

Kendo

Beginners Guide



剣道

By Holt Sensei



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Kendo

*Beginners
Guide*



I have written this little book to help guide beginners through the basic movements, techniques formalities and practice of Kendo. As you will discover as your training progresses, most teachers (sensei) use Japanese words and terminology to describe the many aspects of kendo during practice. I hope this guide will help you understand this Japanese terminology and ease you into this new and exciting journey that you have decided to take.

As this is a beginner's guide, I have kept the descriptions and examples as simple and as clear as possible, starting with a brief history of kendo and its development then explaining about the dojo, etiquette in the dojo and how to conduct yourself before and after practice. In the practice of kendo it is very important to look after your training costume and equipment, always keeping them clean, tidy and well maintained. One of the most important things to consider is how to look after your Shinai which is made of bamboo and can splinter or crack during practice. You should maintain it regularly and you will find a page on the shinai explaining the different parts and how it should be cared for. I am sure you will be given a lesson at your dojo on shinai care.

In the next part I explain the different footwork, stances (kamae) and postures you will need to learn when holding your shinai and facing your opponent. Then we move on to swinging and striking movements plus the basic training exercises of Kirikaeshi and Kihon-Keiko-Ho. After completing these basics, you will be invited by your sensei to put on kendo armour (bogu) for the first time. Now you are in armour you can begin to learn some of the different techniques (waza). This booklet describes only a few, the ones that you will need to study as a beginner.

As your kendo progresses, you will begin to take part in kendo matches (shiai). The booklet shows how valid points (yuko-datotsu) are scored and how you should conduct yourself before during and after a competition. You will also find a glossary of Japanese words and numbers.

I finish with the concept of kendo described by All Japan Kendo Federation and that of the Mumeishi Kendo Club..

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those kendo friends, sensei and senior instructors of Mumeishi Kendo Clubs around the world who have helped in the compilation of this booklet.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy your kendo journey for many years to come and we look forward someday to meeting you at the tip of our shinai in combat and friendship (Ko-Ken-Chi-Ai)

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Kendo

Kendo is the art of Japanese sword fighting that was practiced by the Samurai. The art of combat was a very important part of their lives, so they trained their sword skills every day. Kendo literally translated “Ken” sword and “Do” the way, together it means, “The Way of the Sword”. In the past the Samurai practiced using real swords or wooden ones in prearranged forms called Kata. Consequently injuries were high. These difficulties were overcome by the wearing of protective pads on the head and forearms. These pads were gradually altered and modified over many years to the armour that is worn today by people that practice Kendo. The wooden sword used for practice also went through many changes. The sword used today is called a Shinai and is made of four pieces of bamboo carefully shaped to substitute a real sword and allow true and accurate strikes to be made. Although the sword and armour of the Samurai have changed, the spirit and fighting techniques have remained virtually the same. While the Samurai's life depended upon his skill and speed with the sword, the present day's form of Kendo is a sport and International & National competitions are held where speed and skill with the Shinai are required. As with the Samurai, true and accurate strikes have to be made to those parts of the opponent's body which would quickly incapacitate them. The different target areas of the body are each protected; by a padded mask, with a metal grill to protect the face and head, called a “MEN”, a heavy breastplate of bamboo splints and rawhide to protect the trunk of the body “DO”, and padded gauntlets for the hands and wrists “KOTE”, as well as a padded thigh protector “TARE”. This equipment permits realistic full contact fencing matches that follow the rules and principals of traditional Japanese swordsmanship. Students of kendo (kendoka) come from all walks of life and of all ages, women train on equal terms with men. Kendo can be safely practised by men, women and children of all ages, and the type and the level of practice may of course be adjusted to suit everyone.



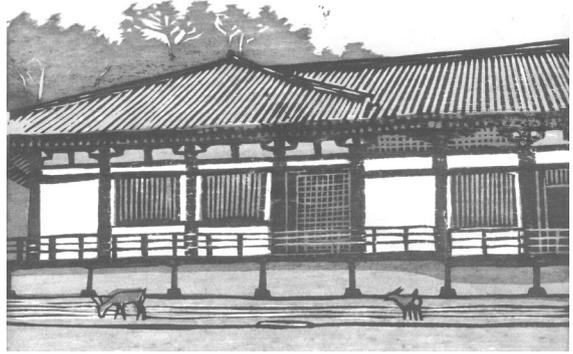
The Dojo

The hall in which we practice Kendo is known as the Dojo. The word Dojo has its origin in Buddhism and means “the place where ascetic training in the principles of Buddhism takes place”. Accordingly, this area, was highly respected as a holy and spiritual training place. Today a dojo is a place in which the martial arts are taught and practiced.

However strong links still exist binding today's dojo to their predecessors. There are many different dojo layouts, one feature often found in some dojo is the

Kamidana, a miniature shrine honouring the patron saint of the dojo. Some dojo have a banner or writing describing the dojo name or policy. The place reserved for the sensei or respected guests is called the “Kamiza” or “Joseki” (high seat).

The traditions of Kendo require a strict observance of etiquette within the dojo by all. Kendo starts with courtesy and finishes with courtesy. When compared with other sports it would be easy for Kendo to degenerate into wild and uncontrolled aggression. By keeping to strict codes of behaviour, students of Kendo keep the conflicting emotions generated by Kendo under control.



Etiquette in the Dojo

Try not to arrive late at the dojo . Be at the dojo in plenty of time to change and warm up etc.

Remove shoes before entering the dojo but never walk to the dojo in bare feet.

When entering or leaving the dojo, make a correct standing bow (rei) to the dojo honouring the place of practice.

Carry your equipment and other bags into the dojo in a respectful way and place them on the floor in a safe and correct position.

Make sure the dojo floor is cleaned and safe before starting practice.

When in the dojo the armour should only be put on or adjusted from seiza position (Kneeling down).

The sensei and senior members of the dojo should be treated with respect at all times.

The sensei sits on the high side of the dojo which is called the “kamiza” (joseki), the senior sensei sits furthest away from the door. All the others sit opposite the sensei; often the senior grades are first in line with lower grades down the line but other factors such as age can be taken into account.

Try not to walk in front of other kendoka sitting on the dojo floor. If this is unavoidable, bow slightly and extend your right hand in front of you as you pass.

Do not step over a shinai or bokuto, but walk around it.

Do not move another persons armour unless asked to or permission is given by the owner.
Bow to your opponent at the start and finish of each practice.

During practice higher grades stand on the sensei side of the Dojo, facing the lower grades.



If your shinai or armour needs to be adjusted during practice, you should indicate to your partner by rising your right hand and then in standing position put your shinai away (*Osame-to*) and step back out of the way of others. You should sit in seiza and make the necessary adjustments. The opponent waits until the adjustment is made, then both bow and recommence practice.

If you have to leave the dojo during training for any reason please ask permission from the dojo senior member (*Sempai*) or the sensei. It is good manners to your sensei and sempai to say why you are leaving, especially if you are not feeling well as you may need medical attention or help.

During Kendo practice there should be no talking between kendoka. The training session is a time of learning and not a time for discussion or gossip, there is time enough for this afterwards.

Respect at all times should be shown to the sensei, fellow students and the dojo. Personal thanks are expressed with a kneeling rei between sensei and students, and amongst fellow students.

The final Rei marks the end of the training session and students are free to leave the dojo. However, bogu should be properly packed away before leaving the dojo.

If relaxed sitting is permitted sit with legs crossed and back straight. Ensure your feet are covered by your hakama. This is the only other acceptable sitting position in the dojo other than seiza. Do not allow yourself to slump.

Starting and Ending of the Practice session

At the start of the session the (*Sempai*) senior student of the dojo calls out the commands to sit down and line up with him/her sitting in the highest place on the *Shimoza* or students side of the dojo. The highest place is furthest from the doorway, depending on dojo layout.



- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Sei-ritsu | Line up |
| 2. Seiza or Chakuza | Sit down |
| 3. Mokusō | Meditation |
| 4. Yame | Stop |
| 5. Shinzen-ni-rei/ Shomen-ni-rei | Bow to Shinzen or Kamiza |
| 6. Sensei-ni-rei / Gata-ni-rei | Bow to teacher / or teachers |
| 7. Men-tsuke | To put on Tenugui / Men / Kote |

Ending the session

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Sei-ritsu | Line up |
| 2. Seiza or Chakuza | Sit down |
| 3. Men-tore | Take off Kote / Men / Tenugui |
| 4. Mokusō | Meditation |
| 5. Yame | Stop |
| 6. Sensei-ni-rei | Bow to teacher |
| 7. Shinzen-ni-rei/ Shomen-ni-rei | Bow to Shinzen or Kamiza |
| 8. Otagai ni-rei | Bow to each other to say thank you |

Each dojo you visit may have it's own ways of starting and ending their practice sessions

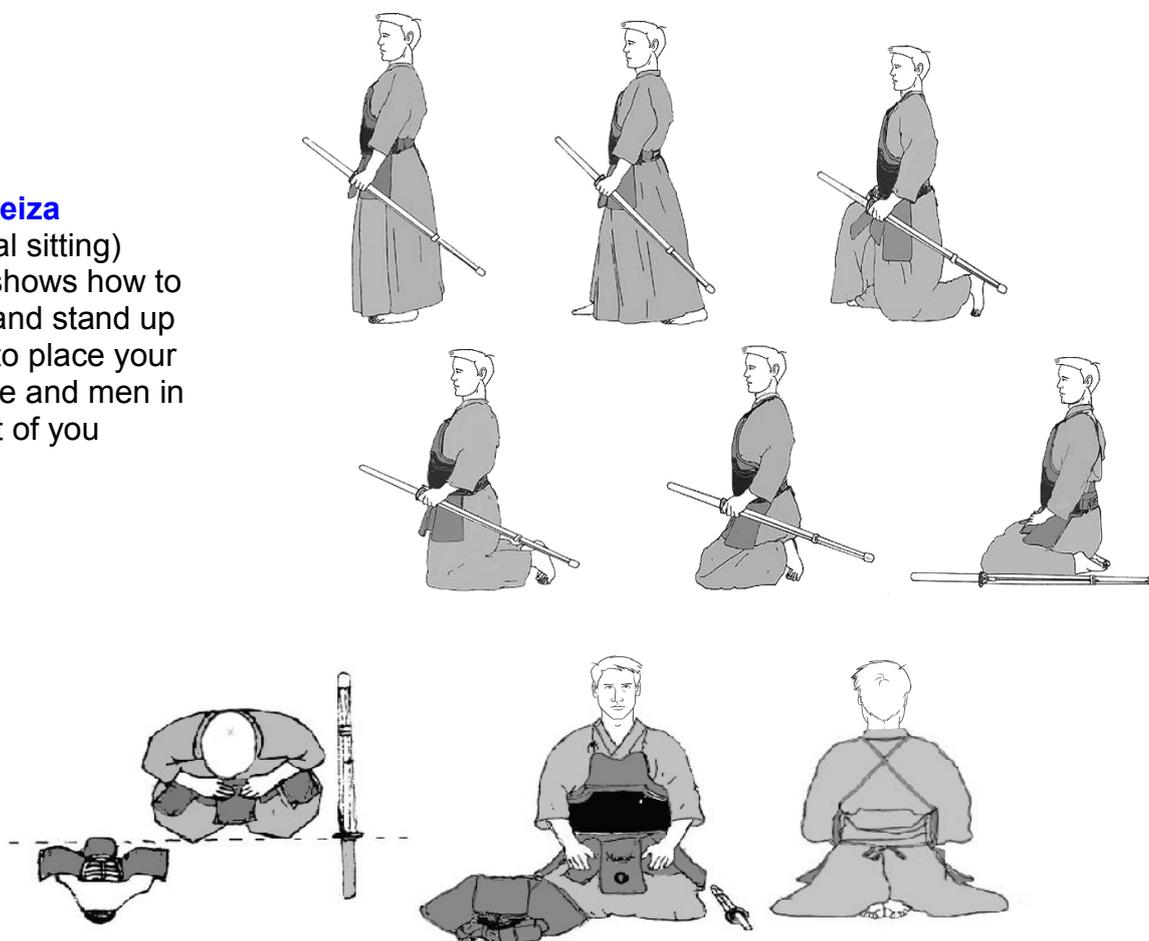
Seiza (Formal sitting kneeling)

Seiza is the formal Japanese style of sitting (kneeling). Kneel with your knees about 20 cm apart, your feet should be slightly crossed, with the big toe of the right foot resting on top of the left. Your hands should rest lightly on your thighs with fingers extended and together. The back should be straight, with shoulders relaxed and head looking directly forward with the mouth closed. The correct way to assume seiza from a standing position is to lower your weight onto your left knee first, and then your right. Once you have assumed seiza it is important that you carefully adjust your position, so you are initially comfortable (this may take some practice) as it is important, that once you are sitting in seiza, you do not adjust your position. The first reason for this is that it is impolite, from an etiquette point of view, to move around whilst a senior person is speaking to you. The second is that whilst seiza is uncomfortable because it restricts the flow of blood to the lower legs, the practice of rocking the body weight from one leg to the other, apart from being rude, causes an unnaturally high blood pressure in the lower legs, as it traps more blood in the lower leg than would normally be there, which can cause nerve and blood vessel damage. When rising to a standing position, the reverse process is used, place the right foot on the floor first and stand up. Your hands should not touch the floor either in kneeling or rising from seiza, and the back should remain straight at all times.

Seiza

(formal sitting)

Diagram shows how to sit down and stand up and how to place your shinai, kote and men in front of you



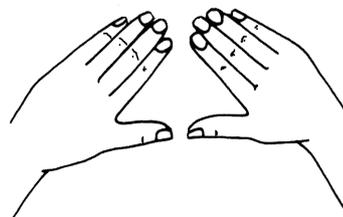
Mokuso (Meditation)

From seiza, lightly close your eyes and rest both hands palm up in your lap. Place the fingers of either the left hand or the fingers of the right hand on top. The thumbs should touch lightly together. Quietly start breathing, slowly from the abdomen. Now open your mind to the kendo practice and away from any other thoughts.



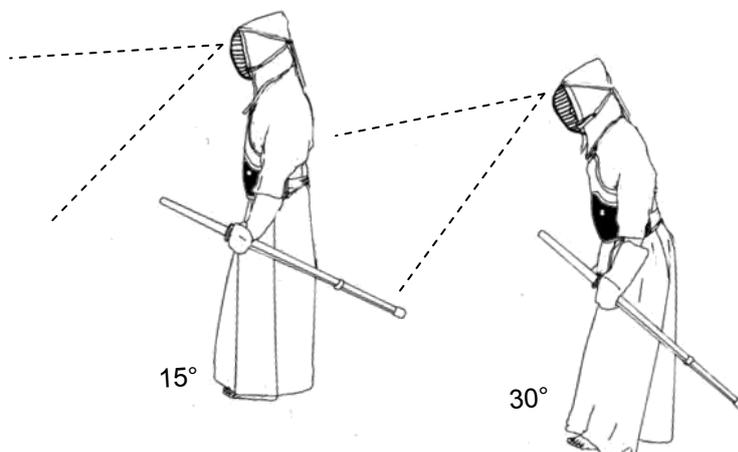
Rei (The bow) & Zarei (Kneeling bow):

Keeping your eyes on your opponent and without raising your hips or bending your neck, lean your body forward. Advance your hands slightly in front of your knees, placing both of them on the floor with finger tips just touching slowly lowering your head. Hold this position for a brief moment, then reverse the process to return to your original position. Be careful not to stick your elbows out like wings, and not to let your head touch the floor.



Ritsurei (Standing bow)

Keep eye contact with your opponent and without bending your neck or knees, bend your upper body forward, at the hips, to an angle of about 15° to your opponent and 30° to Kamiza (Joseki) looking at the floor. Keep your arms at the side of your body not letting them swing forward in front of you. Make sure the tip of your shinai does not raise up, keep it pointing down. Hold this position for a short period and return to a normal standing position.

