza doesn't fully stop a strike; it's a split second disruption.

Nuki: "Evading"

Nuki (抜き) waza are techniques used to dodge and counter attack.



Figure 232: Men, nuki dô.

KEY POINTS: NUKI WAZA

Don't dodge, then hit. Strike *while* you are dodging, hitting the opponent *while* their strike is still moving.

Note: According to Ozawa (1997), "it is a mistake to think that hiki-waza can only be performed from tsuba-zeriai. Its benefits can also be reaped when your opponent is obviously lacking confidence..."

WAZA FROM TSUBA-ZERIAI

Hikibana (ひきばな) waza, or hiki-waza, are strikes moving backward instead of forward, most often from tsuba-zeriai.



Figure 233: Hiki-men from tsuba-zeriai.

TAI-ATARI: "BODYCHECK"

When kendōka are in close range, tsuba-zeriai or by closing in during zanshin, one can perform tai-atari which translates to "bodycheck".⁶⁰

Tai-atari is allowed after each strike attempt as the attacker closes in on the opponent or as a method of creating an opening in tsuba-zeriai. The kendōka must be careful not to confuse tai-atari with shoving; tai-atari is strategic as *it is used to create an opportunity to strike again*.

The following note remarks on the (mis)use of tai-atari:⁶¹

"Shiai represents a duel between gentlemen. If a person imagines real swords are being used, an insightful appreciation of kendo can be realized. The rough style of Kendo, such as pushing and shoving your opponent after a hit in order to break zanshin, or charging into an opponent in an attempt to intimidate him/her, is unrealistic in a real duel. There could be none of the shoving mentioned above as the man would be dead! Charging foolishly into an opponents sword will produce the same results. We can continue to perpetuate productive ladies and gentlemen or, we can produce competitive brutes who intentionally hurt people and bend the rules [...] under the pretense of kendo."

There are two general types of tai-atari. With the first, collide with the opponent to push them back making an opening to strike again. The second uses the opponent to stop the momentum of your body, disrupting them slightly, making an opening for a hiki-waza.

Tai-atari type #1: push the opponent back. This can be performed as you move forward with zanshin from a strike, or from tsuba-zeriai. Position your hands for tsuba-zeriai as in figure 178, p. 100 and move in to your opponent. When your body collides with your opponent continue moving forward with your hips and push with your arms. As the opponent is pushed back, continue forward and strike any opening that appears.

KEY POINTS: TAI-ATARI, TYPE #1

1. Your body collides with your opponent *before* you push.
2. Push your opponent with your entire body not just your arms.
3. Pushing the opponent's hands upward during tai-atari can be *very* dangerous and should be avoided.
4. Kendō is not a shoving match. The goal here is to unbalance your opponent creating an opening to immediately attack again, forward or backward. Don't push just for the sake of pushing; push & attack.

⁶⁰ *Jim Breen's Online Japanese Dictionary* (2015) translates tai-atari as "body-blow" or "ramming attack".

⁶¹ Edited from Ando Sensei (2001).

DAINGEROUS TAI-ATARI

On its own, either variation of tai-atari is a perfectly safe and perfectly viable waza in kendō. However, this assumes that it is done *correctly*. It is crucial for your opponent's safety that when performing tai-atari yours and your opponent's hands must be in the correct tsuba-zeriai position, p. 100, near the abdomen. Never perform tai-atari when you are *not* in the proper tsuba-zeriai position with your opponent. Tsuba-zeriai tends to be a dynamic position, with both sets of hands moving around. *Never push if your hands are high up on the opponent's chest, on their throat, or on their face.* This is *extremely dangerous* and can seriously injure your opponent.

Tai-atari type #2: stopping forward momentum. This is performed while moving forward during zanshin. As you move toward your opponent position your hands for tsuba-zeriai as in figure 178, p. 100. As you make contact with your opponent's hands, your collision will disrupt their control of their hands briefly. With your forward momentum under control, and the opponent's hands disrupted, immediately strike with a hiki-waza.

KEY POINTS: TAI-ATARI, TYPE #2

1. This type of tai-atari requires more agility and control over your body in order to transition from moving forward into a hiki-waza.
2. Your goal here is not to push your opponent backward, but to use them as a springboard to launch a hiki-waza.
3. This tai-atari disrupts the opponent's hands, not their entire body.

ABUSE OF TAI-ATARI

Would a person mindlessly wrestle someone holding a real katana? Think of what would happen! The goal of modern tai-atari is to create an opening in order to *attempt a strike*. Any other purpose and you are no longer performing meaningful tai-atari but instead have degenerated to shoving, allowable only because of the use of a shinai. In a tournament, if a player uses tai-atari without showing intent to strike, the referees can issue a penalty, FIK (2017). This idea stems from the "Concept and Purpose of Kendō", p. 7.

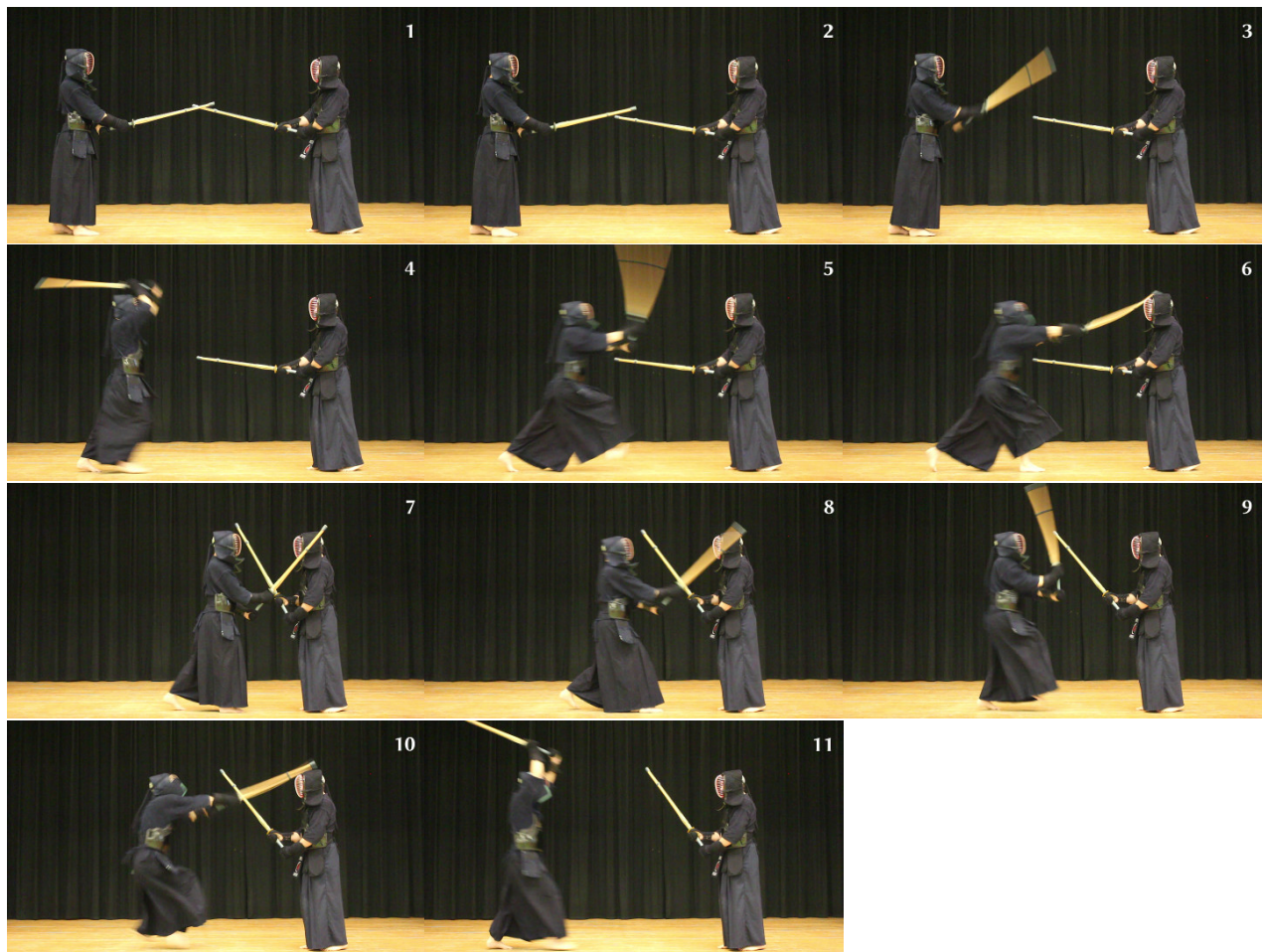


Figure 234: Tai-atari type two: men, tai-atari, hiki-men.

CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF KENDŌ

CHAPTER PREVIEW

ALL JAPANESE MARTIAL ARTS referred to as a dō, such as kendō, are direct descendants of martial arts which were developed during a period in which Zen, Shinto, Taoism, and Confucianism were common spiritual disciplines.⁶² As such, those who practiced, taught, and created these martial arts did so in such a way that their methodology coincided with their spirituality or vice versa.

Today, while a number of these arts are no longer practiced in their original context, or have been adapted and systematized to suit modern use, it is the philosophical background and formal traditions that ties us to the original.

KIAI

The following excerpt discusses kiai:⁶³

“There is no adequate English translation for ki-ai. A Japanese-English dictionary renders the term as “yell, shout, etc., to hypnotize or mesmerize another person with will power.” But this is preposterous. Etymologically the term is a compound, “ki” referring to energy and “ai” referring to integration.

Ki, in the original Chinese (Chi) was believed to be a material element, and conceived of as a source of life which pervades the universe. But ki, when used in the compound ki-ai, and in particular when used in the limited context of Kendo, refers to a verbal outflow of synergistic force derived through body-mind integration.

A Kendo ki-ai is not simply a shout meant to “startle or mesmerize” the opponent. It is the verbal revelation, demonstration, and evidence of a synergistic force issuing from the body-mind integration that produces the most important element in Kendo: decisiveness.

A decisive hit of the kind demanded in Kendo requires precision, and precision requires a synergistic force. But body-mind integration, not ki-ai, brings about this kind of force. Ki-ai is the product of this integration. As such it is the mind (Mushin), not ki-ai, that needs to be nurtured. An effective ki-ai emerges from one's gut. Shouting in a frenzy is not a ki-ai.”

⁶² These arts are more often referred to collectively as budō.

⁶³ Kiyota (2002)

Note: Kiai and yelling, or *kakegoe*, are connected, but yelling is not necessarily kiai. Kiai is the by-product of a successful body-mind integration.

This excerpt discusses breathing:⁶⁴

Question: What is the most important thing of all in martial arts?

Taisen Deshimaru: Breathing. What condition are you in below the navel? I don't mean your sexual organs! I mean the hara, three fingers beneath the navel. The way to develop the power of the hara, to assemble all your energy there, is the right breathing.

Question: Can you talk to us about Kiai, the special shout used in the martial arts, especially in Karate and Kendo? In my Karate dojo we are made to do it very often, a whole series of violent shouts...

Taisen Deshimaru: The powerful vibrations of the kiai paralyze the adversary for a brief instant. It is comparable to the kwatz that Rinzai Zen masters use to startle and arouse their disciples. In my opinion there is no point to repeating it over and over, once is enough - but once really. Push out your shout with everything in you, starting from the hara, the lower abdomen or intestines - the place the Japanese also call "kikai", the ocean of energy. To do it right you also have to learn Zen breathing, which is the same as in Budo - the long exhalation, as deep as you can. At the very end of it ones energy is at its greatest. The kiai is that same exhalation, combined with a loud voice; the sound has to spring out naturally from the depths of the body, and for that one has to know how to breathe, which few people do. After za-zen, when I conduct a ceremony and we chant the "Hannya Haramita Shingyo", the sutra of great wisdom, I do it as a kind of training in breathing; the voice must go to the utter limits of breath. Its good practice for the kiai. The word kiai is composed of "ki", energy, and "ai", union, so it means the union of energy. One cry, one instant containing all space-time.

Kiai!!! At this point Deshimaru Roshi utters a terrifying roar, by which the audience is stunned, then bursts out laughing.⁶⁵ But, the kiai I hear in martial arts dojos, or the Hannya Shingyos chanted in Zen dojos, never have as much power as that! People shout or chant to express their own personalities, they make vocal decoration, there is nothing authentic or really fierce about them. No strength. They're just singing or making noise. There is no ki in their kiai, no energy.

Question: Why not?

Taisen Deshimaru: Because they do not know how to breathe. Nobody has taught them. And then it takes a very long time to explain the way a true budo or Zen master would do it. It is not the loudness of the voice that makes the strength of the sound!! The sound must start in the hara, not the throat. Observe how a cat meows or a lion roars: that is real kiai. Practice breathing; but don't try to acquire some kind of magic power through your kiai. In the way of Budo as in the way of Zen you must practice, as I am always saying, without any object or desire for profit. Most people always want to get something, they want to have instead of be.

⁶⁴ Deshimaru (1991)

KIAI IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Kiai is often thought to be something that only pertains to martial arts, in particular the vocal aspect of it. This is not true. Think about squatting down and lifting something up, a heavy box for example. At the very moment you engage your muscles with the intent to lift the box, most people will exhale and vocalize some kind of "grunt" or other sound. *This is kiai.* It is a by-product of the unification between our movement, muscles, and intent to lift the object. This kiai happens naturally and is *very* different than randomly making noise, making noise because you planned to, or because are told to do it. This is the difference between "yelling" and kiai in kendō.

LOUD & QUIET KIAI?

Kiai is not just a facet of kendō, but is used in all martial arts. In some arts, kendō for example, kiai is highly vocalized into a shout. In arts such as *iaidō* (居合道), which is "the art of drawing the Japanese sword", kiai is silent. The crucial idea is that kiai is not the same as yelling; it is the result of the integrated action and intent of the body and the mind.

⁶⁵ According to Hakuin (1994) and Leggett (2003), Zen monks were frequently tested by their masters to gauge their progress in Zen understanding; the samurai Zen practitioners were not exempt from these tests. Some of the tests (ko-an) were to test ones spiritual energy by a demonstration of a *Katzu* shout, i.e., a Zen version of kiai used to awaken oneself spiritually. One of the more difficult tests required that the katzu be so strong that it render a living creature *unconscious*, usually an insect, bird, or even a small mammal. One of the last known students to pass this test was none other than Yamaoka Tesshu, see p. 162.

MAAI & KAMAE

The following excerpt discusses maai:⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Kiyota (2002)

"The term distance is a rough translation of ma-ai, the root of which is ma, 'space'. As such the term 'distance' can be misleading.

The term ma is used in the Japanese tea ceremony in the sense of the term ma o toru, literally 'space evaluation.' Actually, the term refers to the hosts awareness of the relationship between the principal guest and the environment in which the ceremony is observed. Specifically, it refers to furnishing the tea room with a picture scroll, a vase of carefully arranged flowers, ceramic ware of excellent make and design, and other accoutrements tastefully chosen and set out to reflect the personality of the principal guest. Items required for the ceremony, such as cups, kettle, and ladle, are strategically placed to minimize the movements that the host must make in executing the prescribed steps in the ceremony. Ma, then, is a term that implies the creative utilization of space-that is the ability to control space.

The art of flower arrangement, like Kendo, employs three levels of position. Here high, middle, and low levels represent heaven, human, and earth, the human dimension serving as a bridge between heaven and earth and so giving an overall harmony to the composition. This human dimension is, however, not fixed. After all, each individual has his or her own personality, so that there are no limits to creativity. Ultimately, though, the human dimension must merge with nature, with heaven and earth, to bring about total harmony. Hence, when a master of this art speaks of an overall harmony, he or she is not speaking only about the flower arrangement, but also about the shape of the vase appropriate to the flower design, and the entire context that determines the choice of vase and design (e.g., the size and style of the alcove in which the flower arrangement is to be placed, the size and style of the room, and the nature of the occasion for the display).

In Kendo, ma-ai generally refers to the distance between the tips of the two opponents shinai when both are in Chudan no Kamae. Theoretically, the shinai should cross each other about two or three inches below their tips.

However, this basic definition cannot be applied if the opponent takes an alternate kamae than Chudan no Kamae. (e.g., Jodan no Kamae or Gedan no Kamae) In these cases the opponent cannot judge the distance by the shinai tips and so must take into account the opponents degree of alertness and speed as well as the moment and angle of charge. And, of course, when a practitioner faces multiple opponents, the general definition of ma-ai, 'distance', would hardly have any meaning at all. Ma-ai, then, involves more than just the judgment of distance between opponents.

Ma-ai actually refers to space. A Kendoka needs to control space-to develop the ability to size up the situation in which he finds himself and to place himself in a strategically advantageous position.

Note: The basic definition of maai being that of distance is inappropriate save for very limited situations. Maai also takes into account speed, strength, your timing, and ability.

But although ma-ai literally refers to spacing, it is also associated with the ability to read the time—a fraction of a second—it will take for the Kendoka to leap forward before the opponents charge. The ma-ai between two experienced Kendoka is, therefore, frequently stretched out in order to accommodate the unexpected. This brings us to Kamae.

Kamae indicates the degree of control the Kendoka has over space and time. As such, kamae and ma-ai are correlated: an effective kamae reveals an effective ma-ai control. Kamae, then, refers to stance. But because kamae requires the proper reading of ma-ai and also because ma-ai constantly changes according to the opponents movement, kamae is more than a stylized stance. It requires direct cognitive ability. In this context, then, kamae involves a mental attitude, alertness of a kind derived through intense concentration.”

SUKI & ZANSHIN

Suki and zanshin are two concepts commonly spoken of in kendō. Information on these topics from a number of different sources is given in an attempt to explain the meaning of these terms as clearly as possible.

The following excerpt discusses both suki and zanshin.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Kiyota (2002)

“An effective kamae leaves no opening for the opponent to attack. In the Kendo lexicon, an opening is referred to as suki. A Kendoka with no suki projects an intimidating kamae. The term however has another meaning. There is no suki in an accomplished ballet dancer, that is, no futile, wasteful, or meaningless movement. It is the same with an accomplished Kendoka. Each movement, no matter how minute is distinct and has meaning to the Kendokas overall strategy.

A perfect kamae leaves no suki, and a kamae without suki is evidence that the Kendoka is capable of combat without futile movements. The Kendoka's potential for subsequent movements is therefore epitomized in his kamae, a kamae without suki, just as the ballerinas potential for subsequent movements is epitomized in her opening stance, a stance without futile movements.

But an effective kamae of a Kendoka represents the crystallization of consummate effort over the course of years, during which the kendoka coped with the issue of ma-ai through intense combat practice.

Although the Kendoka may have perfected kamae through years of practice, there is always the chance that he or she may miss a target. What position should the Kendoka then take? Here the issue of zanshin, sustained alertness, needs to be taken up. Two examples are presented below:

In the first case, the attacker attacks and misses a target. The receiver of the attack would have the advantage. He would be in a position to calmly observe the attackers opening. So after the attack, the attacker must get away from the receivers range of attack, turn quickly, and transform defense into offense instantly. In the second case, although the attacker had missed the first target, normally he would be able to see a second opening in the receivers defense but would not be able to carry through the second attack.

Note: The idea of zanshin meaning to “follow through” isn't the full meaning of the term but is only a basic example. In general, the essence of what zanshin means is to remain constantly alert.

These two examples provide the necessary grounds to examine zanshin, sustained alertness. Inherent in this concept is a determined attitude to never to 'abandon ship' (never leave an opening and constantly seek the opponents openings) and to instantly launch a second or third attack by transforming defense into offense. The term 'instantly' is crucial because zanshin requires alertness - even after the completion of an attack- of a kind that would enable the attacker to cope with an unexpected situation in a split second. What position should the attacker take if the first attack succeeds?

He should still maintain zanshin. In actual combat, a samurai was trained to be ready to launch a sutemi attack with the last drop of his energy even if seriously wounded. Moreover, even if the first attack dealt a mortal blow, the samurai assumed that he was surrounded by other opponents on all four sides.

Zanshin, then, is sustained alertness with the aim of assuming strategic victory. It is also an attitude that applies to work: complete a task beyond what is expected, and expect the unexpected."

Sources quote Zen master Takuan's essays on Zen concepts relating to swordsmanship.⁶⁸ These discuss the ideas of *suki* and zanshin:

"A mind like a spark. When you clap your hands a sound comes out immediately, without any interval. The sound does not deliberately come out a while after you clap, it comes right out as you clap.

If your mind stops on the sword your opponent is swinging at you, a gap opens up, and in that gap your action falters.⁶⁹ If there is no gap between your opponents striking sword and your action, the sword of the adversary will become your sword. A mind like a spark means the state of mind where there is no gap. When a flint is struck, sparks fly at once. This also means there is no interval for the mind to linger.

It is wrong to understand this only in terms of speed.⁷⁰ It means you should not let the mind linger on things, that you should not set the mind on anything, even speed.

If attention lingers, your mind is taken over by others. If you act quickly counting on speed, your mind is taken over by this attitude."

"Where to set the mind? If you set your mind on an opponents actions, you have your mind taken up by those actions. If you set your mind on an opponents sword, you have your mind taken up by the opponents sword. If you set your mind on the thought of killing an opponent, you have your mind taken up by the thought of killing an opponent. If you set your mind on your own sword, you have your mind taken up by your own sword. If you set your mind on your determination not to be killed, you have your mind taken up by the determination not to be killed. If you set your mind on peoples postures, you have your mind taken up by peoples postures. The point is that there is nowhere at all to set the mind.

Some people say, 'If we have the mind go anywhere at all, the mind will be fixated by where it goes, putting us at a disadvantage to adversaries. So put the mind in your gut (hara) and keep it there, while adapting to what adversaries do.'

⁶⁸ Cleary (1991) and Cleary (2005)

⁶⁹ The definition of *suki* is a "chink in one's armour", but more generally a "space or gap". This can be a gap between points in space, two points in time, and even between one thought and the next.

⁷⁰ Takuan makes it a point to distinguish between "unhindered, immediate reaction" and "fast reaction", i.e., "speed"; two very different concepts.