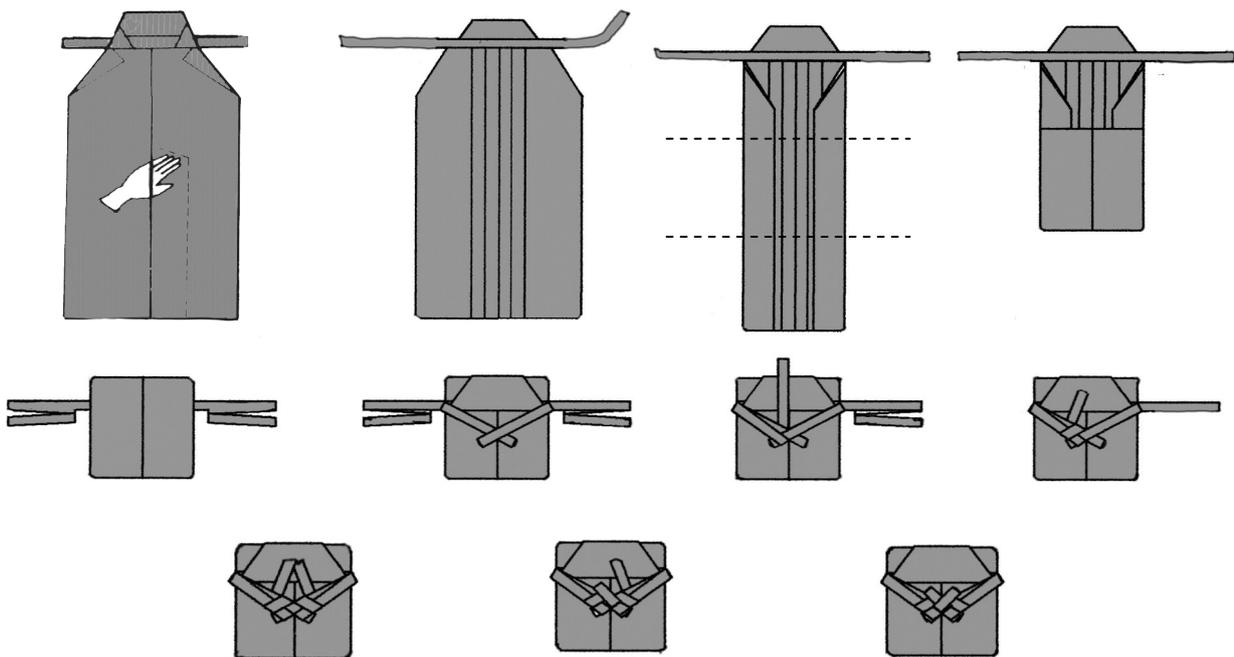


HOW TO WEAR AND FOLD YOUR HAKAMA AND KEIKOGI

It is often said that Kendo starts the moment you set foot within the Dojo. This is not entirely true, as before you enter the Dojo you must change into your Hakama and Keikogi, and this is the point at which you must slip into your Kendo mind. From the first moment you set foot in a Dojo, like it or not, you and your Kendo are being judged. So it is important to create a strong and positive first impression by showing that if you know nothing else, you at least know enough to be able to dress yourself properly. This will mean that people will be more willing to spend time with you on other areas of your Kendo. If however you enter the Dojo poorly dressed, in a hakama or keikogi in bad condition or a hakama that has obviously not been folded properly, you will instantly create a bad impression, that will be very hard to overcome, no matter what standard of kendo you have. It is therefore important to learn how to wear your hakama and keikogi correctly and also to learn how to fold your hakama, so it always looks as good as the day you bought it. This will have a two fold effect, the first is that you will look good when you enter the Dojo. If you look good you will feel good about what you are doing and things will become a little easier.

Folding the hakama

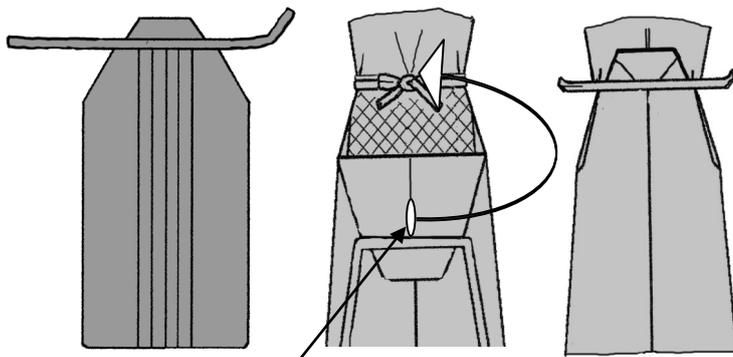
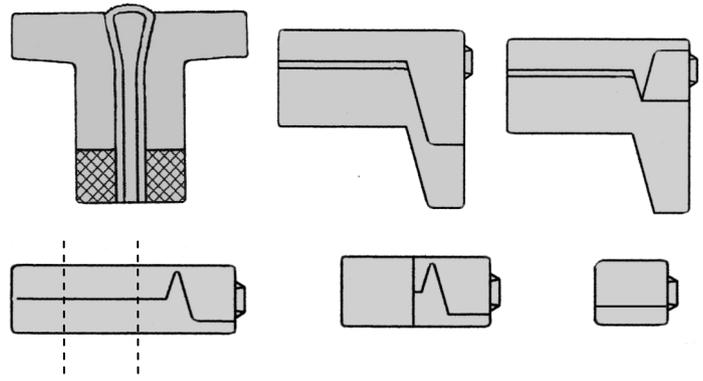
A hakama appears deceptively difficult to look after, but is in fact quite easy to maintain if you spend five minutes after each time you wear it, by folding it. Washing is not a problem, just make sure all the pleats are hanging in approximately the right place when you hang it out to dry. Having dried your hakama you will want to fold your hakama properly, as there is no point in putting on a hakama if it hasn't been folded properly.



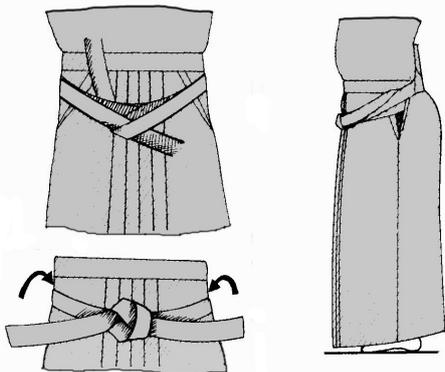
A correctly folded hakama will never need ironing. First holding the front and the back together at the top, shake the hakama out so that the pleats are hanging in about the right place. Next make sure the inner middle pleat inside, is sitting to the right as shown in the 1st diagram. Now lay the hakama flat on the ground with the back upper most, make sure the pleats in the back of the hakama are sitting properly, working from the inside to the outside. Grasp the hakama at the top and bottom at the centre and holding it tight turn it over, being careful not to disturb the pleats in the back. Now make sure the pleats in the front are sitting properly, working from the middle to the edges. Once it is all lying smoothly, fold the sides of the hakama in to form a neat rectangle. Finish by folding the hakama into thirds to form a neat package, then following the diagram fold the himo (straps or ties) to complete the job. Remember you haven't really finished practicing Kendo until you have packed your equipment away properly.

Folding the Keikogi

Now with a properly folded hakama and keikogi you are ready to learn how to wear them correctly. The first step in the process is to put on your keikogi, and here there is little scope for error, so long as you remember that the left side of the keikogi crosses in front of the right, the himo (tie) on the breast should be tied in a neat reef knot that sits horizontally across the chest. Next grasping your hakama evenly by the front, step into it, and lift it to a position just above your hips. To ensure that the front of your keikogi sits flat hold the hakama slightly off centre, to the left, then holding the hakama against your stomach gently turn it into a central position. It is important that the front of the hakama sits centrally on your body and is not twisted either to the left or right. Once you are satisfied that your hakama is properly positioned, slide your hands along the tapes and around your body to the middle of your back, being careful not to disturb the front. At this stage the tapes should form a horizontal line around your body and sit just above your hips. Now cross the tapes over at the back and bring them around to the front so that they will cross again at the front about 5 cm below the top of the hakama. Bring the tapes around to the back again, ensure that the tapes lay flat around your body, and tie them in bow or knot. At this stage it is a good idea to make sure that your keikogi is sitting properly on your back. Do this by grasping it below the tapes and gently pulling both sides down and towards the front, so that the cloth at the back of the keikogi sits flat against your back with no gathers or excess, also make sure the front of the keikogi is sitting neatly across your chest. Now pick up the back of your hakama. Some hakama have a small spoon shaped plastic tab attached inside the back, slip this down between your back and the tapes, coming from the front of the hakama; if your hakama doesn't have this tab ignore this step. Holding the back of the hakama slip the side tapes under the top tapes coming from the front of the hakama and pull them round to the front following the line of the lower set of tapes. Tie the tapes at the front in a reef knot in such a way the knot holds together all the tapes at the front of the hakama, now take the loose ends of the tapes and tuck them neatly under the other taps at the sides. If you have a correctly fitting hakama, and you have followed the instructions, your hakama should hang so that it just clears the tops of your feet at the front and is slightly higher at the back. Dressed properly you are now ready to enter the Dojo. Of course there are many other important things you must remember on entering the Dojo that will help to make a good impression, each supporting the other. Dressing properly is important, but taking the opening idea to its logical conclusion, you will find that everything you do outside the Dojo will have an effect on your Kendo, and in turn Kendo will have a positive effect on your life.

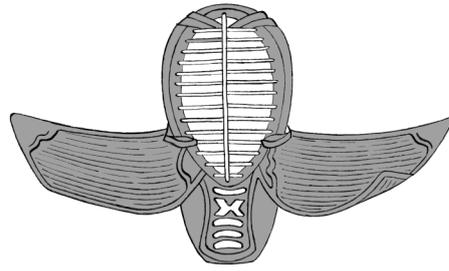


Plastic tab

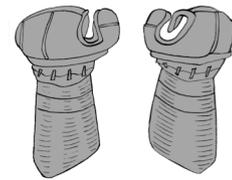


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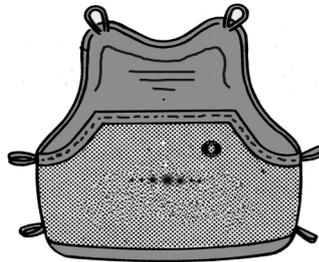
Kendo Equipment Bogu



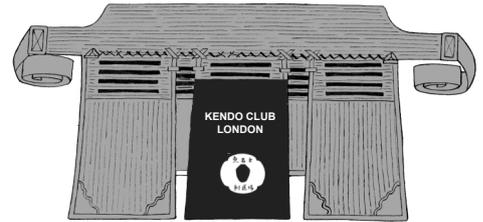
Men



Kote



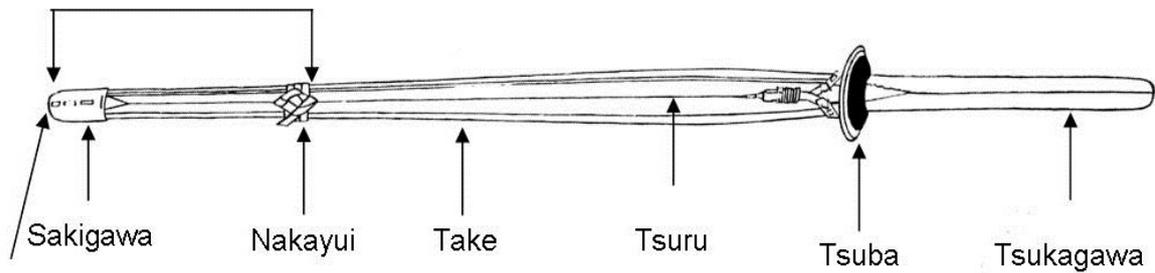
Do



Tare

Datotsu-bu (Striking area $\frac{1}{4}$ of total length)

Shinai



Kensen

Bokuto



Shinai Care and Maintenance

As the shinai is one of the main pieces of equipment used in kendo and the one with the greatest potential to cause serious injury in the event of a component failure, it is vital to carry out regular inspection and maintenance of your shinai. Whether you own a traditional bamboo shinai or one of hi-tech carbon fibre kind it is your duty to your fellow kendoka to ensure that your equipment is in good condition. There is no excuse for causing an injury through the neglect of maintenance of your shinai. If deterioration of your shinai is detected during training, stop immediately, excuse yourself and change to another shinai.



Areas to check

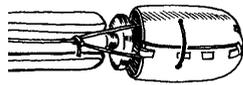
Slats - check for splinters, cracks, or breakdown of the bamboo itself. Repairs to minor splinters can be made by sanding them out. To protect and prolong the life of a bamboo shinai you can use WD40, silicon spray or buy shinai sprays from your bogu supplier. Store your shinai in a cool humid environment. Taping of worn or damaged slats is unacceptable.



Carbon fibre - check for cracks, or areas where the carbon fibre core is exposed. There is no way to repair a damage carbon fibre slat. If there is any doubt as to the safety of a carbon slat do not use it. Store carbon shinai in cool place away from direct sun light as they are susceptible to UV radiation. For both types of slats, remember, 'when in doubt throw it out'.

1. **Sakigawa:** check the top for signs of wear and loose stitching, if the slats or the sakigomu can be seen through the sakigawa, replace it.
2. **Sakigomu:** check that the sakigomu is fitted in the end of the shinai correctly, and is not damaged. This is particularly vital in the case of carbon graphite shinai, as a damaged or incorrectly fitted sakigomu in these can lead to premature and dramatic destruction.

Good Sakigawa



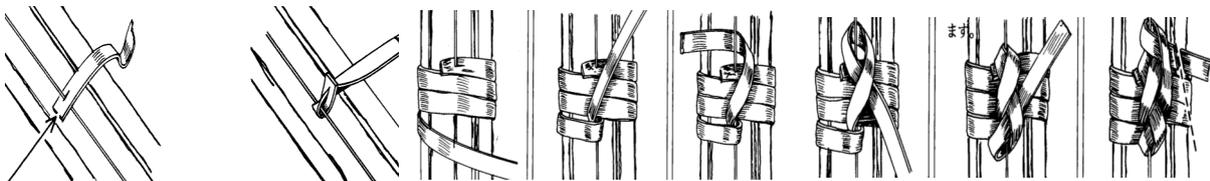
Bad



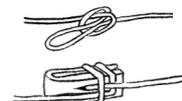
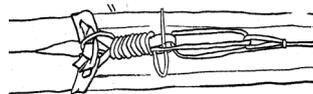
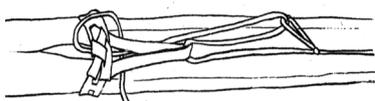
Sakigomu



3. **Nakayui:** check that it is tied tightly and in the right place at $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total length of the shinai, replace it when it breaks, see below for how to tie up.



4. **Tsuru: (Cord)** ensure that it is tight enough to hold the sakigawa in place, but not so tight that it causes the shinai to bow. See below for how to tie Tsuru



5. **Cigiri (Metal Plate)** Make sure this metal plate is always reassembled. If fitting a different slat saw a small cut so it fits in with all the other slat



fitted before fits in with all the

6. **Tsukagawa: (Handle)** check for wear points on the leather handle and for breakdown of the seam. Replace if the seam is splitting or there are any holes in it.

Ashi-Sabaki (Footwork)

Kendo footwork is designed to allow freedom of movement yet at the same time allow an immediate response to any situation that may arise. Since the almost unlimited variety of techniques require coordinated foot and shinai movement, footwork is considered the foundation of kendo. Without a firm foundation of footwork on which to build, it will be difficult to achieve effective kendo techniques. There are four main styles of footwork that provide the necessary range of movement required for effective kendo.

Okuri-Ashi

Used in cuts and thrusts requiring fast, short range movement in any direction. This kind of footwork can be used with many techniques, since it is employed to cover distances of one or two steps in any direction. Begin by advancing the foot corresponding to the direction in which you intend to move. Immediately draw the other foot quickly to the one you have just advanced.

Ayumi-Ashi

For use in moving forward and backwards to cover large distances quickly. In effect this type of footwork is the same as natural walking

Hiraki-Ashi

Is used in situations where it is necessary to move to the side of your opponents yet still remain facing him

Tsugi-Ashi

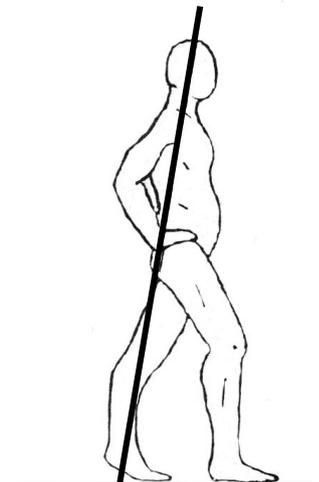
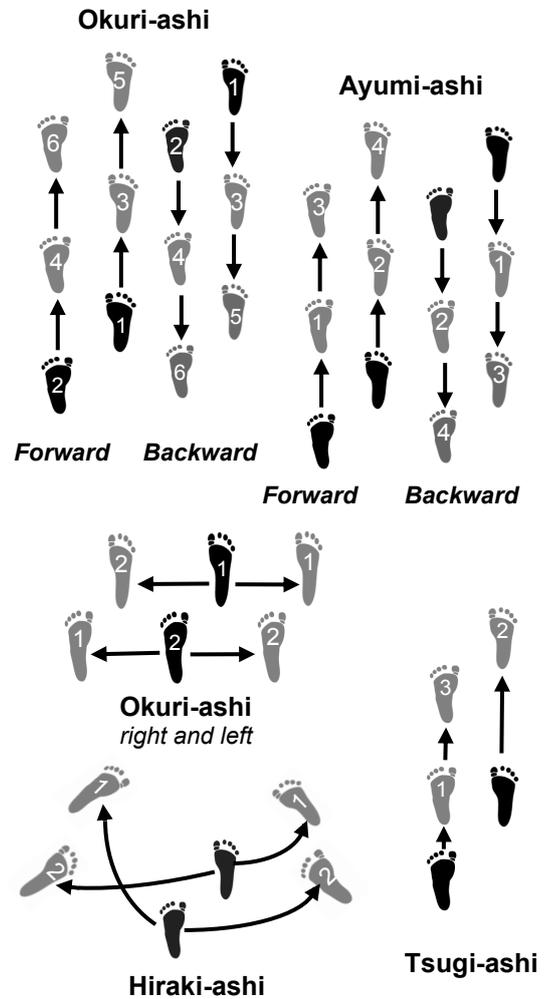
This style of footwork is used when you need to make continuous attacks over a distance that cannot be covered easily using okuri-ashi .