Of course, this could be, but from the point of view of an advanced stage of (Zen) Buddhism, to keep the mind in the lower abdomen is a low stage. It is the stage of practice, the stage of remembrance of seriousness, the stage referred to as 'seeking the free mind.' It is not the higher stage, it is the mood of seriousness.⁷¹

If you force your mind into your gut below your navel and determine to keep it there, your mind is taken up by the determination to keep it there, so your forward action is deficient and you become extraordinarily un-free.

[...] If you don't put your mind anywhere, it will pervade your whole body fully, spreading through your whole being, so that when you need hands it works in your hands, when you need feet it works in your feet, when you need eyes it works in your eyes. Since it is present wherever you need it, it makes functions you need possible. If you fix the mind in one place, it will be taken up by that place and thus deficient in function.

When you put the mind in one place, with the result that it is deficient elsewhere, this is called a warped mind. It is the warp that we disdain. Fixation on things is called becoming warped, and is the disdain of the Zen way.

If you don't think of where to put it, the mind pervades the whole being. Place the mind nowhere, employ your attention to each situation as it happens, according to what the opponents do."

The following excerpt explains zanshin as follows:⁷²

"Bringing back the mind. The sense of this expression is that when you strike a blow with a sword, if you think to yourself that you have scored, then the mind thinking you have scored stops and stays right there. Since your mind does not come back from the blow you have scored, you become careless and get hit by the adversary's "second sword".⁷³ Your initiative turns out to be for naught, and you lose by getting hit with a counter-blow.

When you strike a blow, do not keep your mind on where you hit; after striking, bring your mind back to observe the opponents mood changes; when one gets hit, one becomes resentful and angry.⁷⁴ When angered, an adversary becomes vehement; if you are inattentive, you will get hit.

Think of an adversary who has been hit as a raging wild boar. When you are conscious of having struck a blow, you let your mind tarry and are thus inattentive. You should be aware that your opponents energy will emerge when he is hit. Also, an adversary will be careful of a place where he has already been hit, so if you try the same strike again in the same way, you will miss. When you miss, your opponent will counter and hit you.

Bringing back the mind means bringing your mind back to your body, not letting it tarry at the point where you have struck. The thing is to bring your mind back to observe your opponents condition.

For example, when a master of a house, staying at home, sends a servant out on an errand, if the servant stays where he goes and does not return, he will be missing for further service. In the same way, if your mind lingers on things and does not return to its original state, your ability in martial arts will slip. For this reason, the matter of not fixating the mind on one point applies to everything, not only martial arts."

⁷¹ Cleary (2005) indicates "seriousness" in this context means "single-mindedness and effort" in learning how to "focus ones mind on one point"; a preliminary exercise in Zen practice.

⁷² Yagyu (1993)

⁷³ In Yagyu (*ibid.*), 'second sword' refers to a second attack or second action.

⁷⁴ In Yagyu (*ibid.*), "will" refers to "mental" intention, while "mood" is the bodily expression of intent. Mood and will do not always match, hence the term "You should have your will restrain your mood, so that it does not hurry."

Zanshin, very clearly, means much, much more than simply to “follow through” in the physical sense of the term. Learning and understanding the full meaning of zanshin is essential to one's progress in kendō.

One final piece of information in an attempt to try and bring all of this information together, and to help us understand the full meaning, is to look at the characters for zanshin. Zanshin is composed of two characters, *zan* (残) which translates as “remainder”, “left over”, or “balance”, and *shin* (心) which translates as “heart”, “mind”, or “spirit”. While the translation given for zanshin is “follow-through”, a literal translation from the characters, and in relation to the information given above in this section, would be “remaining mind”, “the mind that is left over”, or “balanced mind”.

MUSHIN & SUTEMI

Throughout this guide references to two important terms are made; *mushin* (無心) and *sutemi* (捨て身). These are such important concepts to the core philosophical aspects of kendō, or in fact any martial art, that they must be discussed in more detail.

Mushin. Mushin is composed of two characters: *mu* (無), “nothingness, nil”; *shin* (心), “heart, mind, spirit”, is often translated as “no mind”.

The following excerpt discusses *mushin*:⁷⁵

“According to Zen masters, *mushin* is operating when the actor is separate from the act and no thoughts interfere with action because the unconscious act is the most free and uninhibited. When *mushin* functions, the mind moves from one activity to another, flowing like a stream of water and filling every space.

The mind must always be in the state of ‘flowing’, for when it stops anywhere that means the flow is interrupted and it is this interruption that is injurious to the well-being of the mind. In the case of the swordsman, it means death.

When the swordsman stands against his opponent, he is not to think of the opponent, nor of himself, nor of his enemy's sword movements. He just stands there with his sword which, forgetful of all technique, is ready only to follow the dictates of the unconscious. The man has effaced himself as the wielder of the sword. When he strikes, it is not the man but the sword in the hand of the unconscious that strikes.”

This state of mind, that of “acting through the unconscious”, is the state of mind that all martial artists strive for. It is obtained only through diligent practice, until one can essentially react naturally v.s. having to think about what to do and when to do it. Intellectually trying to act without thinking, is not *mushin* as we are consciously placing a goal or objective in our mind. It is reaction through our unconscious thoughts, our natural action, that signifies *mushin*.

⁷⁵ Hyams (1982)

ACTING UNCONSCIOUSLY?

The concept of acting with the unconscious mind does not refer to some mystical state of being, nor does it mean to act “without thinking” or to act randomly. It also does not mean acting through some kind of innate reflex. Instead, it refers to acting naturally; action without “over-thinking” or actions based on previous bias. Each action is determined naturally, spontaneously, in the present moment. For very simplified examples, we do not think about how to walk up a flight of stairs while talking to somebody, or how to turn our head in response to somebody calling our name as we carry out a conversation with another person. We simply do it without conscious thought or effort while remaining completely calm during the process. This is what it means to act through the unconscious mind, in the present, and is the essence of *mushin*.

Sytemi. Sytemi is made of two characters: su(te) (捨て), “*abandon, sacrifice*”; mi (身), “*person, body, self*”, and is often translated to “*body abandoning*” but perhaps a more western translation is that of “*all or nothing*”.

When one attacks with the feeling of sytemi, one has the mind set of “all or nothing” or that “with this strike, I will either kill or be killed”. Sytemi acknowledges the fact that there is an ultimate finality stemming from this moment and that there will be no second chances, and no other possible outcomes.

To practice striking with a true feeling of sytemi, we must place all of our energy and spirit into the strike alone. Consideration for ourself, our protection, our opponent, whether or not we miss, whether or not we are counter-attacked, etc. is irrelevant. Thus to strike with sytemi, we must disregard our natural tendency to protect ourself. There should be no thoughts of “what if my opponent does this?”, “how will I stop them from doing that?”, and so on; we simply attack with the full sum of our spirit.

By using our full spirit with each attack in a sytemi-style way we act with but one focus: our strike. By eliminating all other concerns, our techniques will be more effective because our minds will be less hindered with doubts, or as it is explained in Zen ideology we can free our mind of attachments. This makes decisions and hence our actions more “in the moment” or “natural”.

But this takes us back to the beginning as this is the essence of mushin. As we train, we learn to perform our techniques while having to think about them less and less as they become more natural. This in turn helps us practice sytemi as our strikes can be done with full spirit without the need to overtly focus on the technique itself.

In a very over-simplified way, sytemi helps us learn mushin and mushin helps us to attack with sytemi. By practicing one we learn the other, developing our understanding of each in a circular manner.

KI KEN TAI ICHI

Ki ken tai ichi is the essence behind being able to perform a strike properly both physically and spiritually. Ki: (気) “*spirit/energy*”, ken: (剣) “*sword*”, tai: (体) “*body*”, ichi: (一致) “*(done) as one*”.

A direct translation of the above terms is “*spirit, sword, body as one*”. The usual interpretation for beginners is “*in order to land an effective strike against your opponent you must ‘yell’ the name of the target the moment your shinai lands and as your foot hits the floor.*”

However, we can read a lot deeper into this phrase.

Note: The beginner's explanation of ki ken tai ichi is just a fraction of the full meaning.

Ki. Ki refers to our spirit/energy, which can have both mental and physical components. One obvious form of this is our *kiai*, the vocal expression of our mental and physical energy; the energy of our “fighting spirit”. If we are able to project this energy forward we will express *seme* (攻め), the “pressure” we apply to our opponent. Ki then must be present not only during a strike, but at all times.

Ken. Ken refers to our weapon, but not simply to the act of swinging it to strike. In *kendō*, one's weapon is the primary source of offense and defense, and is rooted in our *kamae*. A strong *kamae* creates *suki* in the opponent, and removes them from ourselves. Thus *ken* refers to our weapon before, during, and after each strike.

Tai. *Tai* refers to our body, but not to just our foot hitting the floor. It refers to all aspects of the body: posture, breathing, footwork, balance, position, grip, etc...all of which must be in correct form.

Ki ken tai ichi should not be considered simply as something we “turn on” as we strike but rather that only by *first* obtaining ki ken tai ichi will we then be able to perform a proper strike. All of the above factors (and more!) must be included in our interpretation. Once done, then we can understand just how important this simple statement really is.

SAN-SAPPŌ, MITSU NO SEN, & THE FOUR SICKNESSES

San-Sappō: “The Three Laws”

The *san-sappō* (三冊法) are guidelines on defeating an opponent.

Ken (w)o korusu. (剣を殺す) “Kill their sword”. Control the opponents *kamae* and their attacks such that they become ineffective. The sword is the source of the opponents ability to attack as well as their method of defense. *Ken (w)o korusu*, and your opponent can't attack nor can they defend.

Ki (w)o korusu. (気を殺す) “Kill their spirit”. Mentally/spiritually dominate your opponent, such that they begin to doubt themselves and hesitate in their actions. Doubt and hesitation create *suki* in your opponent creating flaws in their offense and defense. *Ki (w)o korusu* and your opponent is defeated before you even attack them.

THE KI KEN TAI UMBRELLA

Ki ken tai ichi, while it seems simple on the surface, encompasses a lot of subtle detail which is why it is so central to *kendō*. There are other terms in *kendō* which describe a unison of action, such as *shin-ki-ryoku-itchi* (心気力一致) and *shin-gi-tai-itchi* (心技体一致). *Shin ki ryoku ichi* indicates that one's heart (*shin*) able to predict the opponent's action through *mushin*, guides the dynamic mental state of one's spirit (*ki*), which in turn dictates one's action via appropriate *waza* (*ryoku*), all three aspects acting in unison. *Shin gi tai ichi* refers to transitioning from intent in the mind (*shin*) being smoothly expressed through the ability (*gi*) of one's body (*tai*), i.e., thought being put into effective action. However these all fall under the umbrella of *ki ken tai ichi*. *Ki ken tai ichi* is elaborated on somewhat on p. 147.

Note: There is no one specific formula or method on how to use the *san-sappō*. They are generalized methods through which one can expose or create *suki* in the opponent. The number of ways one can apply these ideas to an opponent is vast to say the least.

Waza (w) o korusu. (技を殺す) “Kill their techniques”. Disrupt your opponent's techniques such that they become ineffective. In the most general sense this means if your opponent tries to use “kill their sword” or “kill their spirit” against you, you must make these attempts fail. Or, as a specific example, disrupt the opponent's attempts at using their tokui waza (得意技) or “specialty”/“strongest” technique(s).

Mitsu no Sen: “The Three Initiatives”

The *mitsu no sen* (三つの先) are the three (advantageous) opportunities of attack. In very general terms, this can be explained as follows:

Sen no sen. (先の先) This term translates to “taking initiative against the initiative of the opponent”. Sen no sen is when one makes an attack as the opponent is initiating an attack or movement.

Go no sen. (後先の先) This translates to “taking initiative after the opponent takes initiative”. This is when one responds to the opponents attack with a counter; the attack is launched, recognized, then responded to.

Sen sen no sen. (先々の先) This can be interpreted as “initiative against an opponent attempting to use sen no sen against you”. Similar to go no sen in that one responds to the opponent's attack, however instead of recognizing the attack after it is launched, one has prior knowledge of the attack and counter-attacking using that knowledge.⁷⁶

Shi-Kai: “The Four Sicknesses/Admonitions”

The *shi-kai* (四戒) are the four “afflictions” which cloud the mind.

Ku. (恐怖, “fear”) Fear of the opponent, fear of being scored on, or fear of the unknown. Fear leads to hesitation, doubt, loss of opportunity, and prevents one from reacting naturally and spontaneously.

Gi. (疑, “doubt”) Doubt in oneself or in ones techniques leads to lowered self-confidence and a lessening of the spirit.

Kyu. (驚, “surprise”) Surprise is due to a momentary loss of ones connection between oneself and the opponent. Surprise momentarily inhibits ones ability to think and act freely.

Waku. (惑, “confusion”) Confusion indicates the complete loss of a connection between oneself and the opponent, or the loss of a connection between one's intent and one's physical action(s).

THE THREE INITIATIVES

The mitsu no sen are an important concept in kendō. There are a variety of explanations, and even different names, explaining what they are. Musashi (2012) categorized the mitsu no sen as ken no sen (懸の先), “advance initiative”; tai no sen (待の先), “waiting initiative”; and tai tai no sen (体々の先), “simultaneous initiative”. These correspond directly to the more standard sen no sen, go no sen, and sen sen no sen.

⁷⁶ Prior knowledge is gained by either perceiving the opponent's intent or luring/inviting them to make a particular attack.

Note: The four sicknesses are connected to the san-sappō, however this is beyond the scope of this text. One need only consider the san-sappō and their effect on an opponent to see the connection.

THE FUNDAMENTAL THEOREM OF KENDŌ?

Kendō is composed of an immense number of techniques and concepts centered on the combative scenario of Japanese swordplay. Many of these concepts are intertwined with one another.

Even concepts which seem to be of completely different mindsets have inherent relations. One specific example is shikake and ōji waza or “attacking” and “counterattacking” techniques. While these are related in the obvious sense that they are both ways to hit a target their relation is much deeper than this.

Using this example as a starting point, the intent is to show how many common concepts in kendō can be generalized from their “beginner” definitions to ones which give rise to a much wider scope and attempt to broaden our understanding of these concepts. The result of this generalization will be to show how shikake and ōji waza are related to one another so deeply that they can in fact be considered the same thing. Through this relation, a simplification of kendō appears.

Basic Definitions

The following are basic definitions for the ideas discussed throughout.

Suki. “(1) Gap, space, (2) break, interval, (3) chink (in ones armour), chance, opportunity.” In kendō suki is used to refer to an opening in the opponents (or your own) defenses. This opening can either be physical, for example an exposed target area, or mental such as a momentary loss of concentration, focus, or connection with the opponent.

Shikake waza. Shikake waza are techniques in which one initiates an attack. Examples of shikake waza would be tobi-komi waza, harai waza, katsugi waza, etc... The general idea is that the kendōka creates or takes advantage of an existing suki by attacking with strong spirit.

Ōji waza. Ōji waza are techniques in which one responds to an attack initiated by the opponent. Examples of ōji waza would be nuki waza, suriage waza, uchi-otoshi waza, etc...

Connection. This refers to the mental and physical connection one establishes with the opponent. A very rudimentary example of this connection is the one established through basic metsuke (目付け) or “point of observation.”⁷⁷ In this example, the point of observation is the eyes of the opponent. Once this rudimentary connection is established one begins to perceive the opponents physical movements and attacks through peripheral vision. A true connection allows one to perceive the opponent's intentions before they happen.

⁷⁷ The full term is “enzan no metsuke” (遠山の目付け) or “looking at a distant mountain.” The concept of this is that one looks at something as a whole v.s. looking at a specific detail at the expense of others. A western equivalent is “can't see the forest for the trees.”

Sente. (先手) “*First move, initiative*”, closely related to sen. The idea of sen is that one is “ready to act.” A more concise explanation is that one never allows a *suki* to be passed up.

Sytemi. “*Body abandoning.*” Sytemi can be interpreted as “all or nothing.” This stems from the idea that in actual combat each strike must be performed with the mentality that to “kill, be killed, or both” are the only possible outcomes. The slightest hesitation or doubt would only result in your own death.

Kamae. “*Stance or position.*” The immediate notion of kamae in kendō refers to the stance one assumes with the shinai or bokutō, e.g., chūdan, jōdan, gedan, etc...

Kiai. “*Energy integration/union.*” For beginners this refers to the shouts used when attacking; the verbal expression of our “fighting spirit.”⁷⁸

Ki ken tai ichi. “*Spirit/energy, sword, body as one.*” This is one of the most commonly referenced ideas in kendō, and is often introduced very early to a kendōka. The most basic explanation of ki ken tai ichi is that in order to strike effectively one must strike the target at the same time as the foot lands with strong kiai all in a smooth motion.

⁷⁸ Kakegoe is the term for shouting. While they are related in kendō, kiai and kakegoe are most definitely not the same thing.

Zanshin. “*Mind that is left-over/remaining.*” Zanshin is most commonly introduced as “follow-through” (after a strike) in kendō. The beginner’s explanation of zanshin is that after one strikes “you must move past your opponent and return to kamae.”

Seme. “*To attack, or to assault.*” Seme is often translated as “pressure” in kendō, but in the sense of a mental or physical pressure applied (to the opponent) as a result of one’s imminent attack as *perceived by the opponent*.

Mitsu no sen. “*The three sens.*” A somewhat more advanced topic in kendō, this is the three opportunities at which point one can attack the opponent and have an advantage. The mitsu no sen are (1) sen no sen, (2) go no sen, and (3) sen sen no sen or essentially “attacking as your opponent initiates”, “attacking after your opponent initiates”, and “initiating an attack to draw your opponent’s attack, then attacking the *suki* made by their action” respectively.

San-sappo. “*The three laws.*” These are three methods through which one can defeat their opponent: *ken (w)ō korosu*, *ki (w)ō korosu*, and *waza (w)ō korosu* or “kill their sword”, “kill their spirit”, and “kill their techniques” respectively.

The four sicknesses. These are four afflictions of the mind which have the effect of disrupting ones ability to express/perform *sen*, *sutemi* (attacks), *ki ken tai ichi*, *zanshin*, or to disrupt ones *kamae* or connection. The four sicknesses are fear, doubt, surprise, and confusion.

Extending our Definitions

The basic definitions can now be expanded with more detail.

Ki Ken Tai Ichi Revisited

Ki ken tai ichi is the easiest place to start in our expansion. The basic definition given is often assumed to be the entirety of what ki ken tai ichi implies.

The basic definition of ki ken tai ichi given above, p. 146, interprets the components as: *ki* implies *kiai*, your verbal expression of your “fighting spirit”, *ken* implies the sword striking a target, and *tai* implies your (front) foot landing during *fumi-komi*, all of which must happen simultaneously in a smooth motion. But what about when we aren’t striking? Is ki ken tai ichi something that we primarily ignore and then “turn on” when we strike? Examining each of the components of ki ken tai ichi, expanding on their meaning, will help show that the basic definition is really only the tip of the iceberg.

Ki. *Ki* translates as “spirit” and “energy” whereas the basic explanation given above implies *ki* is a “forceful yell” at the moment of striking. While *kiai* in *kendō* relates to yelling, yelling is not the same as *kiai*, nor is it the same as *ki*.

Kiai, literally translated, is “*Energy (ki) union/integration (ai)*” and is the natural by-product of the mind and body working together⁷⁹. An example of “real” *kiai* is the automatic grunt people utter the moment they lift something heavy. We don’t think of making this sound, it just happens naturally. This is simply the effect of our mental intent to lift the object combining with our body, motion, and muscles acting on that intent. This grunt is often a far cry from a “forceful yell” but it is real *kiai*. *Ki* then cannot only refer to *kiai*, even when limited to the yell at the moment of striking, as *kiai* refers to a *coordination* of energy whereas *ki* refers to the energy itself.

The mental component of our energy could be thought of as a composition of two previous ideas: *sen* and *sutemi*. In this context *ki* refers to an abstract notion; the energy or focus from a particular mindset. For *sen* its readiness to attack. For *sutemi* its determination to carry through with our intent regardless of outcome.

⁷⁹ Kiyota (2002)

In each of the above (kiai, sen, and sūtemi) ki is a component. However each of these aspects are essential not just during our strikes but *before, during, and after*. Given these broader interpretations perhaps a better translation for ki, with regards to a more generalized notion of ki ken tai ichi, would be that it refers to ones spiritual and/or mental “intent.”

Ken. Ken translates as sword, but in the context of the basic explanation of ki ken tai ichi given, it specifically pertains to the sword striking the target. However our sword serves more than just as a means of striking a target. What about before our strike, i.e., our kamae?

The sword serves a means of offense and as defense in that an active kamae can create sūki in our opponent as well as prevent them from appearing in our own defenses. What about immediately after the strike, i.e., during zanshin? An effective strike itself has many components, but in the context of “after the hit” the sword must be held in the proper position and at a correct angle. Aside from emulating a cut, this helps to maintain our posture and balance and also helps to protect ourselves from counter-attack.

Tai. Tai translates as body, but in the context above tai was limited to footwork. If we extend tai to the more general sense, i.e. the body before, during, and after a strike, tai refers to movement, posture, balance, grip, breathing, and any other number of body movements.

Given these generalized notions of ki, ken, and tai, ki ken tai ichi can be extended to situations before, during, and after a strike. This allows us to address our original question of whether or not ki ken tai ichi was something that is simply turned on only when we wish to strike. The answer ought to be clear: “no.” Ki ken tai ichi must be present at all times or we couldn’t begin, land, or finish a strike in an effective or meaningful way.

Zanshin Revisited

Zanshin literally translates as “remaining mind” or “the mind that is left over”, but is commonly given the meaning of “follow-through” as indicated in our basic definitions. But this basic interpretation pertains to physical actions, where as the literal translation of zanshin pertains to the mind. It makes sense that since kendō has both mental and physical components a stronger definition of zanshin encompasses both of these.

ZANSHIN & YŪKŌ DATOTSU

According to FIK (2017), “Yūko datotsu is defined as an accurate strike or thrust made onto the datotsu-bui of the opponent’s kendō-gu with shinai at its datotsu-bu in high spirits and correct posture, being followed by zanshin.” Zanshin is specifically defined as “the state of alertness both mental and physical, against the opponent’s counterattack.” Comparing this to the usual beginner definition of zanshin, that of “moving past the opponent” as on p. 118, it is clear the FIK definition of zanshin alludes to something much more.

This is alluded to in the FIK definition of proper zanshin with regards to yūkō-datotsu as “follow-through and a readiness against counter-attack”.⁸⁰ In essence a return to “readiness” mentally and physically. This has a very obvious connection to the notion of sen. From this we can see that physical zanshin brings us safely back to our ready position, kamae, whereas the mental component of zanshin enables us to maintain sen.

What about motions or actions other than striking? We can extend zanshin to a more general sense where it is present before, during, and after a strike. From our definitions *suki* can be both physical and mental openings. In order to maintain mental and physical readiness at all times one must exhibit a constant zanshin: a return to readiness after *each and every action*. This encompasses actions such as moving, dodging, striking, parrying, etc...but also to observing the opponent, looking for openings, adjusting kamae, confirming strike validity, etc...to even minute actions such as breathing, blinking, hearing your teammates call your name during shiai, etc...

This extended notion of zanshin, constantly returning ourselves to readiness, gives a much more all-encompassing definition. Clearly the basic definition of “follow-through” is an aspect of zanshin, but it is not the full definition. In this general context a better interpretation would be that one demonstrates a constant “return to readiness” or a “sustained alertness.”

Sen and Sūtemi

Another relatively simple relation that is not necessarily ever pointed out during practice is the relation between sen and sūtemi (attacks).

Specifically, there needs to be expression of one in order to express the other in a somewhat circular relation. That is they are both learned and practiced at the same time with one naturally strengthening the other. In order to attack without hesitation or doubt, as indicated in the definition of sūtemi, one must be in a constant state of “readiness to act” as defined by sen. And in order to be “ready to act” as defined by sen, one must possess the ability to attack without concern for outcome as defined by sūtemi.

By examining this relation, we uncover one of the core components of kihon (fundamental/basics) kendō. When one practices kihon, apart from practice of basic waza, maai (distance & spacing), etc..., the common instruction given is always the simple notion of “attack, attack, attack!”, especially beginners. And why is this so important for kihon? The answer is simple: *by eliminating the choices one has during kihon practice exclusively to shikake waza, it naturally forces the practice of the sen-sūtemi cycle.*

The necessity of fully incorporating this cycle into ones practice, and explaining why it is of fundamental importance, will be shown in the following sections.

⁸⁰ FIK is the acronym for the International Kendo Federation. See FIK (*ibid.*).

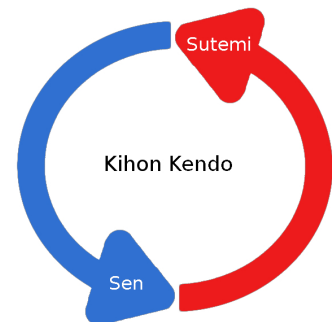


Figure 235: Sen and sūtemi cyclic relation.

Note: The relation between sen and sūtemi uncovers one of the core aspects of practicing kendō basics.

Seme

We can now start to pull the various pieces together and begin the next topic: seme. Seme is relatively simple to define and in fact the definition given at the start of the article is exactly what seme is. It is a pressure put on the opponent and while it is most often a perceived pressure versus a physical one, it is not strictly limited to this. The difficult issue, which we are now prepared to tackle, is the question “how do I make seme?”

Much like all things in kendō, seme is something that can only be discovered through years of practice. However the *verbal* answer as to how one makes it isn't all that complex given the discussions above. There are three aspects that we can break seme into: (1) “physical” seme, (2) “perceived” seme, and (3) “spiritual” seme. Before we go on, let's recall the definition of seme: “to attack, or to assault.” Seme is often translated as “pressure” in kendō but it is in the sense of a mental or physical pressure as a result of ones imminent attack *as perceived by the opponent*.⁸¹

It is important to note that there is no *guaranteed* source of seme, only *potential* sources. This is the difficulty beginners have with the notion of seme and is the reason for its elusiveness. The lack of guaranteed seme production is due to the fact that it depends both on oneself *and on the reactions and perceptions of the opponent*.

Physical seme. Physical seme pertains to a physical movement which conveys ones intent to attack. The act of moving toward the opponent, the visible initiation of ones attack, and attempts to physically disrupt the opponents defenses are all examples of which can potentially create seme as they are all a possible prelude to attack.⁸²

It ought to be obvious that these examples will only produce seme if one performs them while expressing sen and of course sūtemi. In fact, seme will not be produced until ones expression of sen is established with the opponent.⁸³ This is the basis for all types of seme, however physical seme is a direct consequence of the opponent *knowing* you will attack and *seeing you physically begin that process*.

This relates to kihon kendō. Establishing ones expression of sen means that the opponent knows, without question, that should you perceive a sūki in their defenses there will be no hesitation on your part in attempting an attack. But the only kind of attack which will fully convince the opponent of this readiness to attack their sūki is a sūtemi style attack, making physical seme is a *by-product of kihon kendō* in the sense that one practices being ready to attack with sūtemi style strikes. This is outlined on p. 149.

UNDERSTANDING SEME

Seme is a complex topic. To help explain it, seme is *artificially* broken up into three separate types, each with hurdle that must be overcome:

- Hurdle #1: Sen & sūtemi.
- Seme: Physical.
- Hurdle #2: Connection.
- Seme: Perceived.
- Hurdle #3: Perceived seme.
- Seme: Projected/spiritual.

These boundaries are somewhat contrived, but to make these ideas tenable lines have to be drawn somewhere.

⁸¹ This is the core of what makes seme difficult; it doesn't matter what *you* think you are doing or how *you* think it will be perceived, all that matters is how the opponent *actually* perceives it.

⁸² The saying in kendō, “seme with the front foot, attack with the rear foot”, can be understood by using dynamic weight distribution, p. 44, while pressuring the opponent.

⁸³ Expression of sen means showing the opponent that you are ready to attack without hesitation. Blocking without an intent to counter, excessively retreating, or anything showing you are not prepared to strike prohibits your expression of sen.

THE FIRST HURDLE

The first barrier or hurdle one must overcome when learning to produce seme is that of establishing your expression of sen with the opponent. Physical seme is a direct by-product of kihon kendō through attacking with the feeling of sūtemi.

Perceived seme. Perceived seme is much more difficult to produce as it depends both on your own ability to produce physical seme and on your opponent *perceiving* seme when you are not physically exerting it, i.e., your opponent perceives your intent and your ability to attack.⁸⁴

Connection. Before going further, we must clearly define connection. To exert perceived seme, one must establish and maintain a connection with the opponent; this has mental and physical aspects. The mental connection implies perceiving how the opponent will act in situations, their intents, perceiving of their level of focus, ki ken tai ichi, and zanshin. The physical connection allows one to react to physical movements, maintain distance, adjust kamae, etc. A connection allows you to match the opponent mentally and physically, keeping a balance until a *suki* is found or created. Maintaining an effective connection to the opponent is yet another barrier in understanding seme.

As this seme is perceived by the opponent it affects them, via the four sicknesses, in two ways: their offense and defense. That is they become fearful of your attacks and doubt of their own initiatives due to perceiving your intent to counter-attack.

Clearly, this type of seme is rooted in the notion of sen in the same way as physical seme. However, in order to extend seme from physical to perceived we must also express ki ken tai ichi and zanshin.

Expression of ki ken tai ichi implies our intent, kamae, posture, and movements are unified with intent to attack, while expression of zanshin implies we are constantly able to return to readiness. This eliminates *suki* in ourselves and allows us to pursue them in our opponent. These are the conditions under which the opponent will perceive seme.

Projected/spiritual seme. Projected seme is an extension of perceived seme and is the most difficult to produce. At the same time it is the most powerful in terms of its effect on the opponent. The idea of projected seme is that one is able to *pro-actively push their intent into the opponents perception* instead of passively waiting for it to be noticed.

The difference between the two types is linked to the strength of ones kamae. Specifically, being able to use kamae to *constantly* challenge the opponent. The essence of this is that this type of seme is *proactive*; one threatens the opponent when in position to attack, and “*brings the threat toward them*” if not in position.⁸⁵ This pro-activity is constant, which is the source of this seme’s devastating effects.

⁸⁴ Essentially, your opponent becomes pressured by the idea of your *potential* to attack or to counter their strikes.

THE SECOND HURDLE

Establishing and being able to maintain a connection with the opponent is another hurdle one must overcome in order to produce seme.

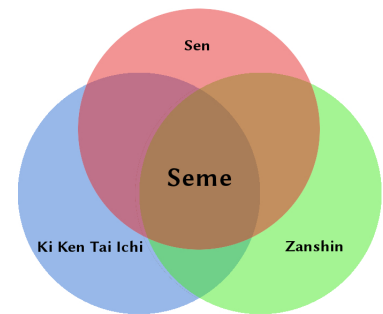


Figure 236: Simultaneous sen, ki ken tai ichi, and zanshin produce seme.

THE THIRD HURDLE

Projected seme is an extension of perceived seme. This makes establishing and maintaining perceived seme itself a hurdle that must be overcome.

⁸⁵ For example if they are out of range or retreating move toward them, forcing them to deal with your potential attack whether they are ready or not. In essence, you “control the pace” of the encounter.

While kamae is a core aspect of perceived seme, it is much more important here as it is the source of our proactive threat. If ones kamae is perceived to be weak at any time, then it cannot be perceived as a threat. In order to project seme, the threat of attack must be constant; any *suki* in this offense can break this perception.

Strong kamae can be described as being *active*. Instead of kamae being a static position of the sword, it has active mental and physical components; ones intent is displayed as well as *pro-actively threatening and adapting to the opponent*. Given this understanding we can sum up our results as:

Ki ken tai ichi, sen, and zanshin expressed properly have the effect of producing seme through ones kamae.

Mitsu no Sen, San-Sappō, & the Four Sicknesses Revisited

The meaning of the san-sappō are clear from their descriptions. By disrupting the opponents kamae, spirit, and waza we can create *suki*. Each are carried out through our kamae, seme, and expression of sen, ki ken tai ichi, and zanshin.

The four sicknesses are effects produced through seme and are sources of *suki*. The primary result being disruption of ones connection, sen, ki ken tai ichi, and zanshin. The san-sappō and four sicknesses are related in that the use of the san-sappō can produce one or all of the four sicknesses. Should the opponent suffer from one of the four sicknesses one can more effectively perform the san-sappō. The core idea is that they both stem from an application of seme.

The mitsu no sen are three opportunities where one can strike the opponent. However, given our discussion of seme, the mitsu no sen can now be interpreted as three types of *suki* made *through the application of seme*. Defining the mitsu no sen in this context gives:

Sen no Sen. Apply seme, inducing the opponent to strike with a basic sen-sytemi attack. Strike the opponent just as they are initiating their strike.

Go no Sen. Apply seme. The opponent attacks *believing they will counter* with sen no sen. Their attack is recognized and responded to via a counter attack (*ōji waza*).

Sen Sen no Sen. Apply seme and draw out a specific response from the opponent, due to them believing they can counter with sen no sen. Respond with an *ōji waza* using the prior knowledge of the coming attack.

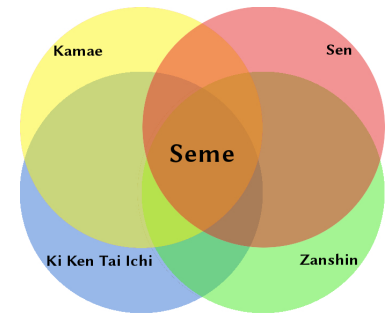


Figure 237: Simultaneous sen, ki ken tai ichi, zanshin, and an active kamae enables projected seme.

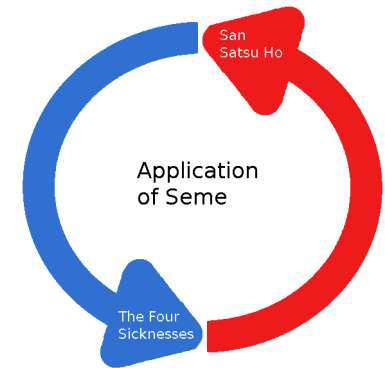


Figure 238: Application of seme.

Kata	Uchidachi	Shidachi
1	Sen no sen	Sen sen no sen
2	Sen no sen	Sen sen no sen
3	Sen no sen	Sen sen no sen
4	Sen no sen	Go no sen
5	Sen no sen	Sen sen no sen
6	Sen no sen	Go no sen
7	Sen no sen	Go no sen

Table 2: The mitsu no sen are exemplified in the nihon kendō kata. Uchidachi attempts sen no sen throughout while the shidachi performs sen sen no sen in kata 1, 2, 3, and 5 and go no sen in kata 4, 6, and 7.

BACK TO THE BASICS

If the opponent doesn't respond to your seme with a strike, and instead retreats, blocks, freezes, etc.. instead of countering according to the mitsu no sen, initiate a basic sen-sytemi style attack of your own. Don't forget the basic opportunities!

Unification of Shikake Waza & Ōji Waza

These waza often induce separate mindsets with beginners; with shikake waza, p. 127, one initiates the strike, with ōji waza, p. 129, one waits to attempt a counterstrike. This may work with beginners but it is unlikely against an experienced opponent. The issue is seme.

Seme has the effect of producing *suki* in the opponent in three ways:

1. Seme produces a mental *suki* in the opponent by a loss of confidence, focus, concentration, or a break in *zanshin*.
2. Production of a physical *suki* in that the opponent reacts or moves out of fear of impending attack, i.e., attempted block, parry, dodge, or some other movement.
3. Production of a physical *suki* due to the opponent being pressured into initiating an attack.

The first two allow attack via shikake waza however in the last an opportunity for ōji waza exists. Both opportunities are created through seme. In this context there are not separate mindsets of attack and defense or preparing for shikake or ōji waza. *Both shikake waza and ōji waza opportunities arise from our intent to strike. Which waza is used and which target is attacked is determined purely by the reaction of the opponent.*

It is through our seme that our attack on the opponent begins. In conjunction with our *kamae* we are constantly applying pressure, i.e., to *pro-actively* induce *suki*. In this context we are always the aggressor and always initiate the attack. It simply becomes a matter of how we perform the strike.

Through the application of seme, shikake and ōji waza lose the separation of offense and defense and are unified into attacking waza. Their distinction is now only through which *type* of *suki* we land a strike on the opponent. The following quotation encompasses this idea:⁸⁶

"If you move I strike. If you do not move I strike."

Through this unification we obtain a simplification in kendō in that there is only one method of attack. The defeat of the opponent comes in creating the *suki*, the waza and the strike are determined by the type of *suki*. This simplification is summed up by the following quote (taken somewhat out of context):⁸⁷

"In the beginners mind there are so many possibilities, but in the experts there are so few."

ATTACK OR DEFENSE

Beginners often have two distinct mentalities they will adopt during *keiko*: offensive and defensive. Meaning that they will either decide to be aggressive and attack or they will wait for the opponent to attack and attempt a counter attack; they cannot do both. This choice is usually made well in advance of the actual striking opportunity and often without taking the opponent's behavior into consideration. Essentially this corresponds to choosing between exclusive use of shikake waza or exclusive use of ōji waza respectively. It is through the application of seme that this pre-determined "either/or" mentality is eliminated. Shikake waza and ōji waza both become attacking waza, only the type of opening changes. The type of opening is a result of seme applied to the opponent.

⁸⁶ Kipling (2004)

⁸⁷ Suzuki (1970)

A ROLE MODEL OF MODERN KENDŌ

To close this chapter I will quote one of kendō's many modern and exemplary figures: Sensei Moriji Mochida. Mochida sensei was one of five kendōka to be awarded the rank of tenth *dan* (段) after the second World War.⁸⁸ Practicing regularly well into his eighties, he was thought to have embodied the conceptual aspects of kendō as equally as the physical.

"There are many people who practice kendo that believe that they have completed their practice of the kendo fundamentals during the beginner stage and only attempt to relate to them theoretically thereafter. However, this is a big misconception to the pursuit of true kendo.

Until you are 50 years old, you must endeavor to practice the fundamentals of kendo and make it a part of you.

It has taken me 50 years to learn the fundamentals of kendo by body. It was not until I became 50 years old that I started my true kendo training. This is because I practiced kendo with all my heart and spirit.

When one becomes 60 years old, the legs are not as strong as they once were. It is the spirit that overcomes this weakness. It is through a strong spirit that one can overcome the inevitability of the body becoming physically weaker.

When I became 70 years old, the entire body became weaker. I found that the next step is to practice the concept of not moving one's spirit (immovable spirit) when practicing kendo. When one is able to achieve the state of an immovable spirit, your opponents' spirit and will manifest itself to you. I tried to achieve a calm and immovable spirit at this stage in my life.

When I became 80 years old, I achieved the state of the immovable spirit. However, there are times when a random thought will enter my mind. I am striving to eliminate these random thoughts at this state in my life."

⁸⁸ According to McCall (2015), in 2000 the All Japan Kendō Federation changed their rank structure and removed the possibility of granting any further ninth or tenth dan ranks. The five tenth dan ranks awarded after WW2 were: Nakano Sosuke (1885–1963), Ogawa Kinnosuke (1884–1962), Mochida Moriji (1885–1974), Saimura Goro (1887–1969), and Oasa Yuji (1887–1974).

Note: The idea of having an "immovable spirit" (不動心, fudōshin) is a prevalent idea in kendō. In fact, the kanji for this is often written on tenugui as a reminder of a kendōka's ultimate goal.



Figure 239: Sensei Moriji Mochida, Hanshi, tenth dan (1885-1974).

KEIKO: “PRACTICE”

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THIS CHAPTER GIVES A description of the various types of partnered drills and exercises kendōka perform during dōjō practice, referred to generally as *keiko* (稽古). The initial parts of the chapter are devoted to explaining important ideas for *keiko*, specifically the proper attitude, goals, and methods needed to maximize the effectiveness of your practice sessions. The later sections give descriptions of the specific kinds of exercises one will encounter, namely:

uchi-komi geiko (打ち込み稽古), p. 159

kakari geiko (掛稽古), p. 159

ai-kakari geiko (相掛稽古), p. 160

shiai geiko (試合稽古), p. 160

EFFECTIVE KEIKO

Keiko, while many people use this word to refer to sparring with an opponent, means “practice” or “study”. If one examines the kanji used for *keiko*, it is composed of *kei* (稽) which translates as “think” or “consider” and *ko* (古), which means “old” or “aged”. Performing *keiko* could then be interpreted as considering the things you have done before or of the things done by others before you, in the context of trying to improve upon your knowledge. Using this definition *keiko* then refers to any type of training done, mentally or physically, in order to try and improve oneself. Regardless of how you choose to interpret *keiko*, one thing is for certain; it pertains to *practice*.

Practice is the only way in which you can become more skilled in *kendō*. That being said, there is no right way or wrong way in which to perform *keiko*, rather there are effective ways in which to practice as well as methods to the contrary. Your progress is directly linked to the amount and quality of practice you do.⁸⁹

DELIBERATE PRACTICE

There are many ways in which one learns, however modern evidence shows that just doing something is not enough; one must be engaged, mentally and physically, in methodical practice. How well one improves with practice depends on many factors: how one approaches practice, the activity itself, the person, frequency of practice, and the type and availability of feedback. In *kendō* it is important to be fully engaged mentally and physically in the exercises and drills done, i.e., don't simply do them on “auto-pilot”. Set goals, focus on specific areas, and use feedback to alter your approach to training.

The Deliberate Practice Process

1. Repetitive performance.
2. Rigorous skills assessment.
3. Specific feedback.
4. Better skills performance.

Skills Required by the Learner

1. Planning/organization.
2. Concentration/dedication.
3. Repetition/revision.
4. Study style/self reflection.

See Clark and Mayer (2008), Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993), and Duvivier et al. (2011).

⁸⁹ Practice here refers to two types: physical practice, i.e., doing the exercises, and practice by observing/watching. The latter is known as *mitori-geiko* or “learning by watching”.

Avoid practicing alone. Kendō has so many subtleties that it is impossible to truly progress without the input of others, such as a sensei, a senpai, your peers, etc... Secondly, progress in kendō is dependent upon having an opponent, and while you can practice and become proficient in suburi on your own, being good at suburi does not make you good at kendō.⁹⁰ You need an active opponent to teach you about maai, proper kamae, zanshin, seme, timing, etc...

⁹⁰ Suburi here refers to both swing practice as well as more complex forms such as uchi-komi, kiri-kaeshi, etc...

Energy. Practice every strike, drill, and exercise with full energy. Practicing for long amounts of time is unnecessary if you put the proper amount of effort into your keiko. It is easy to “hold back” during practice with the idea of saving your energy for a strong opponent, or for a particularly difficult drill. One practice strike, done with full effort is better than any number of halfhearted strikes. *Only you can make yourself put in the required effort.*

Note: A one hour practice versus a two or even three hour practice is sufficient if you practice with full effort and spirit. As stated in Lowry (2004): *ichi-go, ichi-e* or one encounter, one chance. Treat each swing as if it is your last chance to practice; make it count!

Focus. Have the proper state of mind when in the dōjō. Leave all of your extraneous thoughts and emotions outside of the dōjō. Focus on what you are doing and put all of your concentration into that.

Large strikes. Use large strikes as much as possible in the early stages. If you focus on small strikes your kendō becomes “small”.

Seek help. Seek help from those who are better than you. Learn to identify your own weaknesses in an honest and humble way and seek the help of somebody who doesn't have the same ones. This could be a sensei, a senpai, your peers, etc... They all have something to teach you; don't waste this invaluable resource!

Awareness. Practice each exercise with full attention, focus, and energy. It is very easy to allow yourself to become “robotic” while doing drill repetitions. Be mindful of your effort, concentration, and approach to each exercise. You must also be mindful of what you are actually doing during your practice. Proprioception refers to our awareness of our body and muscles, and their position and movement in three dimensions.⁹¹ It is easy to lose track of this unless you actively attempt to be aware of it. What we are *actually* doing and how we are moving is often quite different from what you *think* you are doing.

⁹¹ Proprioception (noun), Proprioceptive (adj.): “Relating to stimuli that are produced and perceived within an organism, especially those connected with the position and movement of the body.”

Basics. Practice the basics regularly, regardless of rank or skill.

Progress & the Pattern of Learning

Progress in kendō will advance at different rates dependent on the individual, but there is a common pattern followed by everyone.