Note:

Do not lift your feet too high but slide them across the floor as if you were on a sheet of paper .Think of your hips as the centre of your body, and move so that your hips travel in a horizontal line and do not move up and down.

Kendo no Shisei

Posture and balance are very important to how you can move and react when needed. Perfect posture is 50% of your body weight on both feet but this is not possible. We should try not to let our weight go higher than 58% on the front or back foot. If it goes to 60% on the front foot you cannot lift it off the floor. 60% on the back foot now you cannot move backwards. Try to imagine a line running from the back of your neck right down to your left heel, this should be no more that 5% forwards. This is the perfect posture where you can move forward or backwards. By maintaining this posture at all times with good footwork you can react to any situation instantly.



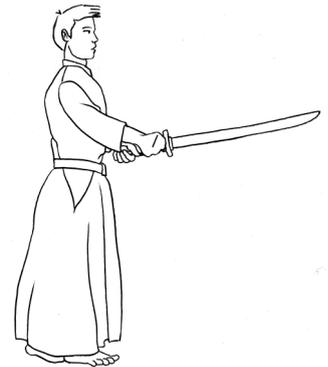
Kamae

Kamae (the word can mean an attitude or a posture) falls into two categories; physical positions and spiritual positions. Although in general use the term refers to the physical position of a player, it is important to realise that this is the outward manifestation of that player's spiritual or mental position, the one being determined by the other. In actual practice, the position one assumes is determined by the relationship with the opponent. There are five basic kamae, called goho-no kamae, which consist of jodan, chudan, gedan, hasso, and waki-kamae. Of these chudan, jodan and gedan-no-kamae are most common.

Chudan-no-kamae

Chudan-no-kamae (central position) is the basis from which the four other kamae are derived. It is also considered the most effective because it permits the most rapid response (either aggressive or defensive) to any action made by the opponent. Stand with your body weight evenly distributed over both feet. The right foot should be slightly further forward than normal. The left foot should be in a position with the toes in line with the back of the right heel and about two fists distance apart with heel slightly raised.

The tsukagashira (handle of the shinai) should be nestled in the heel of the left hand and be gripped firmly by the little and ring fingers, while the other fingers and thumb provide a relaxed support. The right hand should lightly grip the tsuka (handle) just below the tsuba (guard). The left hand should be in a position about one fists distance from the navel, and the kensen (point) should be directed at the opponents throat with the tsuru (string) on the top of the shinai. Centre your gaze on the opponents eye, but watch his entire body. Your elbows should be in a relaxed position neither locked nor bent too much.



Jodan-no-Kamae

This is the most aggressive of the five kamae and projects an aura of total confidence. It is therefore important that anyone using this kamae be very confident in themselves, otherwise they will be unable use this kamae convincingly. There are many variations on this kamae, but the most commonly encountered is that known as hidari Jodan. This kamae is most effective in attack, as a very rapid attack can be made from this position in response to any variation in the opponents kamae. Taking chudan-no-kamae as your base, advance your left foot forward, whilst at the same time raising your right hand to a position directly above your forehead. The shinai should point up and back at an angle of about forty-five degrees, while the left hand is directly above the left foot. The body weight should be biased slightly forward onto the left foot.



Hasso-no-kamae

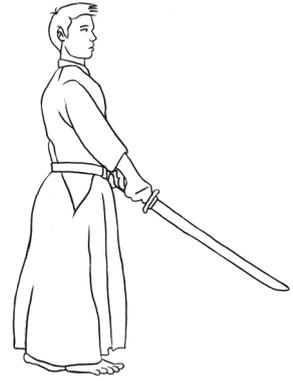
This version of Jodan-no-kamae is infrequently used in modern kendo. Hasso-no-kamae has its origins on the battlefields where a soldier using Jodan-no-kamae would risk fouling his hands or sword in the crest of his helmet. This particular variation of jodan-no-kamae also has the advantage that at no time do the arms pass in front of the face and thus obscuring the opponent. It also allowed for the full weight of the body to be brought into play during the cut. As with Jodan-no-kamae, Hasso-no-kamae also projects a feeling of strength.



Gedan-no-kamae

Gedan-no-kamae in modern kendo represents a defensive, waiting position as it encourages an opponent to launch an attack which can easily be countered with Oji waza.

Historically gedan-no-kamae allowed a swift upward cut into an armored opponents unprotected under arm, with devastating effect.



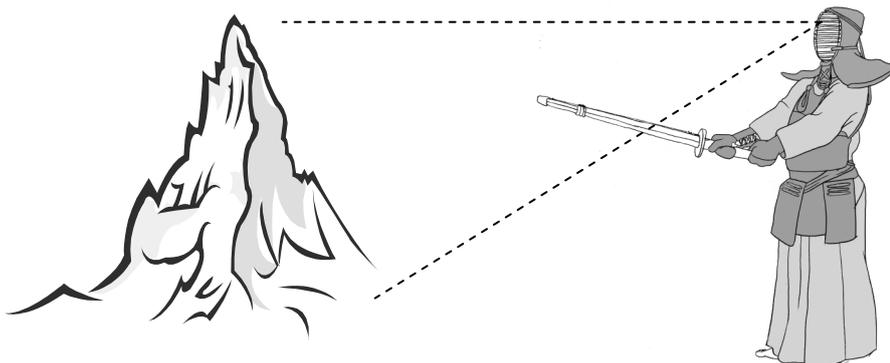
Waki-gamae

Waki-gamae also represents a position developed in more troubled times, but which no longer plays a great part in modern kendo. The purpose of waki-gamae was to hide the length of the weapon from ones opponent and lure him into your cutting range, by showing him a number of unprotected targets. This was quite a dangerous position as it left the body unprotected and provided only one counter to an opponents attack. Waki-gamae like Gedan-no-kamae is also a waiting posture.



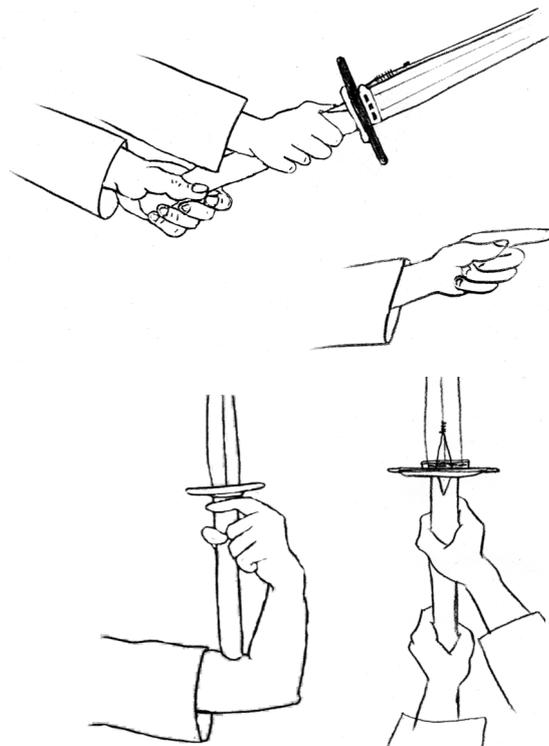
Metsuke

In all kamae it is important to be aware of every detail of your opponent's actions, without letting your gaze fall on any one particular area. This concept is known as metsuke, and is very important. When you attack the position of your gaze can easily betray your intended action, leaving you open to easy counter attack. You should imagine you are looking at a far mountain seeing every thing that is happening on that mountain.