The Pattern of Learning

Kendōka improve by following a certain cycle. This cycle is shown, very roughly, in figure 240. The first phase is the “basics phase”.

Step #1 : Footwork. The first thing kendōka learn is footwork: how to stand, how to move, position of the feet, how to balance their weight, etc...

Step #2 : Kamae. Once footwork is learned, basic chūdan kamae is next. Proper grip, proper position, tension in the hands and fingers, etc...

Step #3 : Strikes. After kamae and footwork the kendōka begins to learn the basic strikes. This starts with basic suburi, then striking actual targets, finally progressing to striking targets using fumi-komi and more complex drills such as kiri-kaeshi. Soon the kendōka reaches a transition point in which they are ready to practice in bōgu.

Step #4 : Waza. The kendōka now begins to learn various waza as applications of basic strikes; they are now learning to fence.

Step #5 : Keiko. The kendōka engages in regular sparring with an opponent and attempts to apply what they have learned.

Step #6 : Re-examination of Basics. This completes the cycle and we are taken back to step #1 where the kendōka must re-examine their ability in each of the steps.

Note: From Donohue (2004), “according to Musashi ‘practicing a thousand days is said to be a discipline, and practicing ten thousand days is said to be refining.’ One must practice continuously and make lots of mistakes so that one can be corrected and be ever on the lookout for ways to refine ones art.”

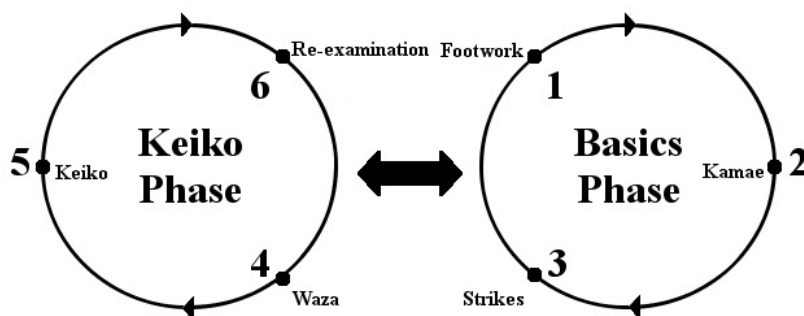


Figure 240: Steps in the learning cycle of kendō.

Progress in Kendō

Knowing the pattern of learning we need to be able to identify which stage we are at. There is no easy way to do this, save for experience, except for the last stage: step #6, re-examination of basics.

When a kendōka has reached this stage they almost always feel as though they have reached some type of plateau where they are “doing everything wrong” or “not getting any better”.

What has happened is they have improved enough to see their own errors *without trying to look for them*. They see themselves doing something but can't seem to stop; a frustrating stage to be in. Secondly they are attempting to push themselves to a new level of ability but are unable to; the same flaws they see in their technique are preventing their advance. It is at this point where kendōka ought to re-examine their basics. Once this begins they will find that they begin to improve. Each plateau has no set amount of time, but with focused practice you *will* get better.

Note: All kendōka, in all dōjōs, will eventually experience this feeling of “being in a slump.” Don't allow yourself to become frustrated. Carefully re-examine your basics, and with diligent practice you will get better.

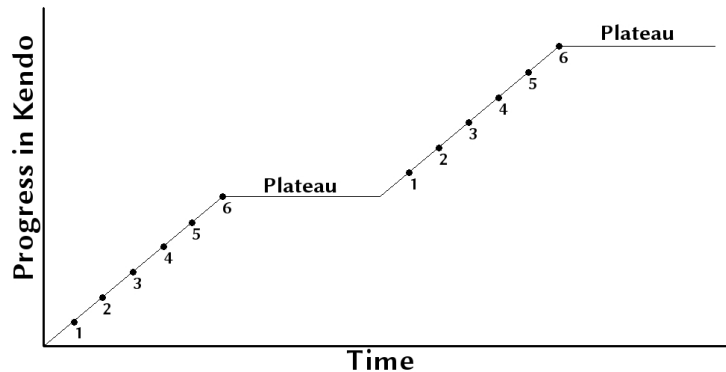


Figure 241: Progress in kendō.

Physical & Mental Aspects in Keiko

There is one further point which needs to be made regarding progress in kendō and that is the physical and mental aspects of kendō.

Kendōka ought to focus on the physical aspects of keiko early in their learning, essentially attacking, attacking, attacking. Before focusing on the mental aspects, seme, mitsu no sen, and the san-sappō for example, one must develop a fearlessness of attacking and a fearlessness of being attacked. This cannot be accomplished by waiting, blocking, or trying difficult techniques. It can only be done by attacking at every opportunity and performing keiko without concern for “points” or being scored on. This is the basis for developing sen and sūtemi style striking. At later stages the mental aspects of keiko become more prevalent.

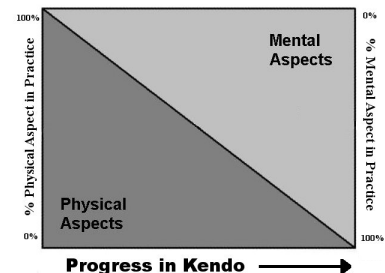


Figure 242: From Ozawa (1997), physical and mental aspects change as one progresses.

UCHI-KOMI GEIKO: "LUNGING STRIKE PRACTICE"

Basic uchi-komi geiko, or motodachi geiko, is when kendōka practice uchi-komi, p. 117, together; one attacks, the other receives.

Performing Basic Uchi-Komi Geiko

Attacking. Assume chūdan no kamae. Start at the tō-ma distance from your opponent. Step in to issoku ittō no maai with strong kiai and then strike the appropriate target. Show zanshin.

KEY POINTS: PERFORMING UCHI-KOMI GEIKO

1. Start from tō-ma, but strike from issoku ittō no maai.
2. Concentrate on performing your strike with strong kiai and proper ashi-sabaki; fumi-komi for the strike, okuri-ashi for zanshin.
3. Be sure to turn around to face your opponent in the correct direction, p. 118; maintain your kiai until you face your opponent.

Receiving. Ensure that your partner always begins from the correct maai and do not blindly open a target unless their initial kiai is sufficient.⁹² As your partner strikes and moves in, step out of the way so that they become accustomed to moving forward in a straight line. If your partner tires help restore their spirit with kiai of your own.

KEY POINTS: RECEIVING UCHI-KOMI GEIKO

1. Ensure your partner is at the proper maai before they strike.
2. Encouraging your partner with your own kiai will help them continue their practice even though they grow tired. *This is essential.*
3. Receiving uchi-komi is not a chance for you to rest; focus on what you can practice as motodachi.

KAKARI GEIKO: "ATTACK PRACTICE"

Kakari geiko is an intense and more advanced form of striking similar to uchi-komi geiko. The major difference being that the attacker continuously *initiates* attacks and attempts to *create* openings almost independent of the receiver. The duration is anywhere from 15 to 30 seconds, due to its intensity, but is often repeated a number of times.

The description below assumes the attacker continually strikes targets exposed by their partner.

FEARLESSNESS IN KEIKO

It is essential that one develops a fearlessness in attacking and especially a fearlessness of being attacked. Without establishing this, your keiko will be ineffective simply due to the fact that your ability to strike will be hindered by your fear of being struck. During keiko you will both hit your opponent and be hit by your opponent repeatedly. Many people feel that being out-hit by their opponent is a sign of poor skill. This is irrelevant. What is important is that you focus on practicing with strong spirit and proper form without concern for being hit, who is better than who, or how many hits you landed. This is not the goal of kendō.

⁹² This requirement is often adjusted depending on the level of the attacker. Beginners should be encouraged to kiai strongly before being given an opening, but limiting the number of times they can practice an attack while waiting for a kiai they may not be able to produce is not productive.

Note: Both kakari geiko and ai-kakari geiko are excellent exercises in the physical sense, i.e., waza, footwork, posture, etc... But, equally important, they are exercises to hone sūtemi style striking and zanshin. They also serve as a means for the kendōka to *experiment* with different attack methods to overcome their opponents defenses. While they may seem similar, kakari geiko is *not* uchi-komi geiko; the intent behind the two drills is distinct and this is an important concept to understand.

Performing Basic Kakari Geiko

Attacking. With strong kiai, create an opening and attack without hesitation. Show zanshin with each strike. Do not simply stand at striking distance *waiting* for an opportunity; use shikake waza to create openings or if motodachi attacks, use ōji waza. Focus on always moving toward your opponent with a strong spirit. Attack quickly but with control.

KEY POINTS: PERFORMING BASIC KAKARI GEIKO

1. Try as many different waza as you can.
2. Never wait for an opportunity to attack; create them!
3. Kiai and zanshin are very important during kakari geiko.⁹³
4. Don't be intimidated by your opponents kamae. Move in and strike.

Receiving kakari geiko. Receiving kakari geiko is similar to that of uchi-komi geiko, see p. 159, save that (1) openings are not necessarily *given* forcing *kakari-te* (掛手) to *make* them, (2) more advanced strikes are often used, such as waza from tsuba-zeriai, requiring motodachi to stand firm and not step aside, and (3) motodachi may occasionally attack kakari-te.

AI-KAKARI GEIKO: "MUTUAL ATTACK PRACTICE"

Ai-kakari geiko is where both kendōka attack each other through kakari geiko simultaneously. It is important to focus on attacking, not on blocking or waiting for an opportunity.

This allows one to strike an aggressive, moving opponent instead of a stationary target, examine the timing and proper maai for various waza, and the opportunity to understand the meaning and application of zanshin.

SHIAI GEIKO: "TOURNAMENT PRACTICE"

Shiai is when kendōka attempt to strike one another with the intent of scoring points. Shiai geiko is often different from standard dōjō keiko due to the added pressure of wanting to win and not being scored on; kendōka can succumb to their natural instincts and begin to block or assume skewed postures. These may work initially but will eventually be countered; if this is substituted for learning strong kihon and building a strong spirit, one's kendō will soon become deficient, hindering overall progress. It is important to try and maintain good form even while under the pressure brought on by shiai.

Note: The zanshin during kakari geiko is shortened, i.e., physically following through a shorter distance, in order to lessen the delay between attacks. However, each strike must still be done with full spirit and focus for kakari geiko to be an effective exercise.

⁹³ Zanshin must be present with each strike but not necessarily the long follow through used in uchi-komi as on p. 118. The zanshin required in kakari geiko places the emphasis on "being continually alert" in order to make a series of seamless attacks.

AN EXERCISE IN ZANSHIN

Kakari-te must attempt to create opportunities to repeatedly attack in kakari geiko and they must have zanshin in order to do this seamlessly, without delay. If an opening is actually given by motodachi, they are often not the large openings given during uchi-komi. Should the motodachi make an attack, this creates an opening for the kakari-te to use ōji waza. However motodachi's attacks are not usually announced beforehand, making the success of kakari-te's counter dependent on their ability to be alert and adapt to motodachi; kakari geiko is an exercise in zanshin.

DEFENSIVE KEIKO & BLOCKING

Shiai geiko tends to cause people to do what they believe is faster, and more “safe”.⁹⁴

Kendō is offense based fencing, through the mitsu no sen, sen, seme, and sūtemi style attacks.⁹⁵ Compare this to western fencing which is based on defensive actions, i.e. the riposte.⁹⁶ Even though defensive waza are present, opportunities are created through offensive pressure; blocking solely to prevent being hit is not a part of this.



The following excerpt discusses blocking.⁹⁷

“Japanese fencing has no blocking or defending techniques. Against an attack, we evade, cut through their blade (kiri-otoshi), or deflect and strike (uke-nagashi). These cannot be categorized as blocking as these actions are done with the objective of cutting or thrusting the enemy. All these techniques are used to place yourself in an advantageous position. For example, when you are doing kiri-otoshi the goal should be to cut the enemy's body, and the instant you perform uke-nagashi you must turn your blade and strike him. While doing this you must not even allow the tiniest opportunity for the enemy to attack you.

It's useless simply to just stop or block the enemy's attack. In deflecting or receiving a blade you must instantly turn it into an attack. Simply blocking/stopping the enemy's attack is not beneficial.

Therefore, the merit of kendo is using “sen sen no sen” to take the lead and attack with strong resolution and overwhelming power, all the time without leaving any opening for the enemy to attack you. This will lead to a superb victory. If you stop to think for a while, this method is not simply about flying blindly into an attack; rather it's about spending a long time working out when the right time is to attack, learning about what works when and what doesn't ... only after you do this can you gain (true) victory.”

⁹⁴ According to Hisashi (2013): “...an over anxious desire to win or escape defeat will – more often than not – lead one to disaster.”

⁹⁵ According to Musashi (2012): “Even though there are things like parrying, blocking, hitting, or touching your opponent's sword, you must understand that they are all for the purpose of cutting down the adversary.”

Figure 243: San-pō-mamori. Men, kote, and mitori are “blocked” simultaneously.

⁹⁶ In sabre or foil fencing there is a priority system which dictates which fencer has the right-of-way to score an attack. To initiate the fencer must first threaten a target with the tip of their sword, granting them priority, then attack. The opponent may not strike until after parrying the incoming attack, making a riposte. This is opposite to kendō where both attack and defensive waza opportunities are created through offensive pressure, are allowed at any time, and the first player to land a proper strike scores a point.

⁹⁷ Tateo (2007)

WHY ARE YOU BLOCKING?

Everyone has blocked; it's human nature. The question is whether or not your practice is focused on removing the reasons behind *choosing to block* or toward *training to block* to keep from getting hit? If you have time to block, you have time to strike or perform a counter *but only if* you have sen, seme, zanshin, ki ken tai ichi, etc...and a connection to your opponent. This is *very* difficult, hence the prevalence of blocking; it's extremely easy to do and in shiai you can delay getting scored on, possibly long enough for you to manage to strike your opponent. Developing the readiness to *not need to block* is far more important than artificially disguising any weak points through blocking.

A HISTORICAL INFLUENCE ON MODERN KEIKO

It seems appropriate to introduce at least one of the historical figures who had influenced the roots of modern kendō. Out of the many prominent figures, I have chosen to introduce Yamaoka Tesshu (1836-1888).⁹⁸

Yamaoka was a master of the sword, Zen, and calligraphy. It is said that he reached enlightenment at the age of forty-five. When he taught pupils at his dōjō, he would have all of his beginners practice only the most basic and fundamental techniques all day, every day, for a minimum of three years. Many of his peers commented that this was very “monotonous training” and was nothing more than “simply chopping wood.”

From his Zen teachings, Yamaoka believed that the goal of all practitioners was to reach a state of void or mushin and that Zen recognition and the sword were intertwined with one another according to the following excerpt:^{99, 100}

“Mind, Body, Technique correspond to Plane, Carpenter, Pillar. If one thinks the carpenter does all the planing, what use is the plane? If one thinks that the plane does all the planing, what use is the pillar? Mind, body, and technique function in a similar way to that of plane, carpenter, pillar; if that interdependence is not understood, one will not produce a good pillar regardless of how long one practices with the carpenter's plane.”

Yamaoka believed forging the spirit to be of the utmost importance. After the beginner phase was complete, students would train for one thousand days, and then be tested by having to fight two hundred opponents in a row without rest save for a small lunch. If they passed, training resumed for another thousand days and at the end they would be tested with six hundred consecutive opponents over three days. After the final training period, the final test was against one thousand four hundred consecutive opponents over seven days!¹⁰¹

What was it that kept these students pressing on despite utter physical exhaustion? *Spirit*. While one's physical strength is finite and decays with age, a person's inner spirit never loses strength, hence Yamaoka's diligent efforts placed in its development. While Yamaoka's methods are not followed per se in modern times, the parallels in modern kendō can be seen.

Yamaoka Tesshu died at the age of 52 from stomach cancer.

⁹⁸ Donohue (2004) and Stevens (1989)

⁹⁹ Yamaoka's (Zen) realization was “the difference between sword and self and between oneself and one's opponent are illusory and that the underlying unity of all is the most important thing in swordsmanship.”

¹⁰⁰ Stevens (2001)



Figure 244: Yamaoka Tesshu (1836-1888), founder of Ittō Shoden Mutō Ryu.

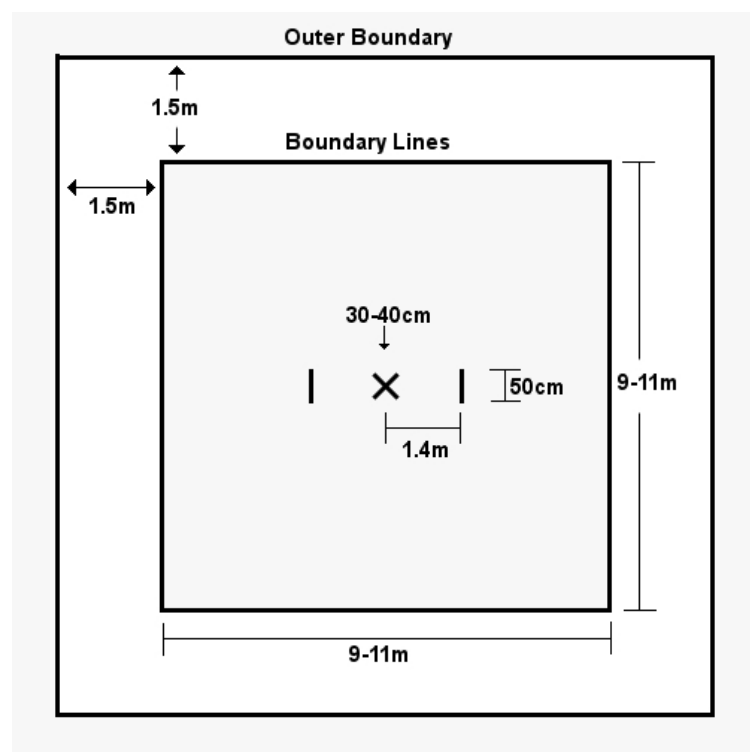
¹⁰¹ According to Stevens (1989), there are only two records remaining as proof of students passing the grueling third seigan: Kominami Yasutomo and Sano (Tojo) Jisaburo.

TOURNAMENTS & PROCEDURES

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THIS CHAPTER BRIEFLY OUTLINES the layout of a shiai court and the appropriate formalities for individual and team competition.

FIK COURT LAYOUT



Note: The standard FIK court layout, match duration, number of points per match, enchō and duration, use of hantei, as well as similar items for team matches can be overridden by shiai management for a given tournament. The same applies to referee attire, flag colour and size, colour and type of the mejirushi.

Figure 245: Standard FIK court layout and measurements.

Court layout. The *shiai-jō* (試合場), figure 245, is square with sides ranging from 9m–11m. For safety a “clear zone” of 1.5m width is recommended to surround the court. Center court is marked with an “X” with arms 30cm–40cm in length. Player starting positions are marked with straight lines, 50cm long and 1.4m from center.

SHINPAN: "REFEREES"

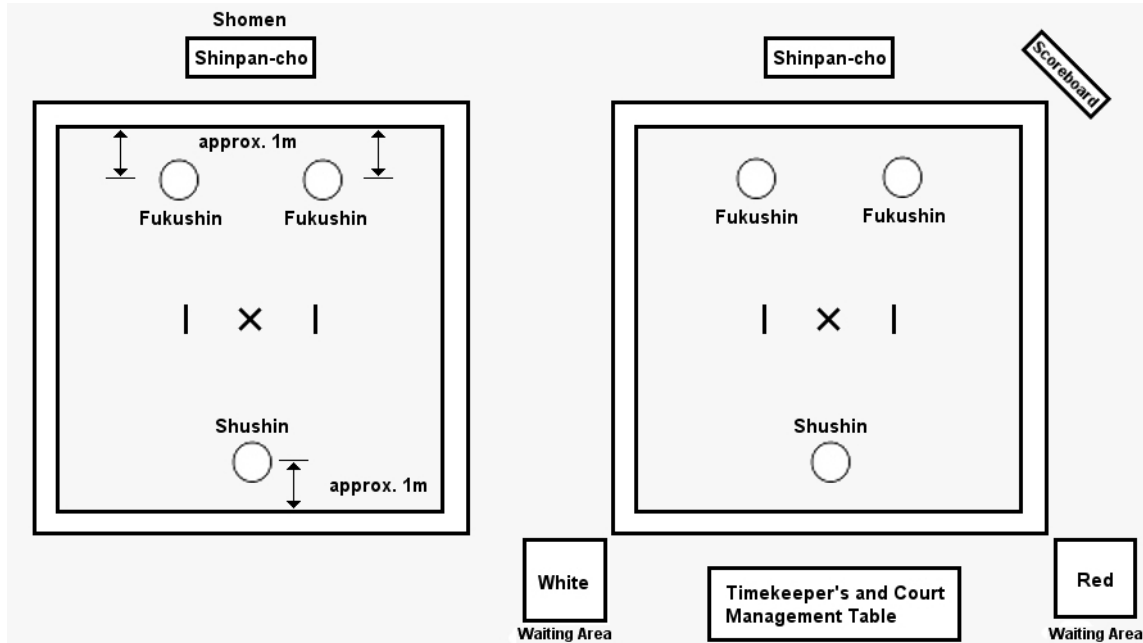


Figure 246: Standard FIK shinpan and court management layout.

Referees. The *shinpan* (審判) consist of the chief referee, *Shushin* (主審), and the two sub-referees, *Fukushin* (副審). Starting positions are approximately 1m from the court boundary. Each judge holds a red and a white flag in the hand corresponding to the red and the white players side respectively. These are used to indicate decisions regarding scoring or match conduct. See table 3 for a summary of verbal commands and p. 168 for a summary of flag signals used in shiai.

PLAYERS & COURT MANAGEMENT

Players. Players are marked with cloth markers on their back, usually red and white, called *Mejirushi* (目印) (also termed “*tasuki*”). Red players begin on the right of the *shushin*, white on the left. Players wait to begin their matches in the designated red or white waiting area.

Court management. The time keeper holds a yellow flag in the shape of a right angle triangle; the short sides are 25cm, the handle measures 35cm. This flag is raised anytime the match clock stops. Court management is responsible for recording the progress of the match on the official scoreboard.