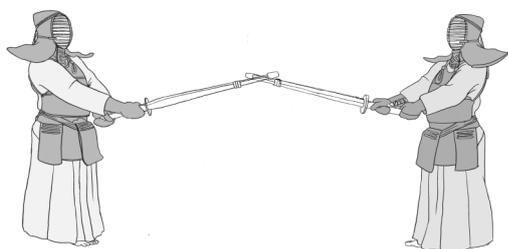
Holding the Shinai correctly

Holding the shinai in your left hand at the bottom of the handle with the string facing up, place the tip of your shinai on the floor in front of the centre of your body, in this position your hand has to wrap around the handle with the fingers all at a different level just like a pointing hand forming a V shape with your index finger and thumb. Now lift the shinai up to middle of the stomach with your left hand about one fist away from your stomach. Next find where you should put your right hand, to find this out place the end of your shinai handle in the bend of your right elbow, point the shinai upwards, and then grip the handle with your right hand. Wrap your fingers around the shinai in the same way as your left hand, this is where your right hand should always be held, the tsuba guard should be about 1cm further forward from your right hand. Now holding your shinai with both hands you can start to learn how to use and move the shinai in a relaxed manner.



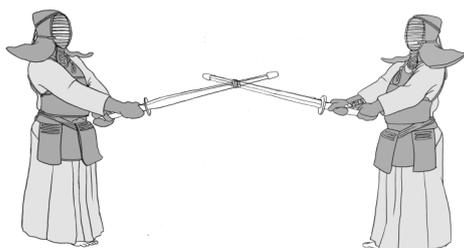
Maai (Distance)

The spatial distance between one's self and the opponent. The gap between two opponents. The establishment of maai through the relationship with the opponent is a delicate and important matter.



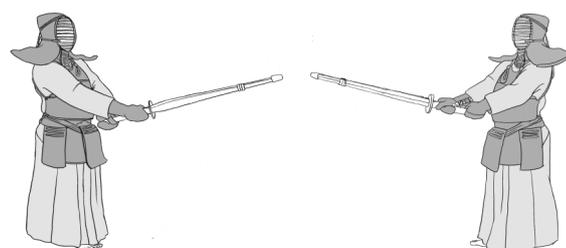
Issoku-itto-no-maai

The distance which enables a player to strike the opponent by taking one step forward and also to evade the opponent by taking one step backward. This one step distance in kendo is different for everyone so you have to find out what is your own one step distance.



Chikama

This distance is called chika-maai (close distance). A smaller distance than issoku-itto-no-maai. At this distance one's strike can easily reach the opponent, but at the same time your opponent has the same opportunity to strike you.



Toma

This distance is referred to as toma-maai. A distance which is farther than issoku-itto-no-maai. The distance from which the opponent's strike cannot reach you, and, at the same time, your strike cannot reach the opponent. There are some kendoka that can make a strike from this distance, so never relax your mind.

Suburi

The practice of moving the shinai or bokuto through the air is called suburi. Suburi is an indispensable part of kendo training as it helps to build up strength and control. It also helps to train the mind and muscles in the correct striking action, so that when it is required a correct strike can be performed with little or no conscious effort.

The most important point in the basic motion is for the shinai to move in perfect coordination with the body. All motions should be performed so that the left hand always moves along an imaginary vertical line through the centre of the body. The tip of the shinai should trace a large circle through the air.

Joge-buri (vertical cuts)

From chudan-no-kamae, swing the shinai in a wide arc straight up, as far above your head as possible. At the top of the arc do not let the motion stop but immediately reverse the motion of the swing, and cut straight down until your left fist touches your abdomen. During the down ward motion take one step forward using okuri-ashi, timing it so that your front foot finishes its forward motion at the same time that the shinai ends its downward movement.

To stop the shinai from touching the floor twist both hands inward on the tsuka (at the same time putting more tension into your grip). Repeat this sequence but this time take one step back using okuri-ashi on the downward motion. Repeat this sequence as many times as instructed alternating between forward and backward cuts.

1. Do not alter the way you hold the shinai during the upward or downward section of the swing.
2. Push the shinai up with your left hand, do not pull it up with the right. The right hand should be relaxed at all times except at the bottom of the swing when it twists in to stop the movement.
3. As you become more experienced and more enthusiastic, vary the strength and speed of your action.
4. Remember both hands and shinai should move along a vertical line in the centre of the body, deviating neither left nor right.

Naname-subur

This exercise is basically the same as joge-buri except that the right hand is used to guide the shinai on a diagonal right to left trajectory, of approximately forty-five degrees, during the forward down stroke, and on a left to right diagonal path, also of about forty-five degrees, during the backward downward stroke.

The angles of the right and left movements should be equal. Remember to use your tenouchi grip on the shinai at the end of each movement.

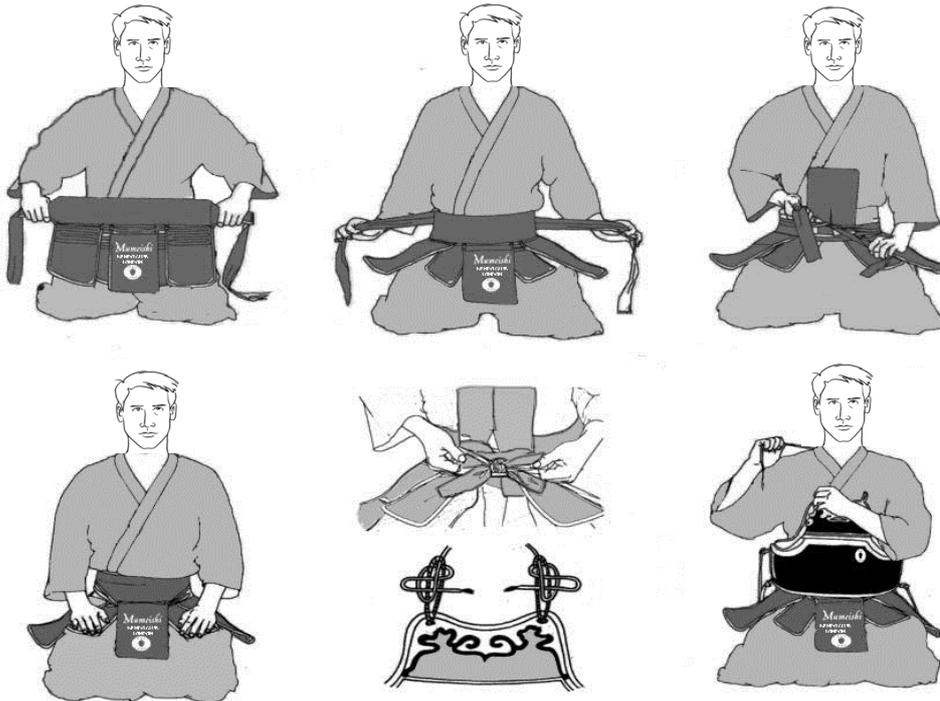
Remember the right hand acts only to guide the shinai through the strike whilst the left hand provides the power in the strike.

Be aware of all the points outlined above for joge-buri.

Note: As with all kendo techniques do not lift your feet too high but glide across the floor as if you were gliding on a sheet of paper

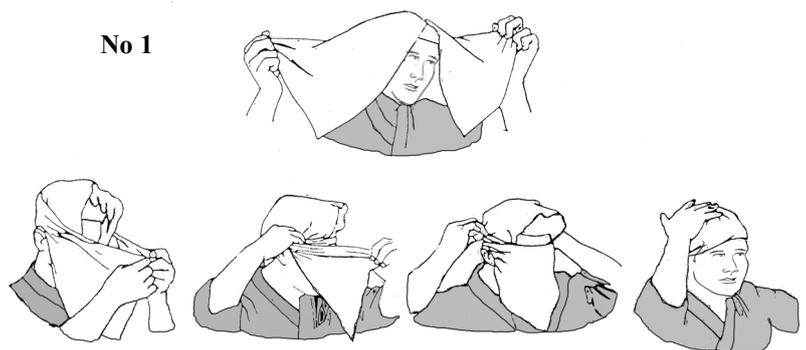
Putting on your Armour and Tenugui

Wearing and removing bogu should always be done while seated in seiza. The first part of the bogu to put on is the tare. Rest it on your lap with the obi up against your abdomen. Wrap the tare obi around your back, crossing them, and bring the ends back to the front. Lift up the central flap and tie the obi in a bow. Tuck the ends of the knot underneath out of sight. Next, put on the Do. Hold it in place with your arms while tying the himo. It should be a little higher than where you want to be, as it will drop a little when released after tying the himo. First take the left himo and cross it over your right shoulder. Tie it to the right loop as shown in the diagram in a half-hitch knot, repeat the process with the other himo. The loops that are left after tightening the knots should be pointing away from the centre. Tuck the loose end of the himo behind the top of the do (mune). Bring both of the bottom do himo around to your back and tie them in a bow. They do not need to be tight as they simply keep the do from flipping up.

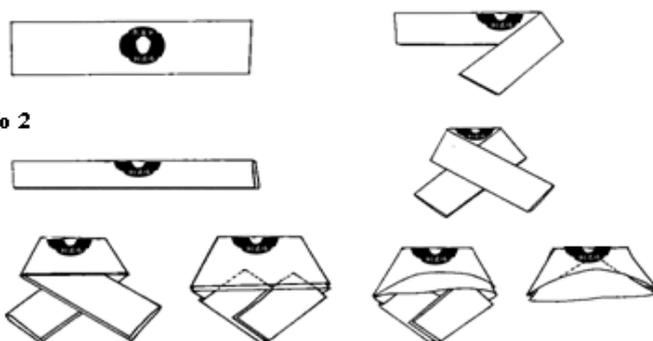


Next comes the te-nugui. Hold it out in front of you by the top corners. Keeping the top edge relatively tight, pull the te-nugui over your head, so that what was the top edge now goes around the back of your head. The bottom corners should now hang to the sides of your head. Wrap one of the back corners around front to the other side of your head, keeping the te-nugui tight. While holding that corner

No 1



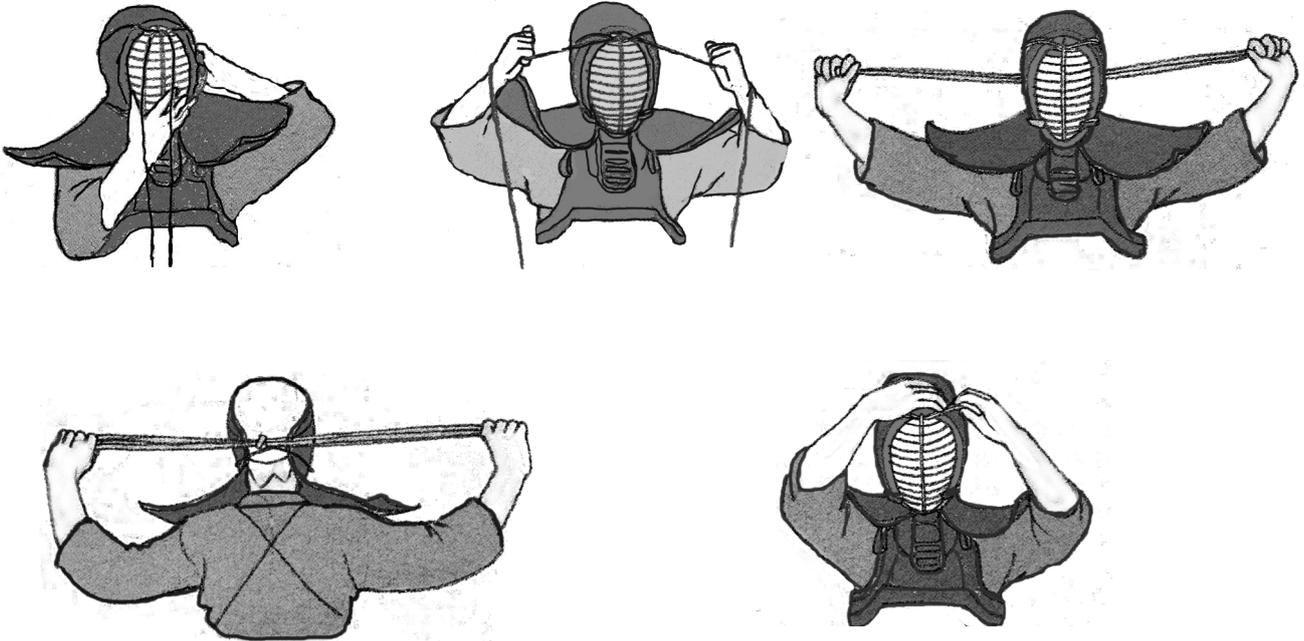
No 2



with a finger or two, wrap the other corner around and tuck it into the fold made by the first corner. Fold the corners that are now in front of your face up over your head. You may have to fold them in half before doing so, so that the te-nugui does not stick out the back of your men like a duck's tail. Diagram 2 shows a pre folded te-nugui. This is very good for children and beginners as it can be done at home or before training starts.

Putting on the Men

Put on your Men as shown, pull the himo tight and tie them around the back in a bow, making sure that the loops and bows are all the same length and no longer than 40cm. Make sure that the himo wrapping around the sides of the men are next to each other and not twisted or crossing.



Putting on Kote

Finally, put on your kote. Put the left one on first. Avoid pulling on either the bottom of the open end or the tip of the mitten, as doing so repeatedly will break down the material and weaken the kote.



Putting on your Kote

Put your left kote on first do not pull your kote on **push from the hand** as in the diagram then adjust, do not pull the kote strings, as kote should fit loosely around your arm

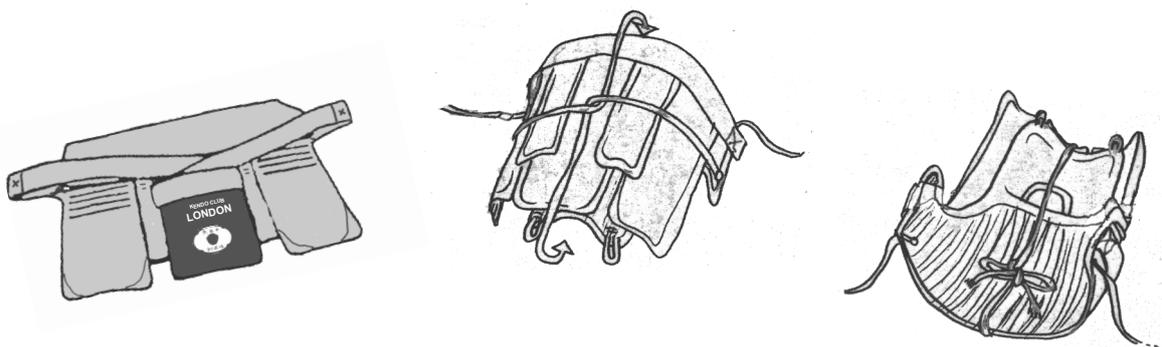


Taking off your Kote

Always take off your right kote first, do not pull your kote by the hand part but **pull from the back** as shown in the diagram

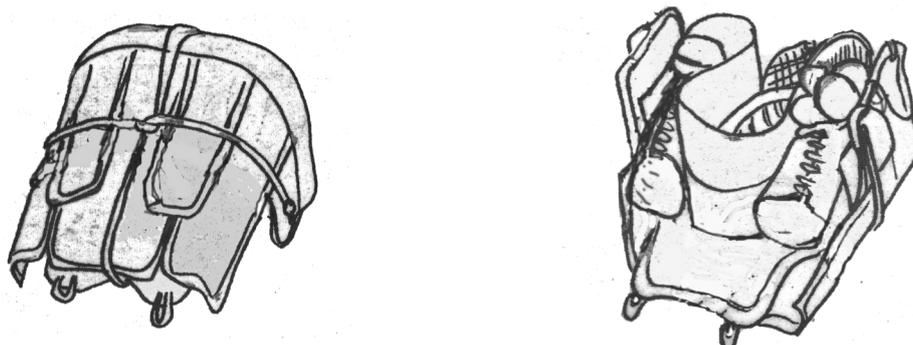
Removing your Men and Kote

When the command, ("men tore") is given to remove men and kote, first remove the right kote and place it on the floor in front and to your right, with the hand pointing to the right. Then remove the left kote, and place it beside the right kote so that the thumbs touch. Now, using your right hand, reach around and untie the men himo, loosen the men and neatly collect both himo in your right hand. Then, holding the (men gane) in your left hand, slip the men off and place it on top of the kote. Remove the te-nugui and use it to wipe the sweat from your face, and then fold it neatly and place it in the men. Once the training session is over you can remove your do and tare by simply untying the himo.



Packing your Bogu up

Start by smoothing out the creases and wrinkles in the tare himo. Then, holding the tare face up, wind the himo around the centre (O-dare) . Once this is done, place the tare face down on the front of the do. Using the longer of the do himo tie the tare firmly to the outside of the do, then tie the ends of the tare to the ends of the do using the shorter do himo. Tying the tare to the do in this manner helps to preserve the graceful curve of the O-dare. Now using your te-nugui, wipe the sweat from the inside of the men and then place the men inside the do. Next smooth the wrinkles and creases out of the palms of the kote. This will help to keep the palms supple and smooth, and will also help prevent the palms from cracking or waxing. Place the kote in the do either side of the men. The regular use of an antifungal spray will help to control the buildup of odour and mildew. It is also a good idea to thoroughly air the bogu after each training session. Do not put in direct sunlight outside but somewhere dry in the shade.