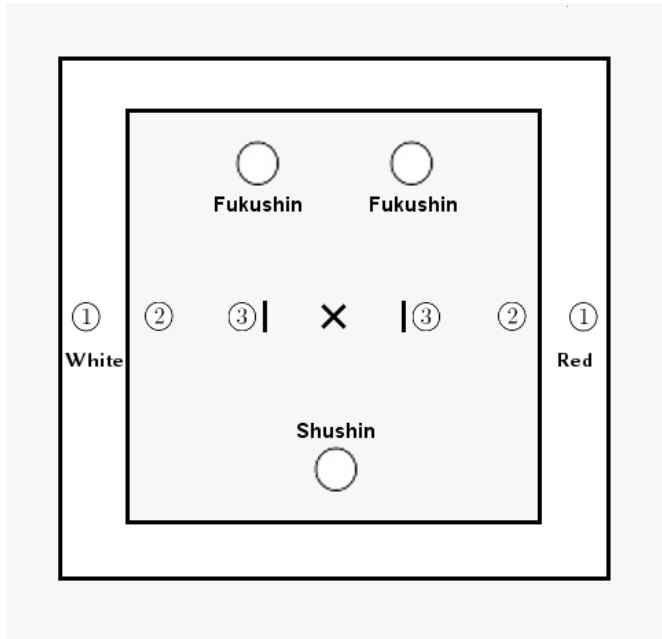


Figure 247: Shinpan-ki, the flags used by referees to communicate during shiai.



Figure 248: Time keeper's flag is raised or lowered whenever the match clock is stopped or started respectively.

PLAYER FORMALITIES & PROCEDURES



Match start. Players stand at ①, move to ②, rei, and assume tai-tō. Players then take three steps to ③, draw their shinai, and assume sonkyo. When the shushin announces *Hajime* (始め), players stand and begin.

Match stop. During the match the judges use their flags to signal commands and decisions. When the shushin indicates a point is scored the match and clock stops and players return to ③. The shushin will then indicate the resumption of the match (if applicable). If a foul is committed, the match and clock are stopped, players return to ③, and the shushin will indicate the foul count and award points (if applicable).

If *Wakare* (分かれ) is called to end tsuba-zeriai the match or match clock is not stopped. Kendōka separate to issoku ittō no maai in chūdan at their current location. Play resumes when the shushin announces hajime.

If the match clock expires, the match is stopped and players return to ③. Shushin will indicate a winner, draw, decision, or begin *Enchō* (延長).

Match ends. The match ends when one player scores the required number of points, the match clock expires and one player has more points than the other, or one player scores a point during enchō. When the shushin announces the result of the match players, who are at ③, assume sonkyo, osame-tō, stand, and take five steps back to ②. Players rei, step backward to ①, then turn and leave the court.

Figure 249: Player positions for shiai. Players enter the court at position #1, bow at position #2, and begin the match at position #3.



Figure 250: (Left) The tasuki, the coloured tie, of the red player is shown. The tasuki are attached to the dō himo on the back of the player. (Right) The nafuda, the name tag, as well as the player and division number of the white player is shown. Both are worn on the tare.

Shushin's Verbal Commands	
Event	Command
Begin	Hajime
Stop	Yame
Second round	Nihonme
Final round	Shōbu
Overtime	Enchō
Point scored	Men ari, kote ari, dō ari, tsuki ari
Point awarded	Ippon ari
Match point	Shōbu ari
Decision	Hantei
First foul	Hansoku ikkai
Second foul	Hansoku nikai
Conference	Gōgi
Separate	Wakare

Table 3: Shinpan verbal commands used during shiai.

TEAM MATCHES

BEGINNING & ENDING A TEAM SHIAI

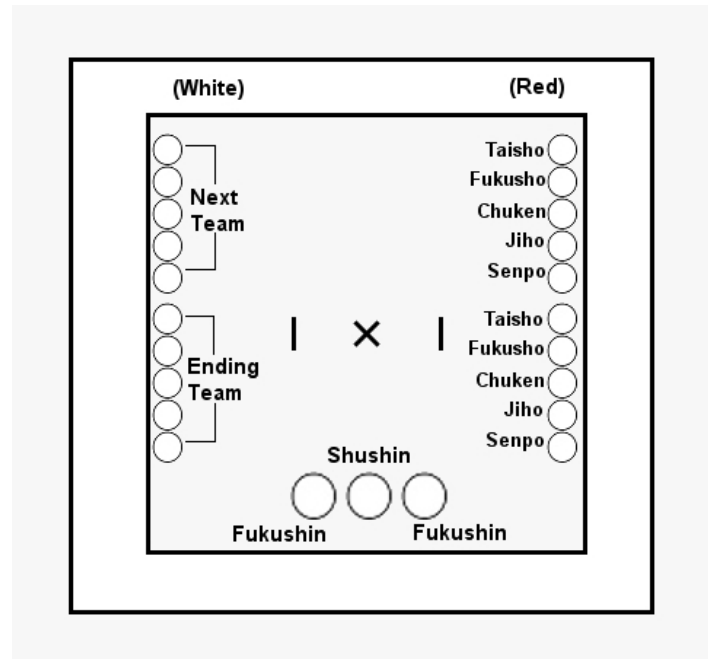


Figure 251: Ritsu-rei positions and rotation order in team shiai. During team matches, teams will perform a group bow to each other before and after their matches. For the very first team match only the incoming team will line up while afterward, both the incoming and outgoing teams line up together for the group bow. The team that is finishing lines up closest to where the shinpan are lined up, the incoming team lines up next the outgoing team. The players line up in ascending order from first to fifth, with the first player closest to the shinpan. On the incoming team, the first and second players of each team line up and bow while wearing their men and carrying their shinai. On the outgoing team, the fifth player from each team will line up wearing their men and carrying their shinai. Teams will perform their group bow approximately three steps from the starting line at the center of the court.

Teams. On a standard team there are five players (in order from first to fifth): senpō (先鋒), jihō (次鋒), chūken (中堅), fukushō (副将), and taishō (大将). At the beginning of a match, the entire team lines up along with the next team according to figure 251. Teams will rei to one another simultaneously. Teams then leave the court, and the senpō through taishō will conduct their matches in the same manner as individuals, see p. 165. After each players' match they will return to the waiting area, seiza, and remove their men and kote. After the taishō's match, the entire team will line up again as at the beginning to rei to the opposing team.

BŌGU & SHINAI DURING REI

For team matches, teams line-up as a group to bow to one another. The *senpō* and *jihō* of the teams who will play immediately line up and bow *wearing full bōgu and holding their shinai*. After all of the current team matches are over, the teams again line up as a group to bow to one another. For this final rei the *taishō* for the teams that just finished playing line up *wearing full bōgu and holding their shinai*.

READING THE FIK SCOREBOARD

The following explains the outcome (a draw) of the team match recorded using the FIK scoreboard format.

Order	Senpo	Jiho	Chuken	Fukusho	Taisho	Referee	
Team Name	Player's Name	Player's Name	Player's Name	Player's Name	Player's Name	Name of Chief Referee	
Red	Ⓜ			Ⓜ	Ⓜ	First Point	
	1	Encho			Ⓣ	Third Point	
White				X		Name of Subreferee	Name of Subreferee
		Ⓜ	○○	Ⓜ	Ⓚ	Second Point	
Team Name	Player's Name	Player's Name	Player's Name	Player's Name	Player's Name		

Figure 252: Recording the outcome of a team shiai.

Note: The method of keeping score, how a scoreboard is marked, or if there is an official match scoreboard at all, is up to the court management for the given shiai.

Match one. The red senpō scores with a men shown as Ⓜ. Match time ends with only one point shown by the 1 at the center.

Match two. The regulation time for the match between the jihō ends and an overtime round is started as marked by the Enchō at the center. The allotted time for enchō ends and the winner (white) is decided by Hantei (判定) as marked by Ⓜ.

Match three. The white chūken is awarded the win by Fusen-gachi (不戦勝ち), i.e., the red player was removed from the shiai due to default or incapacitation. This is marked by the ○○ on the white side.

Match four. Red fukushō scores men marked by the Ⓜ on the red side. White fukushō is awarded one point from two fouls, Hansoku (反則), by the red player recorded as Ⓜ on the white side. The match is a draw, Hiki-wake (引き分け), marked by an X in the center of the scoreboard.

Match five. Each taishō commits one foul marked by the ▲ on each side. Red scores men and tsuki as marked by the Ⓜ and Ⓣ respectively. White scores kote as indicated by the Ⓚ.

SUMMARY OF FLAG SIGNALS USED IN SHIAI

Tournament referees use flags signals to communicate with one another during a match as well as to coordinate the flow and proceedings of the match with court staff and players. Combined with various vocal commands this makes for a very clear and non-intrusive method of communication.

The following is a summary of the most common flag signals.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Holt (2006) and FIK (2017)



Figure 253: Common flag signals used by shinpan. From left to right: (Top) neutral, red ippon, white ippon, yame, gōgi, (Center) red hansoku, white hansoku, double hansoku, (red) hansoku ikkai, (red) hansoku nikai, (Bottom) wakare, disagree, abstention, and hiki-wake.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MEASUREMENTS FOR BŌGU

EACH PERSON’S BOGU IS made to fit that individuals body type. Depending on the quality of bōgu you get, the bōgu may be designed to match your body measurements exactly (“custom made”) or the nearest available approximation will be used (“ready-made”).

The following measurements are what is normally required for purchasing bōgu, both custom and ready-made.

- 1. A: The circumference around the head at the forehead.
- 2. B: The circumference around the head from the chin to the crown, in front of the ears.
- 3. C: Distance from chin to the eyes.

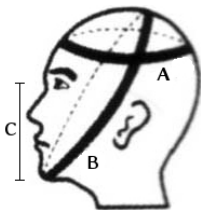


Figure 254: Measurements for the men.

- 1. A: The length around the palm measured at the “webbing” of the thumb.
- 2. B: The length from the wrist to the top of the middle finger.

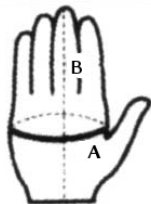


Figure 255: Measurements for the kote.

- 1. A: The width of the dō. This length is equal to the width across ones waist, not around, plus approximately ten centimeters.

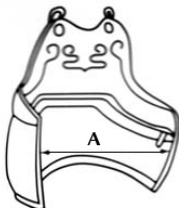


Figure 256: Measurements for the dō.

Secondary Measurements
Total height
Body weight
Waist circumference
Chest circumference
Face type: long or round

Table 4: Secondary measurements.

APPENDIX B: FIK SHINAI REGULATIONS

Canadian Kendō Federation Shinai Specifications, Effective May 1, 2002

Ittō Shinai Specifications				Saki-gawa Specifications	
Age (yrs)	Sex	Length ^a	Weight ^b	Length	Width
12-15 yrs	M	$\leq 114cm$	$\geq 440g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 25mm$
	F	$\leq 114cm$	$\geq 400g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 24mm$
15-18 yrs	M	$\leq 117cm$	$\geq 480g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 26mm$
	F	$\leq 117cm$	$\geq 420g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 25mm$
18+ yrs	M	$\leq 120cm$	$\geq 510g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 26mm$
	F	$\leq 120cm$	$\geq 440g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 25mm$

Table 5: Ittō shinai specifications.

Nitō Shinai Specifications				Saki-gawa Specifications	
Shinai	Sex	Length	Weight	Length	Width
Daitō	M	$\leq 114cm$	$\geq 440g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 25mm$
	F	$\leq 114cm$	$\geq 400g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 24mm$
Shōtō	M	$\leq 62cm$	$280g \leq W \leq 300g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 24mm$
	F	$\leq 62cm$	$250g \leq W \leq 280g$	$\geq 50mm$	$\geq 24mm$

Table 6: Nitō shinai specifications.

a – Measured from tip-to-tip. b – Excludes tsuba and tsuba-dome.



The tsuba must be round, made of leather or synthetic material only, and have a diameter $\leq 90mm$.

Figure 257: (Left) Leather and (Center) synthetic tsuba, (Right) saki-gawa.

APPENDIX C: KENDŌ GRADING REQUIREMENTS

CKF Grading Requirements, Effective Jan. 2013

Rank	Min. Practice Periods	Min. Age
1 Kyu	N/A	N/A
1 (Shō) dan	Three months after granting of first kyū	14 years and over
2 (Ni) dan	One year after granting of first dan	16 years and over
3 (San) dan	Two years after granting of second dan	18 years and over
4 (Yon) dan	Three years after granting of third dan	21 years and over
5 (Go) dan	Four years after granting of fourth dan	25 years and over
6 (Roku) dan	Five years after granting of fifth dan	30 years and over
7 (Nana) dan	Six years after granting of sixth dan	36 years and over
8 (Hachi) dan	Ten years after granting of seventh dan	48 years and over
Rank Applied For:	Kendō no Kata & Kihon Bokutō Waza Requirements	
First kyū	Kihon bokutō waza 1–9	
First dan	Tachi kata 1–3	
Second dan	Tachi kata 1–5	
Third dan	Tachi kata 1–7	
Fourth dan & up	Tachi kata 1–7 & kodachi kata 1–3	

Table 7: The CKF age, kata requirements, & interim training period for each rank.

Written exam. The following are questions used for the 2017 written exam required by the Canadian Kendō Federation.

Shōdan

Answer all of the following:

1. Briefly describe the concept of ki ken tai ichi.
2. What is the origin of the meditation (mokushō) before practice: Shintoism, Confucianism, or Zen Buddhism? What is the purpose of mokushō in modern kendō?
3. List and briefly explain three (3) benefits of kiai (kakegoe).
4. List and briefly describe three (3) types of kendō footwork. What is the purpose of each type of footwork?
5. Briefly describe the importance of zanshin.

Nidan

Answer any three (3) of the following:

1. List and briefly describe the five (5) basic kamae.
2. Briefly describe the three (3) basic maai.
3. Briefly describe four (4) types of kendō footwork.
4. Which part of the shinai is used to hit: datotsubu or datotsubui? Why are we required to use this part of the shinai to score?
5. Name and briefly describe four (4) prohibited acts (hansoku) in shiai. What is the reason these acts are penalized?
6. List and describe three (3) important safety considerations regarding shinai maintenance.

Sandan

Answer any three (3) of the following:

1. List and briefly describe five (5) of the elements which constitute yūkō-datotsu.
2. Briefly describe four (4) types of suburi.
3. Describe fumi-komi. What is the purpose of fumi-komi?
4. Describe seme. What is accomplished through seme?
5. What is the origin of shinzen ni rei before practice: Shintoism, Confucianism, or Zen Buddhism? What is the purpose of shinzen ni rei in modern kendō?
6. List and briefly describe three (3) categories of counter-attack techniques (ōji waza). Include a specific example of each category.

Yondan

Answer any three (3) of the following:

1. Describe the benefits of kendō no kata and its importance for shinai keiko.
2. What distinguishes kendō from being a sport?
3. Why do you value rei-gi (good manners)?
4. Provide explanations of all of the following concepts and their value in kendō:
 - (i) sūtemi
 - (ii) te-no-uchi
 - (iii) hasuji
 - (iv) enzan no metsuke
 - (v) shugyo
5. What is your understanding of zanshin?
6. List and explain five (5) important points when judging as shinpan.

Godan

Please select one question from each section to answer.

1. Kendō pedagogy and budō concepts
Answer one of the following six questions:
 - (i) Explain five (5) important points when teaching kendō to beginners.
 - (ii) Explain the concept of senpai-kohai and its importance to kendō.
 - (iii) Explain the concept of shu-ha-ri.
 - (iv) Describe how budō can serve as a “modern ethical system”.
 - (v) Describe how kendō can serve as a means of self-improvement.
 - (vi) How can kendō be an “instrument of peace in the world”?
2. Tournament Kendō
Answer one of the following questions:
 - (i) Explain your ideas about the “best opportunity to strike”.
 - (ii) Explain the difference between: sen-no-sen and go-no-sen.
 - (iii) Explain the responsibilities of shushin during the following shiai conditions: tsuba-zeriai, gōgi, and fusen-gachi.
 - (iv) Explain your ideas about kendō as an Olympic sport.
3. Kendō no kata and kihon
Answer one of the following four questions:
 - (i) Explain briefly the three (3) concepts: iri-mi, kuraizume, and kigurai.
 - (ii) Explain the motion of the blade in: uke nagasu and surinagasu.
 - (iii) Explain the important elements of te-no-uchi.
 - (iv) List and explain five (5) elements that are common to all kendō kamae.

APPENDIX D: COUNTING & PRONUNCIATION

CARDINALS, ORDINALS, & BASIC PRONUNCIATION

BASIC JAPANESE COUNTING, ORDINAL NUMBERS, & PRONUNCIATION								
Cardinals		Kata & Bokuto Waza Ordinals			Basic Pronunciation			
English	Japanese	English	Kendō Kata	Bokutō Waza	Vowels	Voiced As	International	
One	Ichi	First	Ipponme	Ichi	A	ah	ɑ	
Two	Ni	Second	Nihonme	Ni	E	eh	e	
Three	San	Third	Sanbonme	San	I	ee	i	
Four	Shi	Fourth	Yonhonme	Yon	I	ee (voiceless)	i̥	
Five	Go	Fifth	Gohonme	Go	I	ee (long)	i:	
Six	Roku	Sixth	Ropponme	Roku	O	oh	o	
Seven	Shichi	Seventh	Nanahonme	Nana	O	oh (long)	o:	
Eight	Hachi	Eighth	—	Hachi	U	oo	u	
Nine	Kyū	Ninth	—	Kyū	U	oo (voiceless)	u̥	
Ten	Jū	Tenth	—	—	Combinations	Voiced As	International	
					AE	eye	ai	
					AI	eye	ai	
					EI	ay	ei	

Consonants. Consonants are pronounced as in English. Some are altered when occurring after a vowel. A common example is changing a *k* sound to a *g* as in *kakari geiko* vs. *kakari keiko*.

Doubled consonants indicate a slight pause prior to pronunciation.

Hansoku ikkai has a double *kk* in *ikkai*, giving it a pronunciation of *i-kai*.

Long, standard, and voiceless vowels. Vowels can have a long, standard, and voiceless sound similar to English.

A voiceless vowel is *almost* silent, e.g. a voiceless *u* occurs in *tsuki*, and is voiced as “*tski*” [tsu̥βki̥]. This is similar in English to the *e* in *peculiar* [p^həˈkjuːliə] which is often voiced as “*pculiar*”.¹⁰³

Vowels, most commonly *i* and *u*, often become voiceless when (1) the vowel is between voiceless consonants, and (2) the vowel occurs after a voiceless consonant with nothing following it.¹⁰⁴

Omote uses a standard *o*, *oh* as in *story*, whereas *jōdan* uses a long *o* as in *toast*. The long *o* is usually written as *ou*; this guide uses the Latin convention *ō*. Other long vowels in Japanese are written with duplicate letters, e.g., *chiisai* vs. *chisai* for a long *i* sound.

Table 8: Basic Japanese counting, ordinal numbers, & pronunciation. Cardinal numbers indicate amount, ordinal numbers indicate numeric order. *Voiced as* gives an English term approximating the Japanese term, and *International* gives the International Phonetic Alphabet pronunciation.

ON-YOMI & KUN-YOMI

There are two ways to pronounce kanji; the Chinese (on-yomi) and the Japanese (kun-yomi) pronunciations. Which is used depends on context and/or tradition, e.g., *shi* & *yon* for the number four.

¹⁰³ Wikipedia (2012)

¹⁰⁴ From Living Language (2012), with a voiced letter the throat vibrates while speaking; with voiceless it doesn't. For example, touching the throat while speaking *g*, as in *great*, one feels a vibration. Speaking *k*, as in *kite*, there is no vibration.

HIRAGANA & ROMANJI: JAPANESE PHONETIC SYLLABLES

The following syllabary, called hiragana, lists all of the syllables used to pronounce (exclusively) Japanese words.¹⁰⁵

Hiragana is used to represent Japanese words not represented by kanji and for grammatical inflexion. Romaji is the term used to refer to hiragana written in English letters, e.g., か is written as *Ka*.

¹⁰⁵ Hiragana is not the only syllabary, however it is used exclusively for Japanese words. *Katakana* is used to represent foreign or borrowed words and as an equivalent to *italics* in English.

STANDARD HIRAGANA SYLLABARY WITH ROMANJI										
	—	K	S	T	N	H	M	Y	R	W
A	あ	Ka か	Sa さ	Ta た	Na な	Ha は	Ma ま	Ya や	Ra ら	Wa わ
I	い	Ki き	Shi し	Chi ち	Ni に	Hi ひ	Mi み	—	Ri り	Wi ゐ ¹⁰⁶
U	う	Ku く	Su す	Tsu つ	Nu ぬ	Fu ふ	Mu む	Yu ゆ	Ru る	—
E	え	Ke け	Se せ	Te て	Ne ね	He へ	Me め	—	Re れ	We ゑ ¹⁰⁷
O	お	Ko こ	So そ	To と	No の	Ho ほ	Mo も	Yo よ	Ro ろ	(W)o を ¹⁰⁸
—					N ん					

EXTENDED HIRAGANA SYLLABARY WITH ROMANJI						
	G	Z	D	B	P	
A	Ga が	Za ざ	Da だ	Ba ば	Pa ぱ	
I	Gi ぎ	Ji じ	Ji ぢ	Bi び	Pi ぴ	
U	Gu ぐ	Zu ず	Zu づ	Bu ぶ	Pu ぷ	
E	Ge げ	Ze ぜ	De で	Be べ	Pe ぺ	
O	Go ご	Zo ぞ	Do ど	Bo ぼ	Po ぽ	
	K	S	C	N	H	M
Ya	Kya きゃ	Sha しゃ	Cha ちゃ	Nya にゃ	Bya ひゃ	Mya みゃ
Yu	Kyu きゅ	Shu しゅ	Chu ちゅ	Nyu にゅ	Byu ひゅ	Myu みゅ
Yo	Kyo きょ	Sho しょ	Cho ちょ	Nyo にょ	Byo ひょ	Myo みょ
	R	G	J	B	P	
Ya	Rya りゃ	Gya ぎゃ	Ja じゃ	Hya びゃ	Pya ぴゃ	
Yu	Ryu りゅ	Gyu ぎゅ	Ju じゅ	Hyu びゅ	Pyu ぴゅ	
Yo	Ryo りょ	Gyo ぎょ	Jo じょ	Hyo びょ	Pyo ぴょ	

Table 9: Hiragana syllabary: the Japanese phonetic alphabet.

^{106, 107} Obsolete in modern Japanese.

¹⁰⁸ “(W)o” is pronounced “oh”.

GLOSSARY

Dōjō COMMANDS

H

Hajime (始め) Begin/start.

K

Kamae-tō (構え刀) Assume your stance.

M

Men (w)o tore (面を取れ) Take off your [men](#).

Men (w)o tsuke (面を付け) Put on your [men](#).

Mokushō (黙想) Begin meditation.

O

Osame-tō (納め刀) Put away your weapon.

Otagai ni rei (お互いに礼) Bow to your peers.

S

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](#).

T

Tai-tō (帯刀) Bring your weapon to the ready position at your hip.

Y

Yame (止め) Stop.

Yasume (休め) Break/rest period.

SHIAI TERMS & COMMANDS

C

Chūken (中堅) Third player on a team match.

E

Enchō (延長) “*Extension.*” Enchō extends of duration of a (tied) match when the allotted time runs out; the next point wins.

F

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.

G

Gōgi (合議) “*Judges conference.*” [Shinpan](#) meet to quickly discuss application of the rules and/or judgements mid-match. Players [osame-tō](#), step back to the edge of the court and assume [sonkyo](#) until over.

H

Hajime (始め) Begin a match.

Hansoku (反則) A “*foul/penalty*” (in sports). Match stops, and players return to their starting positions.

Hansoku ikkai (反則一回) “*First foul.*”

Hansoku nikai (反則二回) “*Second foul.*” A second foul results in one point awarded to the opponent; the foul counter is reset.

Hantei (判定) “*Judgment, decision.*”

Hiki-wake (引き分け) “*Draw, tie.*”

J

Jihō (次鋒) Second player on a team match.

Jikan desu (時間です) The time keeper’s signal to indicate “time-up”. Players return to starting positions.

M

Mejirushi (目印) A colored flag worn by players.

N

Nihonme (二本目) Begin round two.

S

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 for a tournament.

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.

T

Taishō (大將) Fifth player on a team match.

Tasuki See [Mejirushi](#).

W

Wakare (分かれ) Players separate to [issoku ittō no maai](#), but maintain relative court positions.

Y

Yame (止め) Stop the match. Players return to center.

GENERAL TERMS

A

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" or "simultaneous strikes."

Ashi (足) "Foot" or "leg."

Ashi-gamae (足構え) "Foot Position."

Ashi-sabaki (足捌き) "Foot control/footwork." See [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 one another. However in [kendō](#) ayumi-ashi is still done as [suri-ashi](#).

B

Bokken (木剣) "Wooden sword." See [bokutō](#).

Bokutō (木刀) "Wooden sword." The bokutō, [tachi](#) and [kodachi](#), are used for [nihon kendō no kata](#). The tachi is used for [bokutō waza](#) and sometimes [suburi](#).

Bokutō ni yoru kendō kihon waza keiko hō (木刀による剣道基本技稽古法) "Practice of fundamental kendō 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](#).

Bōgu (防具) "Kendō armor." Consisting of the [men](#), [kote](#), [dō](#), and [tare](#). Also called [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 learning effective combat skills for defeating an opponent.

Bushi (武士) "War/military gentleman." A [samurai](#). Often translated as *warrior*, this overlooks the meaning of the character *shi* (士): "gentleman, scholar" implying a level of formality and refinement.

Bushidō (武士道) "The way of the samurai." A code of ethics, morals, and conduct for [samurai](#).

C

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](#).

Complimentary stepping Complimentary stepping is the *generalized* method of footwork in [kendō](#). Beginning with the feet in their starting positions, when taking a *single step* both the forward and rear feet are moved consecutively, in quick succession, to re-assume the starting positions upon completion, e.g., [okuri-ashi](#) is commonly a *right-left* motion. Exceptions are found in the [kata](#) or during specialized [waza](#).

Connection [En](#) in Japanese, meaning a “*link, relationship, or connection*.” In [kendō](#) this implies a mental and physical connection to the opponent. Mentally this implies one perceives how the opponent will act, their intents, level of focus, [ki-ken-tai-itchi](#), and [zanshin](#). Physically this allows one to respond to movement, maintain distance, adjust [kamae](#), etc. A connection is essential to understanding the [rhythm](#).

D

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*”. In modern [kendō](#) [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., just as something is being initiated or started.

Dead See [dead sword](#) and [dead hands](#).

Dead hands Similar to a [dead sword](#), however in this case it is caused specifically by the hands or forearms being in an improper position to control one's weapon or strike/cut effectively.

Dead sword A term describing one's weapon when the ability for offensive and defensive action is eliminated via parry or control; [shinitachi](#).

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 or location 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*” (polite).

E

En (縁) A “*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](#).

F

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 (含み足) “Hidden” footwork. This is when one moves forward unnoticed by the opponent while maintaining **ashi-gamae**. It's done by, e.g., curling and uncurling the toes to slowly pull oneself forward. This is an advanced application of footwork.

Fumi-komi (踏み込み) The shortened term for *fumi-komi-ashi* meaning “stepping” or “rushing into” footwork. Fumi-komi is a *lunging okuri-ashi* style step that momentarily forgoes **suri-ashi** as the leading foot leaves the ground during the step. This footwork is known for the stomping sound as the foot claps the floor on landing.

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

G

Gedan no kamae (下段の構え) The “low level” **kamae**, also known as the “*kamae of earth*.” Gedan can be considered a **kamae** of waiting, inviting the opponent, but it also applies **seme** from below by threatening a thrust.

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**.

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 Sometimes called *go sen no sen*. See **mitsu no sen**.

Gyaku (逆) “Reversed” or “opposite.”

Gyaku-dō (逆胴) “Reverse dō.” This refers to the left **datotsu-bui** of the **dō**. Formerly a non-standard target, with the popularization of **san-pō-mamori** awarding **ippon** for **gyaku-dō** is now common.

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

H

Ha (刃) The “blade/edge” of a sword.

Hajime (始め) “Begin/start.”

Hakama (袴) The traditional practice pants, worn with a **gi**, in **kendō**.

Half-step A half-step is when a **kendōka** only moves one of their feet instead of the usual **complimentary stepping**. Half-steps are relatively uncommon but can be found in the **kata**, **bokutō waza**, or specialized **waza**.

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) The “eight position stance.” Also known as the “*kamae of wood*” and sometimes **in no kamae**, it is a variant of **jōdan no kamae**.

Haya suburi (速素振り) “Quick/swift” **suburi**, or “jumping” **suburi**, is a common warm-up 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”. Relative direction, e.g., right & left.

Hidari shizentai See **shizentai**.

Hidari-te (左手) “Left-hand(ed).”

Hiki (引き) “Pull.”

Hiki-age (引き上げ) “Pulling rise.” Hiki-age refers to pulling up the hands upon hitting a target. This is considered improper as the *shinai* is no longer in the position to emulate a cut. A subtle exception is striking *men* via *hiki-waza*. The *zanshin* for this strike brings the *shinai* up into *migi jōdan no kamae* however this is done *after* the *kendōka* moves backward with the *shinai* in the proper cutting position *first* and assuming *jōdan* as they move back during *zanshin*.

Hiki-tsuke (引き付け) “Pull into place; to draw near.”

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

Hōshin (放心) “Released mind.” Musashi (Machida (2013)) describes two interchanging states of mind, *zanshin* and *hōshin*. While *zanshin* indicates a state of sustained alertness, *hōshin* indicates one releases the mind from specific active focus, i.e., from focusing on a particular action or event, back to a neutral, ready state.

Hyō-hō (兵法) “Strategy, tactics, art of war.” Also *hei-hō*.

I

I no kokoro (意のこころ) “Outward spirit, active intention.” This concept, discussed by Musashi (Machida (ibid.)), is tied to *shin no kokoro*.

Iaidō (居合道) “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 of, 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 moving into the striking range of the opponent with the purpose of (1) pressuring them, (2) crowding them making attacks awkward, or (3) making them feel exposed. 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 *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) “Entering body”, often translated as “entering directly.” This is the intent 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) “Entering body stance.” The *kamae* taken when invading the *maai* through *iri-mi*; the *kodachi* is in *chūdan no kamae*, blade downward, *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; the fundamental *maai* of *kendō*. While there are approximations, often described as the distance where opponents' sword tips cross, each individual has their own *unique* *issoku ittō no maai* due to the fact that each person's physique defines a different length for “one-step”.

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, i.e., slowly but surely creeping forward while threatening a strike.

Ittō-Ryū (一刀流) “One cut school/style.” Ittō-Ryū was a sword school founded by Ito Ittōsai Kagehisa which branched into several sub-schools. This school has heavily influenced modern [kendō](#).

J

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) “Blade part.” The side of a [shinai](#) designated as the blade.

Jishū-geiko (自習稽古) “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](#). As jōdan is spiritually aggressive, the terms [ten no kamae](#) and [hi no kamae](#) are used to describe the spirit and intent required to be effective.

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.

K

Kaeshi (返し) “Return, reversal.”

Kaeshi waza (返し技) “Return” [waza](#). Techniques where one momentarily receives the opponent's strike and then, changing the direction of the 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) “Attacking hand.” (1) [Kakari-te](#) is the one who attacks during drill practice. (2) The person performing [waza](#) during the [bokutō waza](#).

Takegoe (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. There are five classical kamae: [chūdan no kamae](#), [jōdan no kamae](#), [gedan no kamae](#), [hassō no kamae](#), and [waki-gamae](#).

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](#) its rhythm. This is not an artificially imposed rhythm as each technique has its 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.

Katsujin-ken (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 katsujin-ken 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-Ryū](#). The antithesis of katsujin-ken 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) "Attack and waiting in unison." This covers many ideas that relate to the application of [seme](#) toward the opponent 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 attack or counter depending on the result, i.e., [seme-tame](#). [Ken](#) in this instance translates to "attack; oppose", but it also can mean "to begin" or to "be trapped". This implies forcing the opponent, via threat of attack, into a situation they must respond to. See [sente](#).

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) "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, in unison." Ki-ken-tai-itchi is a modern umbrella term for several ideas, e.g. [shin-ki-ryoku-itchi](#) and [shin-gi-tai-itchi](#), each of which are specific instances of the more general meaning. As such, ki-ken-tai-itchi takes on different meanings depending on one's experience in [kendō](#). The general meaning, unified action of a [kendōka](#)'s intent/spirit, sword, and body is a fundamental tenet of [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 (切先) See [kensen](#).

Ki (w)o korosu (気を殺す) "Kill their spirit." See [san-sappō](#).

Kōbō (攻防) "Offense & defense." 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 often translated the same as [ken-tai-itchi](#): [ken](#) means to "attack" while [tai](#) has the meaning of "wait" which AJKF ([ibid.](#)) 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](#) implicitly has a more physical or [waza](#) oriented meaning for offense and

defense, e.g., actively striking and parrying. The inferred meaning here 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) “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) “Small part.” This refers to the small piece of leather sometimes attached to the [tsuru](#) which is used in attaching 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 (小手頭) “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) “Level (of) rebuke.” Pressure the opponent into disadvantage by physical and/or spiritual intimidation. Pressuring and [invading the maai](#) of the opponent by the strength of one’s spirit, posture, *kamae*, etc. Used by [shidachi](#) in *tachi kata* #3.

Kyūsa (草) “Grass, weeds.” An alternate reading of [so](#).

Kyo-jitsu (虚実) “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. Kyu ranks usually begin at sixth kyu advancing up to first kyu, however in some [dōjō](#) younger [kendōka](#) may begin at tenth kyu.

M

Ma (間) “Space.” Used in terms referring to distance.

Maai (間合) “Spacial integration.” Often interpreted simply as “distance”, *maai* includes many variables from both oneself *and* the opponent: speed, reaction time, power, distance, [kamae](#), etc.

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.

Maki-osae (巻き押さえ) From [maki](#), “to roll, wind”, and [osae](#), “to hold down, suppress”. Maki-osae [tsuki](#) is the technique [uchidachi](#) uses in the fourth [tachi kata](#) to suppress [shidachi](#)’s [bokutō](#), take center, and thrust.

Men (面) (1) “Mask; face guard”; the helmet worn in [kendō](#), see [kendō-gu](#). (2) The name of the head target.

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**.

Metsyke (目付け) *"Point of observation."* The full term is *"enzan no metsyke"* or *"fixing your eyes on a distant mountain"*. This refers to where one looks while engaging an opponent, likening looking at the opponent to looking at a mountain, the opponent's eyes being the peak. Focusing directly at the peak limits the view to just the peak, look *toward* the peak and the entire mountain can be viewed.

Migi (右) *"Right."* Relative direction, e.g., right & left.

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 opponents 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 opponents 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**.

Mokuyō no kamae (木の構え) The *"kamae of wood."* See **hassō no kamae**.

Mokuyō (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 best, said to be about 10cm from the tip"*, AJKF (2002).

Morote (諸手) *"Two handed."*

Motodachi (元立ち) '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: मृदरा, *"gesture"*, Japanese: **insō**) The mudrā (International Phonetic Alphabet: /mu'drɑ:/, 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 only use one: **zenjō-in**, the mudrā of meditation during **mokuyō** 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) *"Ridge."* The back of a **katana**, also *"mine."* (2) (胸) *"Chest."* The chest of the **dō**; **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 idea that the strength of one's ability doesn't depend on the type of weapon or **kamae** used, but on one's spirit.

N

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."* 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 in the third [tachi kata](#). [Shidachi](#) deflects [uchidachi](#)’s thrust ([nayashi](#)) and counters with a thrust ([ire-zuki](#)).

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.*” In a formal context, the *Nippon Kendō no Kata*, informally *kata*. These are the official standardized set of partnered, predetermined encounters designed to teach techniques and, in particular, the principles of swordsmanship derived from several traditional Japanese sword schools. These principles form the basis of modern [shinai kendō](#).

Nitō (二刀) “*Two sword(s).*” A common term referring to [nitō kamae](#).

Nitō kamae (二刀構え) “*Two sword stance.*” A style of [kendō](#) where one uses both a long and short sword, [daitō](#) and [shōtō](#) respectively, simultaneously. This style has its own variations of the five classic [kamae](#).

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.*” Positioning the feet for an unexpected style of footwork, e.g., positioning for [tsugi-ashi](#), without alerting the opponent. See H. Inoue (2003).

O

Obi (帯) “*Belt.*” The belt (optionally) worn with the [hakama](#) and [gi](#) to hold a sword and [saya](#) at the 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.*” 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. This style of *zanshin* is unused in modern [kendō](#).

Osae (押さえ) “*To hold down, suppress.*”

R

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 techniques.*” This implies striking multiple times in succession.

Rhythm A term frequently used to describe the unique flow and/or timing(s) associated with multiple aspects of an encounter. “*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.”

S

Sae (冴え) “Clearness, clarity.” With correct **te-no-uchi** a **shinai** strike with sae has a characteristic “pop” on 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 on the tip 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, made popular in **shiai**, used to block attacks to **men**, **kote**, and **migi dō** simultaneously.

San-pō-mamori leaves **gyaku-dō** and potentially **tsuki** open to attack.

San-sappō (三殺法) “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 effectively attack.

Sasae-zuki (支え突き) From the verb *sasaeru*, (1) “to support, to prop; to defend”, (2) “to hold at bay, to check, to stem.” This is the thrust used by **shidachi** in **tachi kata** #7 against **uchidachi**’s initial thrust. **Shidachi** induces a stalemate against **uchidachi**’s initial aggression by stepping back while pressing **uchidachi**’s thrust upward slightly from beneath using their left **shinogi**.

Sashi (刺し) “Pierce, stab, thrust.” **Sashi** style strikes in **kendō** refer to attacks that use minimal wrist and shoulder motion, i.e., “thrusting” the **shinai** onto the target. Popularized in **shiai**, this style is discouraged as it doesn’t incorporate a cutting motion. This term is sometimes incorrectly used to refer to **chiisai waza**.

Saya (鞘) “Sword sheathe.”

Sayū-men (左右面) “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) “Correct eye stance” or (晴眼の構え) “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 assume it correctly.

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

Seme (攻め) An “attack” or “offense.” From the verb *semeru* meaning “to attack” or “to assault”, **seme** is most often interpreted as “pressure”, e.g., pressure put on the opponent. The intent is to make them *perceive* that there is imminent attack from you that they *must* respond to immediately. This *need* to respond results in a momentary loss of their composure creating various opportunities for you 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** while invading the **maai** of **uchidachi** during the second **kodachi kata**.

Seme-kuzushi (攻め崩し) An “unbalancing” or a “disruptive pressure.” **Seme-kuzushi** can be likened to the *final nudge* inducing the opponent to react.

Sen (先) (1) “First move”, is synonymous with **sente** and **sen (w)o toru**. (2) “Previous; former.”

Sen (w)o toru (先を取る) “Take the lead” (initiative) and attack by anticipating the opponent.

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 can also be a *relative* term relating to experience in something, not necessarily just age.

Sensei (先生) “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) “Forestalling; (seizing the) initiative.” In *kendō* sente refers to an action used to seize the initiative against the opponent. This then forces the opponent to have to react. In particular they must act at a pace they do not set. See also *sen* and *sen (w)ō toru*.

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 *katsujin-ken*.

Shi (1) (仕) “To serve” or “to do” in a polite context. (2) (士) “Samurai; man, gentleman, scholar”. (3) As a suffix *-shi* is used for academic degrees, e.g., *shōgō*.

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) Ways 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*.

Shin no kokoro (心のこころ) “Inner core, deeper spirit or mind.” Musashi, Machida (2013), describes two distinct types of spirit: the external spirit and the

internal. These can be interpreted as one's will and thought, respectively. According to Musashi, and along with the ideas of *zanshin* and *hōshin*: “Whilst holding the sword you should usually let go the outer spirit and hold back the inner spirit. But in the moment when you strike the opponent in earnest, you should let go the inner spirit and hold back inside the outer spirit.”. This implies a cyclic interchange of *zanshin* and *hōshin* with *i no kokoro* and *shin no kokoro*.

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: “truth”, Gyo: “stream”, and So: “grass.” The three feelings which *shidachi* embodies in the *kodachi kata*. From the *ittō-Ryū* 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*.

Shinitachi (死に太刀) “Dead sword.” See *dead sword*.

Shinogi (鎬) The raised ridge on either side of a *katana* and *bokutō* used for deflecting or manipulating the opponent's weapon.

Shinogi (w)ō kezuru (鎬を削る) “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 *suki* 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 or test done before a panel of judges.

Shisei (姿勢) “Position.” A physical position, e.g., “*tai-tō shisei*” is a specific (named) position. See *tai-tō*.

Shishin (止心) “Stopped mind.” This refers to the mind being focused on one thing inhibiting free action.

Shizentai (自然体) The “natural body.” A natural (proper) posture, i.e., standing straight and extending the spine, shoulders back, arms hanging naturally, feet shoulder width, and the core engaged. *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*.

Shitsurei-shimasu (失礼します) “Excuse me.” Said prior to taking *jōdan no kamae* against a senior.

Shōgō (称号) “Rank, degree, title.” Shōgō are a set of titles awarded to *kendōka* of sufficient rank, 6th, 7th, and 8th *dan*; age, and experience. The titles, listed in ascending order, are *renshi* (錬士), *kyōshi* (教士), and *hanshi* (範士). *Shi* refers to an academic degree, *ren* translates to “refined”, *kyō* is “teach”, and *han* is “example, model”.

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

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

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

Shu-ha-ri (守破離) Shu: “protect, obey”; Ha: “detach, digress”; and Ri: “leave, separate.” Shu-ha-ri describes the stages of progress in many arts. The first, Shu, has the practitioner obeying the teacher in every detail without change. The second, Ha, is when the student has learned enough to incorporate their own ideas alongside their teacher’s. The third, Ri, is when the student is able to leave specific teachings behind them; all actions are in accord with the core principles and theory of their art. The *nihon kendō no kata* are said to embody shu-ha-ri in *tachi kata* #1–3, and in *kodachi kata* #1–3.

So (草) “Grass.” See *kūsa* and *shin-gyo-so*.

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

Suburi (素振り) “Elementary swing.” Various swing practices or exercises which make up 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.” This refers to an opening in your or your opponent’s defenses, or a gap between thoughts or actions.

Suri-age (すり上げ) “Sliding” while “rising.”

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 (すり足) “Sliding foot/leg.” Footwork where *kendōka* slide their feet on the floor as they move.

Suri-komi (すり込み) “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) “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) “Slide and knock down.” Used during the third *kodachi kata*. *Shidachi* pushes their *bokutō* down and to the left, sliding it along *uchidachi*’s, pushing their strike down and away.

Sytemi (捨て身) “Body abandoning”. *Sytemi* refers to the mentality needed while striking, i.e., that one will either kill or be killed during the attempt but by placing one’s life on the line, without hesitation or reservations, one’s strike will become effective.

T

Tachi (太刀) “Long sword.” Used in the *nihon kendō no kata*.

Tachi kata (太刀形) A subset of the *kata* using *tachi*.

Tachi-ai no *maai* (立会いの間合) “Distance between competitors.” The distance between *kendōka* for the *ritsu-rei* in the *nihon kendō no kata*, *bokutō waza*, *shiai*, and *shinsa*; roughly nine steps apart.

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

Tai-atari (体当り) “Body blow”, “ramming attack.” Used to create a *suki* in the opponent by momentarily upsetting their balance via a specific type of push.

Tai-sō (体操) “Gymnastics, calisthenics.” A term used to refer to a warm-up.

Tame (溜め) 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.” In a basic sense *tame* is the continuation of *seme*; one observes the opponent’s reaction(s) to *seme* while maintaining an attacking spirit. It has a broader meaning over the duration of a match: *kendōka* amass their spirit but have the patience to act at their own pace.

Tanden (丹田) “Energy farm/field.” In Eastern martial arts this is where one develops *ki*. Located roughly three fingers width below the navel centered inside of body. This is the center of gravity of the human body.

Tare (垂) “Hang, suspend.” The “skirt of a coat.” The waist protector worn in *kendō*. See *bōgu*.

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 the [mae-obi](#).

Ten (天) “Sky, heavens.”

Ten no kamae (天の構え) “Kamae of heaven.” See [jōdan no kamae](#).

Te-no-uchi (手の内) “Palm, skill.” In [kendō](#) the specific method of handling the sword upon striking, transferring power to the [kensen](#) while maintaining control.

Te-no-uchikawa (手の内皮) The palms of the [kote](#).

Tenugui (手拭い) “Hand towel.” A cloth worn on the head 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 (鐔せり合い) “Urging/forcing (while) *tsubas* 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) “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.” The handle of the [shinai](#) or [bokutō](#).

Tsuka-gashira (柄頭) The “Top/head” of the [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) “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*.

U

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.” The role of “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) “Receive, catch, defend.” The temporary block/deflection in several [ōji waza](#). The opponent's strike is momentarily received/deflected and, in a single continuous motion, a counter-attack is made. This is different than blocking as the intent here is to attack.

Uke-nagashi (受け流し) “Receive and ward off.” Used in the first and second [kodachi kata](#). The [uchidachi](#)'s attack is received on the [shinogi](#) redirecting it while at the same time moving to the side via [hiraki-ashi](#).

Ura (裏) “*Inside*.” The right side of the [shinai](#) or [bokutō](#).

Ushiro (後) “*Backward*.” Ushiro refers to a direction.

W

Waki-gamae (脇構え) “*Side stance*.” Known as the “*kamae of metal*”, or [yō no kamae](#), it’s 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](#).

Y

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.

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 \(w\)o toku](#) 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](#).

Z

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. This is related to [hōshin](#).

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 (ゼッケン) 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](#).

Zen-kei shisei (前傾姿勢) “*Forward leaning position*.” The occurs several times in the [kata](#) after [uchidachi](#) strikes and/or is countered by [shidachi](#). Specifically [tachi kata](#) #1, #4, #7, and [kodachi kata](#) #1–2.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] 2010 Kyoto Taikai Chiba vs. Shimano. YouTube video. Posted by KendoWorld. May 5, 2010.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sox1VzdFbUw>.
- [2] 37th All Japan Kendo Championships (1989)–Higashi vs. Suigura. 第37回全日本剣道選手権(3回戦) 東良美•杉浦知康. YouTube video. Posted by Tsuyoshi Ishikawa. Sept. 25, 2013.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQk0L45msVM>.
- [3] Kim Ahlström, Miwa Ahlström, and Andrew Plummer. *Jisho.org*. 2005.
URL: <http://jisho.org>.
- [4] All Japan 8-dan Tournament - Nihon Kendo Kata Enbu. H8-dan Fujiwara Takao (uchidachi) and H8-dan Makise Noriyasu (shidachi). YouTube video. Posted by KendoWorld. May 2016.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lgUDbF_SXY.
- [5] All Japan Kendo Federation. *Fundamental Kendo*. Japan Publications, 1973. ISBN: 0-87040-226-9.
- [6] All Japan Kendo Federation. *Japanese–English Dictionary of Kendo*. 2nd ed. All Japan Kendo Federation, 2011.
- [7] All Japan Kendo Federation. *Nippon Kendo Kata Instruction Manual*. All Japan Kendo Federation, 2002.
- [8] All Japan Kendo Federation. *Training Method for Fundamental Kendo Techniques with a Bokuto*. Trans. by Alex Bennet and Sato Nariaki. All Japan Kendo Federation, June 2003.
- [9] Ando Sensei. *Notes from Gedatsukai, Shimpan Class*. Submitted by Lawrence Chun. 2001.
URL: <http://www.hawaiiikendo.com/Kenkyukai/essays.htm>.
- [10] Asai Shotokan Association International. *What is Tanden?* 2016.
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/yacv43hq>.
- [11] All Japan Budogu Association. *Looking After Your Kendo Equipment (English Version)*. Japan Budo Equipment Manufacturers Association, 2003.
- [12] Dr. Jonathan Bannister. *Ethics in Martial Arts*. 2011.
URL: http://www.aishinkai.com/Ethics_in_Martial_Arts.html.
- [13] Timur Baytukalov. *Phoetic Translator*. EasyPronunciation.com. 2013.
URL: <https://easypronunciation.com/en/japanese-kanji-to-romaji-converter>.
- [14] Alexander C. Bennett. *Kendo: Culture of the Sword*. University of California Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-520-95994-1.
- [15] Paul Budden. *Looking at a Far Mountain: A Study of Kendo Kata*. Tuttle Publishing, 2000. ISBN: 0-8048-3245-5.
- [16] Chiba sensei Jodan no Kamae - !!Audio corrected!! YouTube video. Posted by thstraeten. Sept. 2015.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhR_uH-qrmg.
- [17] Chiba Sensei Kata Seminar - Toronto Kendo Club 30th Anniversary Seminar. Vimeo video. posted by Mark Kawabe. 2011.
URL: <https://vimeo.com/27168413>.
- [18] Chiba sensei seminar: Kata Kodachi 2. YouTube video. posted by euro kendo. 2010.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wwf-ZhXpC9g>.
- [19] Chiba Sensei's 'Kendo Perfect Master' – Jodan. YouTube video. Posted by Dezzasheep. June 2017.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4dGUZNksB8>.
- [20] Ruth Colvin Clark and Richard E. Mayer.
“Learning by Viewing Versus Learning by Doing: Evidence-Based Guidelines for Principled Learning Environments”.
In: *Performance Improvement* 47 (9 Oct. 2008).
URL: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5afe/1d117b8b60747a396973fa9470a29defe4db.pdf>.
- [21] Thomas Cleary. *Code of the Samurai: A Modern Translation of the Bushido Shoshinshu of Taira Shigesuke*. Tuttle Martial Arts, 1999. ISBN: 978-0804831901.
- [22] Thomas Cleary. *Soul of the Samurai: Modern Translations of Three Classic Works of Zen & Bushido*. Tuttle Martial Arts, 2005. ISBN: 978-0804848954.

- [23] Thomas Cleary. *The Japanese Art of War: Understanding the Culture of Strategy*. Shambhala Classics, 1991. ISBN: 978-1590302453.
- [24] Jonathan Cluett. *How to Stretch Out Properly*. 2005.
URL: <http://orthopedics.about.com/cs/sportsmedicine/ht/stretchingout.htm>.
- [25] Darrell M. Craig. *The Heart of Kendo*. Shambhala Publications, Inc., Dec. 7, 1999. ISBN: 978-1590300145.
- [26] Darrell M. Craig. *The Way of Kendo and Kenjitsu: Soul of the Samurai*. YMAA Publication Center Inc., 2004. ISBN: 978-1594390029.
- [27] Jeffrey Lewis Dann. "Kendo in Japanese Martial Culture: Swordsmanship as Self-Cultivation". PhD thesis. University of Washington, 1978.
- [28] Taisen Deshimaru. *The Zen Way to the Martial Arts*. Arkana Books, 1991. ISBN: 978-0140193442.
- [29] John Donohue. *Complete Kendo*. Tuttle Publishing, 2015. ISBN: 978-0804831482.
- [30] John Donohue. *The Overlook Martial Arts Reader*. Vol. 2. (Vol. 2). The Overlook Press, Peter Mayer Publishers, Inc., 2004. ISBN: 978-1585674633.
- [31] Robbert J Duvivier et al. "The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Aquisition of Clinical Skills". In: *BMC Medical Education* 10 (101 Dec. 2011).
URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6920-11-101>.
- [32] David Edell. *Stretching*. 2001.
URL: http://www.athleticadvisor.com/Injuries/General_Inj/Stretching/stretching1.htm.
- [33] K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf Th. Krampe, and Clemens Tesch-Romer. "The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Aquisition of Expert Performance". In: *Psychological Review* 100 (3 1993), pp. 363–406.
URL: <https://doi.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0033-295X.100.3.363>.
- [34] *Explanation of Jodan Part 1*. YouTube video. Posted by SKCKendoVideos. Aug. 2013.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8GgR8jEq3w&list=FLM8kKiSfsWCzUgGwOP_-DZA&index=52.
- [35] C.T. Farley and D.P. Ferris. "Biomechanics of Walking and Running: From Center of Mass Movement to Muscles Action". In: *Exercise and Sports Sciences Reviews* 26 (1998), pp. 253–285.
URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/13588262_Biomechanics_of_Walking_and_Running_Center_of_Mass_Movements_to_Muscle_Action.
- [36] Karl F Friday. *Legacies of the Sword: The Kashima-Shinryū and Samurai Martial Culture*. University of Hawai'i Press, 1997. ISBN: 0-8248-1847-4.
- [37] Michel Goosens, Sebastian Rahtz, and Frank Mittelbach. *The L^AT_EX Graphics Companion*. Addison Wesley, 1997. ISBN: 978-0321508928.
- [38] Ekaku Hakuin. *The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin: A Translation of the Sokkō-roku Kaien-fusetsu*. Trans. by Norman Waddell. Shambhala, Boston and London, 1994. ISBN: 978-1590308066.
- [39] Hawaiiikendo.com. "Nihon Kendo Kata". In: (2002).
URL: https://www.meikyokan.org/hawaiiikendo_nihon-kendo-kata/.
- [40] Eugen Herrigel. *Zen in the Art of Archery*. Vintage Spiritual Classics, 1989. ISBN: 978-0375705090.
- [41] Tsuyoshi Hiramatsu. "The Seventeen-Article Constitution of Shotoku Taishi (604 AD.)". In: *Social Sciences Review* 6 (2001). Kwansei Gakuin University, Nishinomiya, Japan, pp. 109–119.
URL: https://ci.nii.ac.jp/els/contentscinii_20181227104228.pdf?id=ART0000358577.
- [42] Noma Hisashi. *Kendo Tokuhon: The Kendo Reader*. Ed. and trans. by George McCall. Originally published 1939. <http://magcloud.com>, 2013.
- [43] Kensei Hiwaki. "A Breakthrough in the Dilemma of War or Peace, The Teachings of Kendo". In: *B.K.A. News, The Official Newsletter of the British Kendo Association #24* (2000). Ed. by Peter West, pp. 8–9.
URL: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/15635723/bka-news-24-british-kendo-association>.
Original URL: <http://www.kendo.org.uk/newsletter/archive/bkanews/iss24.pdf> (broken).
- [44] Terry Holt. *Kendo Beginner's Guide*. British Kendo Association. 2014.
URL: <http://www.kendo.org.uk/files/beginnersbooklet20092.pdf>.
- [45] Terry Holt. *The First Steps to Becoming a Referee*. Kendo World. Updated January 2010. 2006.
URL: <http://www.kendo.org.nz/resources/shimpan/RefereeBookletUpdated2010-2nd.pdf>.

- [46] John Howell. *Kendo Kata and its Relationship with Humanity and Buddhism*. British Kendo Association. 2010.
URL: <http://www.britishkendoassociation.com/kendo-and-kata-its-relationship-with-humanity-and-buddhism/>.
- [47] Joe Hyams. *Zen in the Martial Arts*. Bantam Book, 1982. ISBN: 978-0553275599.
- [48] Masahiro Imafuji. *Kendo Study: 5 Points to Put Pressure (5 Seigan)*. YouTube video. Posted by Hiro Imafuji. Mar. 2019.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eCVyEtm610>.
- [49] Hidekatsu Inoue. *Progress in Kendo Book (剣道上達 Book)*. Narumi Hall Publishing, 2003. ISBN: 4-415-01915-3.
- [50] Yoshihiko Inoue. *Inoue Sensei kata 1–3*. Detailed Explanation of Nippon Kendo no Kata (詳解日本剣道形). YouTube video. Posted by tightscot. Nov. 2016.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwPrwPUCLoc&t=16s&index=2&list=FLM8kKiSfsWCzUgGwOP_-DZA.
- [51] Yoshihiko Inoue. *Kendo Kata: Essence and Application*. Trans. by Alex Bennett. Kendo World Productions, 2003. ISBN: 4-9901694-1-7.
- [52] International Kendo Federation. *The Regulations of Kendo Shiai and Shinpan & The Subsidiary Rules of Kendo Shiai and Shinpan. The Guidelines for Kendo Shiai and Shinpan*. International Kendo Federation, Sept. 2017.
- [53] *International Phonetic Alphabet*. International Phonetic Alphabet. 2017.
URL: <http://www.internationalphoneticalphabet.org/>.
- [54] Yasuji Ishiwata and Francis Bond. *Kendo Equipment Manual*. <http://www.f-budogu.jp/>, 2001.
- [55] Ito Ittosai. *The Twelve Rules of the Sword*. Trans. by Eric Shahan. CreateSpace, 2018. ISBN: 978-1720715641.
- [56] *Jim Breen's Online Japanese Dictionary*. 2015.
URL: <http://nihongo.monash.edu/cgi-bin/wwwjdic?1C>.
- [57] *jodan Yamamoto sensei*. 上段 山本雅彦先生. YouTube video. Posted by Dodaichi85. Sept. 2009.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmcHCyf4vfU&list=FLM8kKiSfsWCzUgGwOP_-DZA&index=47.
- [58] *jodan Yamamoto sensei 2*. 山本雅彦先生 大将戦から代表者戦 Yamamoto Masahiko taisho daihyosya. YouTube video. Posted by Dodaichi85. 2009.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USq4Z508Huc>.
- [59] Jeffrey Karinja. *A Lineage all but Forgotten: The Yushinkan (Nakayama Hakudo)*. 2011.
URL: <https://kenshi247.net/blog/2011/02/14/a-lineage-all-but-forgotten-the-yushinkan-nakayama-hakudo/>.
- [60] *Kata Bokuto Ni Yoru Kendo Kihon Waza Keiko Ho*.
From: Training Method for Fundamental Kendo Techniques with a Bokuto (木刀による剣道基本稽古法). YouTube video. Posted by Jose Luis Palacios Vergara. Original by All Japan Kendo Federation (2003). Aug. 2015.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uxdm_Vj9rVs.
- [61] Herman Kauz. *The Martial Spirit: An Introduction to the Origin, Philosophy, and Psychology of the Martial Arts*. The Overlook Press, 1988. ISBN: 978-0879513276.
- [62] *Keiko-Ho with Bokuto (Demonstration)*. 木刀による剣道基本技稽古法 (公開演武). YouTube video. Posted by 全日本剣道連盟 (AJKF). July 2009.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVzHMNJ6NKG>.
- [63] "Kendo Kata No 7 with Miyazaki sensei 2015". In: (2018). Posted by Kendo Guide.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhzUWtJQ45E>.
- [64] *kendo Kurasawa hai~Barcelona*. YouTube video. Posted by Cardano CEO | NEWS. Sept. 2006.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXnzvU-lxoo>.
- [65] Shigematsu Kimiaki. *The Kendo Mind: A Guide to Grading Successfully*. Trans. by Yamaguchi Remi. Bunkasha International Corporation, 2016.
- [66] Rudyard Kipling. *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi*. HarperCollins, 2004. ISBN: 978-0060587857.
- [67] Minoru Kiyota. *The Shambhala Guide to Kendo*. Shambhala, Boston and London, 2002. ISBN: 978-1570629273.
- [68] Iho Kiyotsugu. *New Progress Course Kendo (新剣道上達講座)*. <http://www.skijournal.co.jp>, 1982. ISBN: 978-4789920131.
- [69] Helmut Kopka and Patrick W. Daly. *Guide to L^AT_EX, 4th Ed.* Addison Wesley, 2004. ISBN: 978-0321173850.
- [70] Trevor Leggett. *Samurai Zen: The Warrior Koans*. Routledge, 2003. ISBN: 978-0415284653.
- [71] Living Language. *Voiceless Vowels*. Living Language. 2012.
URL: <https://livinglanguage.com/community/discussion/159/voiceless-vowels>.

- [72] Ray Long. *The Daily Bandha*. 2015.
URL: <http://www.dailybandha.com/2015/08/diaphragmatic-belly-breathing.html>.
- [73] Fredrick Lovret. *The Student's Handbook*. Taseki Publishing Co., 1989.
- [74] Dave Lowry. *Autumn Lightning, The Education of an American Samurai*. Shambhala, 2001. ISBN: 978-1570621154.
- [75] Dave Lowry. *Bokken: Art of the Japanese Sword*. Ohara Publications, 1986. ISBN: 0-89750-104-7.
- [76] Dave Lowry. *Clouds in the West*. The Lyons Press, 2004. ISBN: 1-59228-590-2.
- [77] Sporting Excellence ltd. *Dynamic Stretches and Stretching Routine*. 2018.
URL: <http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com/dynamic-stretches.html>.
- [78] Teruo Machida. "The essence of swordfighting techniques of Miyamoto Musashi. An interperetive translation of his Heiho Sanjugokajo". Trans. by Vaughn Williams Teruo Machida.
In: *Bull. of Nippon Sport Sci. Univ.* 42 (2 2013), pp. 165–179.
- [79] Jumpei Matsumoto. *Kata Observations. Notes on the original writings by Noboru Shigeoka, Hanshi 9th Dan*. Trans. by Kazuyo Matsuda. Translated by Kazuyo Matsuda. British Kendo Association. 2016.
URL: <http://www.britishkendoassociation.com/nihon-kendo-gata-kata/>.
- [80] Nojima Matunobu Yamizaki. *Illustrated Coaching in Kendo* (図解コ一チ剣道). Seibido, 1998. ISBN: 4-415-00488-1.
- [81] George McCall. *Kendo Coaching Tips and Drills*. <http://magcloud.com>, 2012.
- [82] George McCall. *Kendo Judan*. 2015.
URL: <http://kenshi247.net/blog/2015/07/03/kendo-judan/>.
- [83] George McCall. *Kendo no Kata Creators*. 2011.
URL: <https://kenshi247.net/blog/2011/06/13/kendo-no-kata-creators/>.
- [84] Merriam-Webster Incorporated. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. 2022.
URL: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.
- [85] Frank Mittelbach and Michael Goosens. *The L^AT_EX Companion: Tools and Techniques for Computer Typesetting, Second Ed.* Addison-Wesley, 2004. ISBN: 978-0201362992.
- [86] Jan Modric. *Valsalva Maneuver*. 2016.
URL: <http://www.ehealthstar.com/test/valsalva-maneuver>.
- [87] Wayne Muromoto. *Mudra in the Martial Arts*. 2005.
URL: <http://tori4.livejournal.com/47773.html>.
- [88] Miyamoto Musashi. *Go Rin No Sho: The Book of Five Rings*. Trans. by Thomas Cleary. Shambhala Publications, 1993. ISBN: 9781611806403.
- [89] Miyamoto Musashi. *The Five Rings, Miyamoto Musashi's Art of Strategy*. Trans. by David K. Groff. Watkins Publishing, 2012. ISBN: 978-0785834007.
- [90] Andrew N. Nelson. *The Nelson Compact Japanese-English Character Dictionary*. Abridged by John H. Haig. Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1999. ISBN: 0-8048-2037-6.
- [91] *Nippon Kendo Kata - English version*. YouTube video. Posted by Robert Stefanovich. Oct. 2016.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SRwiE_ig_4.
- [92] *Nippon Kendo Kata Demonstration - 16th World Kendo Championships*.
Uchitachi (Left) Kendo-Hanshi IWADATE Saburo, Shitachi (Right) Kendo-Hanshi KATO Koji. YouTube video. Posted by All Japan Kendo Federation (全日本剣道連盟). May 2015.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=at-cmEgy25A>.
- [93] *Nippon Kendo Kata-Enbu - 65th All Japan Kendo Championship*.
Uchitachi (Left) Kendo-Hanshi Noriyasu MAKISE, Shitachi (Right) Masafumi OTAKE. YouTube video. Posted by All Japan Kendo Federation (全日本剣道連盟). Nov. 2017.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eT7c_Pty3k.
- [94] Tsuneo Nishioka. "Uchidachi and Shidachi". In: *Sword and Spirit. Classical Warrior Traditions of Japan*. Ed. by Diane Skoss. Vol. 2. Koryu Books, 1999. ISBN: 978-1890536-02-2.
- [95] Inazo Nitobe. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. Trans. by Suchi Tokuhei. Kodansha International Ltd., 1998. ISBN: 0-8048-3413-X.
- [96] Hidy Ochiai. *A Way to Victory: The Annotated Book of Five Rings*. The Overlook Press, 2005. ISBN: 1-58567-038-3.
- [97] Haruki Ogawa. *Advanced Kendo Seminar* (実戦のための剣道講座). <http://www.skijournal.co.jp>, 2001. ISBN: 4-7899-2079-8.

- [98] Okinawa Karate Kobujutsu Kenkyu Kai. *Karate ni sente nashi Teil 2*. 2018.
URL: <https://www.ryukyu-bujutsu.de/2018/04/01/karate-ni-sente-nashi-teil-2/>.
- [99] Hiroshi Ozawa. *Kendo: The Definitive Guide*. Kodansha International, 1997. ISBN: 4-7700-2119-4.
- [100] Ryan Parker. *Five Oral Teachings (Kunden) and Gamaku*. 2016.
URL: http://ryukyuma.blogspot.ca/2014_08_01_archive.html.
- [101] Red Pine. *The Heart Sutra*. Shoemaker and Hoard, 2004. ISBN: 978-1593760823.
- [102] *Refereeing a Nitoryu Player*. YouTube video. Posted by Joice. Sept. 2019.
URL:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soVpiRvm6nY&list=PLa5E1pT1Fo0K5UqJ_st2qZl02jY0HhMpg&index=5.
- [103] Fernando Pagés Ruiz. *What can Science Teach us About Flexibility*. 2007.
URL: <http://www.yogajournal.com/practice/209>.
- [104] Brian Sagi. *Power Generation in Martial Arts: Axis, the Spine, and the Center – Gamaku*. 2015.
URL: <http://www.fullpotentialma.com/power-generation-martial-arts-axis-spine-center-gamaku/>.
- [105] Masao Sakudo. *Nippon Kendo Kata: Considerations for Instruction*. 41st Japanese Academy of Budo Conference. Japanese Academy of Budo. 2009.
URL: http://www.budo.ac/kendo/kendo_archives_e/Nippon_Kendo_Kata/Nippon_Kendo_Kata.htm.
- [106] Geoff Salmon. *Kendo: A Comprehensive Guide to Japanese Swordsmanship*. Tuttle Publishing, 2013. ISBN: 978-4805312315.
- [107] Mark Schultzel et al. "The Prevalence of Injury in Kendo". In: *The Physician and Sports Medicine* 44 (1 2016), pp. 29–33.
URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00913847.2016.1105093>.
- [108] Mark Schumacher. *Shinto and Japanese Buddhist Corner*. 2002.
URL: <http://www.onmarkproductions.com/html/buddhism.shtml>.
- [109] Noboru Shigeoka. *Detailed Explanation of Nippon Kendo Kata* (詳解日本剣道形). Ski Journal Limited, 1977.
- [110] *Shodai Kenji vs Hara at 51. AJKF*. YouTube video. Posted by A. Vachter. Oct. 2010.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWB3GmDL4B8&list=FLM8kKiSfsWCzUgGwOP_-DZA&index=2.
- [111] Suzuki Shosan. *Warrior of Zen: The Diamond-hard Wisdom Mind of Suzuki Shosan*. Trans. by Arthur Braverman. Kodansha America, 1994. ISBN: 978-1568360317.
- [112] SportsFitnessAdvisor. *Flexibility Training Improves Your Health and Athletic Performance*. 2001.
URL: <http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com/flexibilitytraining.html>.
- [113] SportsFitnessAdvisor. *Proprioceptive Muscular Facilitation (PNF) Stretching*. 2001.
URL: <http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com/pnfstretching.html>.
- [114] Phillip Starr. *Martial Mechanics: Maximum Results with Minimum Effort in the Practice of the Martial Arts*. Blue Snake Books, 2008. ISBN: 978-1583942116.
- [115] Phillip Starr. *The Making of a Butterfly: Traditional Chinese Martial Arts as Taught by Master W.C. Chen*. Blue Snake Books, 2006. ISBN: 978-1583941515.
- [116] John Stevens. *Budo Secrets: Teachings of the Martial Arts Masters*. Shambala Publications, Inc., 2001. ISBN: 978-1570629150.
- [117] John Stevens. *The Sword of no Sword: Life of the Master Warrior Tesshu*. Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1989. ISBN: 978-1570620508.
- [118] Nicklaus Suino. *Budo Mind and Body. Training Secrets of the Japanese Martial Arts*. Weatherhill, Boston and London, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-8348-0568-2.
- [119] *Sumi Sensei Tips on Kendo no Kata 1st Part. Useful tips on Kendo no kata during Sumi sensei seminar at Shibukan 2009*. YouTube video. Posted by kedomaniac. Apr. 2009.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZVULx5eYT4>.
- [120] Shunryu Suzuki. *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. Weatherhill, Inc., 1970. ISBN: 0-8348-0079-9.
- [121] Soho Takuan. *The Unfettered Mind: Writings from a Zen Master to a Master Swordsman*. Trans. by William Wilson. Kodansha International, 2002. ISBN: 978-4-7700-2947-8.
- [122] Morishima Tateo. *Pursuing the Spirit and Modern Kendo*. Lecture translated by George McCall. 2007.
URL: <http://kenshi247.net/blog/2011/02/21/pursuing-the-spirit-and-modern-kendo-part-1/>.
- [123] Jinichi Tokeshi. *Kendo: Elements, Rules, and Philosophy*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2003. ISBN: 978-0824825980.
- [124] *Tokyo Koshi GoGyo no Kata*. 東京高師五行之形. YouTube video. Posted by 利信酒井. May 2018.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1nBfI6N-Fc>.

- [125] All Japan Kendo Federation Committee on Tournaments and Refereeing. *A Guide for Tournament Refereeing in Kendo*. Trans. by Tadashi Wakabayashi. 2003.
URL: https://www.kendo-canada.com/docs/Referee_Guide_Book_English.pdf.
- [126] Edward R. Tufte. *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative*. Graphics Press LLC, 1997. ISBN: 978-0961392123.
- [127] Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*. Trans. by Stephen Mitchell. Harper Collins, 1999. ISBN: 978-0711212787.
- [128] *Various Methods to Tie the Obi and Hakama (Japanese)*. 2003.
URL: <http://kimono.net/kituke.html>.
- [129] Gordon Warner and Junzo Sasamori. *This is Kendo: The Art of Japanese Fencing*. Charles E Tuttle, 1964. ISBN: 978-0804816076.
- [130] George Washington. *From George Washington to John Turnbull, 25 June 1799*.
The Papers of George Washington, Retirement Series, vol. 4, 20 April 1799–13 December 1799, ed. W. W. Abbot. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999, pp. 156–159. Founders Online, National Archives. 1799.
URL: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/06-04-02-0120>.
- [131] Alan Watkins. *Getting to the Heart of Performance: The Significance of Heart Rate Variability for Leadership Performance*. Complete-Coherence.com. 2016.
URL: <http://www.complete-coherence.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/HRV-White-Paper.pdf>.
- [132] Alan Watts. *The Way of Zen*. Vintage Spiritual Classics, 1985. ISBN: 978-0375705106.
- [133] Wikipedia. *Confucianism*. 2001.
URL: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucianism>.
- [134] Wikipedia. *Golgi Tendon Reflex*. 2008.
URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golgi_tendon_reflex.
- [135] Wikipedia. *Help:IPA/Japanese*. Wikipedia. 2009.
URL: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Japanese>.
- [136] Wikipedia. *International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration*. Apr. 2, 2021.
URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Alphabet_of_Sanskrit_Transliteration.
- [137] Wikipedia. *Muscle Spindle*. 2015.
URL: http://www.wikipedia.com/wiki/Muscle_spindle.
- [138] Wikipedia. *PNF Stretching*. 2004.
URL: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stretching>.
- [139] Wikipedia. *Voicelessness*. Wikipedia. 2012.
URL: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voicelessness>.
- [140] Wikipedia. *Wa (Japanese culture)*. Wikipedia. 2017.
URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wa_\(Japanese_culture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wa_(Japanese_culture)).
- [141] Kevin Yackle et al. "Breathing Control Centre Neurons That Promote Arousal in Mice".
In: *Science* 355 (6332 Mar. 2017), pp. 1411–1415.
URL: <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/355/6332/1411.full>.
- [142] Munenori Yagyu. *Family Traditions on the Art of War*. Trans. by Thomas Cleary. Shambhala Publications, 1993. ISBN: 9781611806403.
- [143] Yamazato Productions. *All Japan Kendo Federation Nihon Kendo Kata*. DVD. 2001.
URL: <http://www.yamazato-videos.com>.
- [144] John M. Yumoto. *The Samurai Sword: A Handbook*. Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1980. ISBN: 0-8048-0509-1.
- [145] 前原正作(鹿児島) - 寺地種寿(東京) 1990 全日本剣道選手権大会.
Masasaku Maehara (Kagoshima) - Tsukiji Tansen (Tokyo) 1990 All Japan Kendo Championship. YouTube video.
Posted by Tsuyoshi Ishikawa. Feb. 4, 2014.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tLUhDsp03M>.
- [146] 千葉 仁 Chiba sensei (kyōshi 7.dan) and 東 一良 Higashi sensei (kyōshi 6.dan) [1980's]. YouTube video.
Posted by A Vachter. Apr. 10, 2011.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dh2qaWDVF2Q&list=FLM8kKiSfSWCzUgGw0P_-DZA&index=13.

- [147] 日本剣道形 (2014年全日本剣道選手権大会). The 62nd All Japan Kendo Championship 2014(Kendo Kata). YouTube video. Posted by YUN YUN. Nov. 3, 2014.
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twfw4mPkx3k>.
- [148] 第23回 明治村剣道大会 千葉仁 x 有馬光男. *The 23rd Meijimura Kendo Taikai Chiba Masashi x Arima Mitsuo*. YouTube video. Posted by MyongjiKENDO. Mar. 30, 2013.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_ZB8v_1A3Y.

INDEX

Motodachi, 121

Saki-Gomu, *see* Shinai

San-Pō-Mamori, 110

Shinai

Components of
Saki-Gomu, 68

Advanced Strikes, 109

Small strikes, 109

Small Men, 109

Yoko-Men, 109

Gyaku Dō, 110

Katate Tsuki, 110

Katate Men from Jōdan, 111

Katate Kote from Jōdan, 111

Katate Men from Nitō, 112

Katate Kote from Nitō, 112

Age-Tō, *see* Kamae

Ai-Kakari Geiko, *see* Keiko

Ashi-Gamae, 43

Ashi-Sabaki, 46

Ayumi-Ashi, 46

Fumi-Komi, 46, 117, 118

Fumi-Kiru, 46

Hikitsukeru, 46

Hiraki-Ashi, 46

Okuri-Ashi, 45

Suri-Ashi, 45, 46, 107

Tsugi-Ashi, 46

Ayumi-Ashi, *see* Ashi-Sabaki

Basic Strikes, 103

Shōmen, 103

Sayū-Men, 104

Kote, 105

Dō, 106

Tsuki, 107

Right-Handed Strikes, 105

Coordination & Footwork, 107

Te-no-Uchi, 108

Bōgu, 83

How to carry, 37

How to remove, 94

How to wear, 87

Preparing for use, 84

Setting up in the dōjō, 36

Sizing, 169

Storing the bōgu to dry, 95

Stowing in a bōgu bag, 97

Bokutō Waza, 62

Bokutō

Components of, 62

Kensen, 62

Mono-Uchi, 62

Shinogi, 62

Tsuba, 62

Tsuba-Dome, 62

Tsuka, 62

Tsuka-Gashira, 62

Holding in Chūdan no Kamae

Grip, 50

Position, 51

Maintenance, 62

Chi no Kamae, *see* Kamae

Chika-Ma, *see* Maai

Chūdan Hanmi no Kamae, *see* Kamae

Chūdan no Kamae, *see* Kamae

Connection, 129, 145, 151

Daitō, *see* Shinai

Datotsu-Bui, *see* Men, Kote, Dō, and Tsuki Target

Areas, 101

Datotsu-Bu, *see* Mono-Uchi

Debana Waza, *see* Waza

Dōjō

Overview of a practice, 9

Procedures and formalities, 25

Dōmo Arigato Gozaimashita, 12

Dō

- Components of, [84](#)
 - Dō-Chikawa, [84](#)
 - Dō-Himo, [84](#), [88](#)
 - Dō-Kawa, [84](#)
 - Dō-Mune, [84](#)
 - Mune-Chikawa, [84](#), [88](#)
- Gyaku Dō, *see* Advanced Strikes
- How to strike
 - Migi Dō, [106](#)
- How to wear, [88](#)
- Target Areas
 - Gyaku Dō, [102](#)
 - Migi Dō, [102](#)
- Footwork**, *see* Ashi-Sabaki
- Formalities**, *see* Rei-Hō
- Four Sicknesses**, [144](#), [147](#), [151](#), [152](#)
- Fumi-Komi**, *see* Ashi-Sabaki
- Gedan Hanmi no Kamae**, *see* Kamae
- Gedan no Kamae**, *see* Kamae
- Gi**
 - How to fold, [77](#)
 - How to wear, [72](#)
- Gyaku Dō**, *see* Advanced Strikes
- Hakama**
 - How to fold, [77](#)
 - How to wear, [72](#)
 - Meaning of the pleats, [71](#)
- Hanmi Kamae**, *see* Kamae
- Harai Waza**, *see* Waza
- Hara**, [42](#), [136](#)
- Hassō no Kamae**, *see* Kamae
- Haya Suburi**, *see* Suburi
- Hidari-Te**, [52](#)
- Hiki-Waza**, *see* Waza
- Hiraki-Ashi**, *see* Ashi-Sabaki
- Ichidan Suburi**, *see* Suburi
- Issoku Ittō no Maai**, *see* Maai
- Jin-Bu**, *see* Shinai
- Jō-Ge Buri**, *see* Suburi
- Jōdan no Kamae**, *see* Kamae
- Kaeshi Waza**, *see* Waza
- Kakari Geiko**, *see* Keiko
- Kamae-Tō**, [33](#)
- Kamae**, [138](#), [151](#)
 - Alternate Kamae, [52](#)
 - Hidari-te Variants, [52](#)
 - Seigan no Kamae, [52](#)
 - Jōdan no Kamae, [53](#)
 - Age-Tō, [54](#)
 - Hassō no Kamae, [55](#)
 - Gedan no Kamae, [56](#)
 - Waki-Gamae, [57](#)
 - Nitō Kamae, [58](#)
 - Hanmi Kamae, [59](#)
 - Gedan Hanmi no Kamae, [59](#)
 - Chi no Kamae, [56](#)
 - Chūdan no Kamae, [49](#)
 - Ashi-Gamae, [43](#)
 - Holding the Bokutō, *see* Bokutō
 - Holding the Shinai, *see* Shinai
 - Hi no Kamae, [53](#)
 - Kane no Kamae, [57](#)
 - Mizu no Kamae, [49](#)
 - Moku no Kamae, [55](#)
 - Mu-Gamae, [59](#)
 - Ten no Kamae, [53](#)
- Kane no Kamae**, *see* Kamae
- Katate Kote**, *see* Advanced Strikes
- Katate Men**, *see* Advanced Strikes
- Katsugi Waza**, *see* Waza
- Katzu**, [136](#)
- Keiko**, [155](#)
 - Ai-Kakari Geiko, [160](#)
 - Defensive Kendō, [161](#)
 - Effective Keiko, [155](#)
 - Kakari Geiko, [159](#)
 - Mitori Geiko, [155](#)
 - Motodachi Geiko, [159](#)
 - Shiai Geiko, [160](#)
 - Uchi-Komi Geiko, [159](#)
- Kendō-Gu**, *see* Bokutō, *see* Bōgu, *see* Gi, *see* Hakama, *see* Shinai, [61](#)
- Kendō**
 - Grading requirements, [171](#)
- Kensen**, *see* Bokutō, *see* Shinai
- Ki Ken Tai Ichi**, [107](#), [142](#), [146](#), [147](#), [151](#)
- Kiai**, [135](#), [147](#)
- Kihon Bokutō Waza**, *see* Bokutō Waza
- Kiri-Kaeshi**, *see* Suburi
- Ki**, [147](#)
- Komono**, *see* Shinai
- Koshiita**, [75](#)

Koshi, 15

Kote

Components of, 83

Kera, 83

Kote-Gashira, 93

Kote-Himo, 83

Te-no-Uchikawa, 83

Tsutsu, 83

How to strike, 105

How to wear, 93

Katate Kote from Jōdan, *see* Advanced Strikes

Katate Kote from Nitō, *see* Advanced Strikes

Target Areas

Hidari kote, 102

Migi Kote, 102

Maai, 99, 137

Chika-Ma, 100

Issoku Ittō no Maai, 99

Tō-Ma, 99

Mejirushi, 164

Men (wo) Tore, 13

Men (wo) Tsuke, 12

Men

Components of, 83

Men-Buton, 83

Men-Chikawa, 85

Men-Chikawa, 83

Men-Dare, 83, 91

Men-Gane, 83, 85

Men-Himo, 83, 91

Men-Tate-Gane, 83

Men-Yoko-Gane, 83, 92

Tsuki-Dare, 83, 95

How to carry, *see* Bōgu

How to strike

Sayū-Men, 104

Shōmen, 103

How to wear

Kanto style, 91

Kansai style, 92

Katate Men from Jōdan, *see* Advanced Strikes

Katate Men from Nitō, *see* Advanced Strikes

Target Areas

Sayū-Men, 102

Shōmen, 102

Yoko-Men, *see* Advanced Strikes

Metsuke, 145

Migi-Te, 52

Mitori Geiko, *see* Keiko

Mitsu no Sen, 143, 144, 146, 152

Go no Sen, 144, 152

Sen no Sen, 144, 152

Sen Sen no Sen, 144, 152

Mizu no Kamae, *see* Kamae

Mokushō, 11, 39

Mono-Uchi, *see* Bokutō, *see* Shinai

Motodachi Geiko, *see* Keiko

Mu-Gamae, *see* Kamae

Mudrā

During Mokushō, 42

Mune-Chikawa, *see* Dō

Mushin, 141

Nakayui, *see* Shinai

Naname Buri, *see* Suburi

Nidan Suburi, *see* Suburi

Nidan Waza, *see* Waza

Nihon Kendō no Kata, 62

Nitō Kamae, *see* Kamae

Nuki Waza, *see* Waza

Obi

How to wear, 73

Ōji Waza, *see* Waza

Okuri-Ashi, *see* Ashi-Sabaki

Omote, 62, 63

Onegai-Shimasu, 11, 12

Osame-Tō, 12, 33

Rei-Gi, 25

Rei-Hō, 25

Rei, 28

Ritsu-Rei, 12, 28

Sensei ni Rei, 11

Shōmen ni Rei, 11

Za-Rei, 11, 28

Renzoku

Renzoku Sayū-Men, 104

Sage-Tō, 12, 30

Saki-Gawa, *see* Shinai

San-Pō-Mamori, 102, 161

San-Sappō, 143, 146, 152

Ken (w)o Korosu, 143

Ki (w)o Korosu, 143

Waza (w)o Korosu, 144

Sandan Suburi, *see* Suburi
Sayū-Men, *see* Basic Strikes
Seigan no Kamae, *see* Kamae
Seiretsu, 10
Seiza, 11
 How to sit in, 26
Seme, 146, 150
 Perceived Seme, 151
 Physical Seme, 150
 Producing Seme, 150
 Relating Shikake and Ōji Waza, 153
 Spiritual Seme, 151
Sensei ni Rei, *see* Rei
Sente, 146
Sen, 146, 147, 149, 150
Shi-Kai, *see* Four Sicknesses
Shiai Geiko, *see* Keiko
Shiai
 Commands
 Hajime, 165
 Yame, 165
 Nihonme, 165
 Shōbu, 165
 Enchō, 165
 Wakare, 165
 Court Layout, 163
 Fusen-Gachi, 167
 Individuals, 163
 Pronouncements
 Men Ari, 165
 Kote Ari, 165
 Dō Ari, 165
 Tsuki Ari, 165
 Ippon Ari, 165
 Shōbu Ari, 165
 Hantei, 165
 Hansoku, 165
 Gōgi, 165
 Scoreboard, 167
 Shinpan, 164
 Fukushin, 164
 Shushin, 164
 Teams, 166
 Chūken, 166
 Fukushō, 166
 Jihō, 166

 Senpō, 166
 Taishō, 166
Shikake Waza, *see* Waza
Shin Gi Tai Ichi, 143
Shin Ki Ryoku Ichi, 143
Shinai, 63
 Carrying, 30
 Components of
 Jin-Bu, 63
 Kensen, 63
 Komono, 63
 Mono-Uchi, 63
 Nakayui, 63
 Saki-Gawa, 63
 Tsuba, 63
 Tsuba-Dome, 63
 Tsuru, 63
 Tsuka, 63
 Tsuka-Gashira, 63
 Tsuka-Gawa, 63
 Tsuka-Himo, 63
 Daitō, 58
 Drawing, 32
 Holding in Chūdan no Kamae
 Grip, 50
 Position, 51
 Maintaining, 64
 Regulations, 170
 Shōtō, 58
Shinogi, *see* Bokutō
 Usage of, 130
Shizentai, 25
Shōmen ni Rei, *see* Rei
Shōmen, *see* Basic Strikes
 Symbolic, 11
Shōtō, *see* Shinai
Sonkyo, 12, 29
 Assuming Sonkyo, 29
Stretching, *see* Tai-Sō
Suburi, 113
 Haya Suburi, 116
 Ichidan Suburi, 115
 Jō-Ge Buri, 113
 Kiri-Kaeshi, 119
 Naname Buri, 114
 Nidan Suburi, 115

Sandan Suburi, [114](#)
Uchi-Komi, [117](#)
Suki, [138](#), [145](#), [150](#), [151](#)
Suri-Ashi, *see* Ashi-Sabaki
Suriage Waza, *see* Waza
Sutemi, [139](#), [141](#), [146](#), [147](#), [149](#), [150](#)
Tai-Atari, *see* Waza
Tai-Sō, [10](#)
Tai-Tō, [12](#), [32](#)
Tai, [148](#)
Tare
 Components of, [84](#)
 Ō-Dare, [84](#), [87](#)
 Ko-Dare, [84](#), [87](#)
 Tare-Himo, [84](#), [87](#)
 Tare-Obi, [84](#)
Te-no-Uchi, *see* Basic Strikes
Tenugui, [89](#)
 How to wear, [89](#)
Tō-Ma, *see* Maai
Tobi-Komi Waza, *see* Waza
Tournament, *see* Shiai
Tsuba-Dome, *see* Bokutō, *see* Shinai
Tsuba-Zeriai, [100](#), [127](#), [132](#)
 Waza from, *see* Waza
Tsuba, *see* Bokutō, *see* Shinai
Tsugi-Ashi, *see* Ashi-Sabaki
Tsuru, *see* Shinai
Tsuka-Gashira, *see* Bokutō, *see* Shinai
Tsuka-Gawa, *see* Shinai
Tsuka-Himo, *see* Shinai
Tsuka, *see* Bokutō, *see* Shinai
Tsuki

 How to strike
 Morote Tsuki, [107](#)
 Katate Tsuki, *see* Advanced Strikes
 Target Area, [102](#)
Uchi-Komi Geiko, *see* Keiko
Uchi-Komi, *see* Suburi
Uchi-Otoshi Waza, *see* Waza
Ura, [62](#), [63](#)
Waki-Gamae, *see* Kamae
Waza
 Ōji Waza, [127](#), [129](#), [145](#), [153](#)
 Debana Waza, [129](#)
 Kaeshi Waza, [131](#)
 Nuki Waza, [132](#)
 Suriage Waza, [130](#)
 Uchi-Otoshi Waza, [131](#)
 Hiki-Waza, [132](#)
 Shikake Waza, [127](#), [145](#), [153](#)
 Harai Waza, [129](#)
 Katsugi Waza, [128](#)
 Nidan Waza, [128](#)
 Tobi-Komi Waza, [127](#)
 Tai-Atari, [133](#)
 type #1, [133](#)
 type #2, [134](#)
 Tsuba-Zeriai, [132](#)
Yoko-Men, *see* Advanced Strikes
Za-Zen, [17](#), [39](#), [136](#)
Zanshin, [118](#), [138](#), [146](#), [148](#), [149](#), [151](#)
Zenjo-In, [42](#)

Zekken, [95](#)