Kirikaeshi

Kirikaeshi is probably one of the most important training exercises for kendoka of all levels, as it helps to develop good timing / footwork / body and hand control / breathing and stamina plus a good warm-up exercise before basic kendo training or keiko starts .

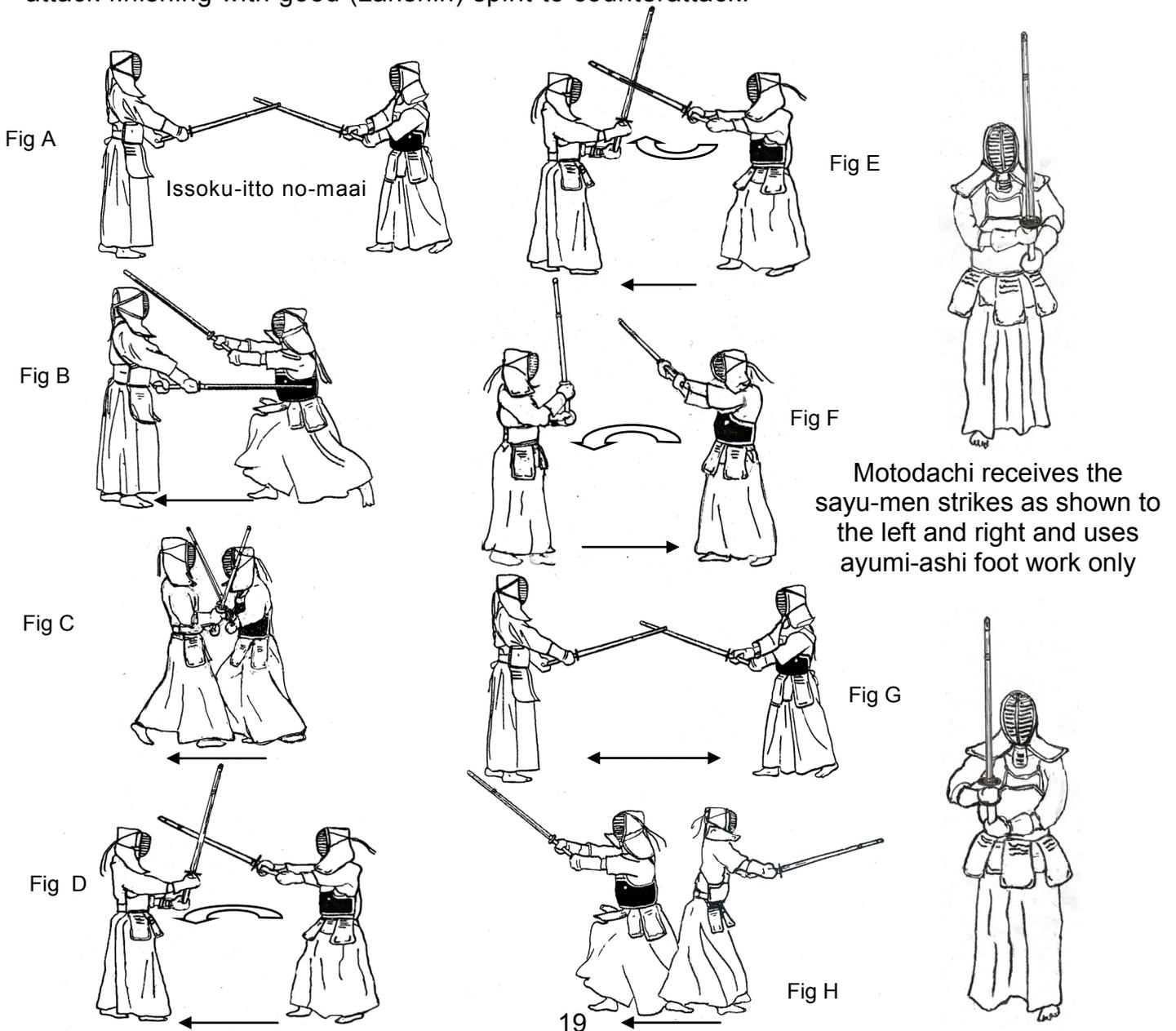
Kirikaeshi is often compared to a large wave crashing against a rock and then retreating. Start in chudan from (issoku-itto-maai) Fig A, then take a small step (okuri-ashi) forward, (seme).

Then make an attack to the centre of the motodachi men Fig B. Following the strike step forward and make contact (tai atari) with motodachi Fig C. Then motodachi absorbs the contact, and steps back to striking distance.

Then perform a series of sayu-men strikes beginning on your right side, first striking the men above the opponent's left eye and alternating to the left Fig D . Attacker makes four (sayu-men) strikes while moving forward, one step every strike, using okuri-ashi foot movement.

After the fourth forward sayu-men is completed Fig E , the attacker then performs five sayu-men strikes moving backward starting from the right side and finishing on the right Fig F, making a total number of nine sayu-men strikes (right and left).

After the last (hike-men) backward strike is delivered , then go into (issoku itto no maai) Fig G. Then repeat the whole cycle again. You finish the second cycle with a strike directly to the centre of the motodachi men Fig H. Then follow through after this last men attack finishing with good (zanshin) spirit to counterattack.



Kihon Keiko Ho Basic Techniques with a bokuto (wooden sword)

This is a set of nine forms covering all the different (waza) techniques that are used in Kendo, developed recently by senior sensei of the AJKF, as another teaching aid to help you understand the basics of kendo movements, of attacking and counterattacking (shikake and oji waza). The purpose of the bokuto keiko ho is to give an introduction to these basic techniques of kendo, and at the same time experience handling of the (bokuto) wooden sword. It has been formulated especially for beginners so that they can practice fundamental movements before they are able to wear armour (bogu). Also it can be very useful for all kendoka to practice, to see how a technique works etc. Kihon Keiko Ho is performed in pairs; the motodachi has the role creating the openings, and the Kakari-te has the role of the attacker practicing the prescribed waza.

1. Ippon-uchi no Waza : Men - Kote - Do - Tsuki

- 1 Men strike to the centre of the Men from Issoku-itto-no-maai (one step distance) with one step forward using (Okuri-ashi footwork).
- 2 Kote strike to the right Kote from Issoku-itto-no-maai (one step distance) one step forward.
- 3 Do strike to the right Do from Chika-maai (close distance) one step forward.
- 4 Tsuki thrust from Issoku-itto-no-maai (one step distance) one step forward, in this form Motodachi should step back one step at the same time .

2. Ni-san-dan no Waza : Kote - Men

Strike to Kote then Men from Issoku-itto-no-maai (one step distance) with two steps forward in this form, Motodachi should receive then step back once.

3. Harai-waza : Harai - Men

Harai-men (Omote-harai-men) strike to the Men deflecting Motodachi Bokuto up to the right side from Issoku-itto-no-maai (one step distance) with one step.

4. Hiki-waza : Hiki - Do

At first, Kakari-te strikes Men from Issoku-itto-no-maai taking one step forward. Then, Motodachi defends the attack with (omote-suriage) technique without moving. Next, Kakari-te closes into Motodachi and takes up Tsubazeriai position with one step forward. Kakari-te then pushes down on the Motodachi's Tsuba. Motodachi reacts raising up his/her hand and arms. Thereupon, Kakari-te strikes to the right Do at the same time stepping back.

5. Nuki-waza : Men - Nuki - Do

Motodachi strikes Men from Issoku-itto-no-maai with one step forward. At that moment, Kakari-te strikes Motodachi right Do avoiding the attack by stepping to the right side. After Kakari-te body and toes should face towards Motodachi.

6. Suriage-waza : Kote - Suriage - Men

Motodachi strikes Kakari-te right Kote with one step forward. Then, Kakari-te deflects Motodachi strike using the right side of Kakari-te own bokuto, swinging it upward from below as if drawing an arc (ura-suriage technique), stepping back. Next, Kakari-te strikes Men with one step forward. The two actions of Kakari-te (suriage and striking) should not be separated.

7. Debana-waza : Debana - Kote

Motodachi raises up his/her bokuto a little as if he/she is going to strike. At that moment, Kakari-te strikes Motodachi right Kote (small fast movement) with one step forward.

8. Kaeshi-waza : Men - Kaeshi - Do

Motodachi strikes Men from Issoku-itto-no-maai taking one step. Then, Kakari-te defends the attack over his/her head with (omote-suriage) technique and strikes Motodachi right Do immediately, with a small step to right side (Kakari-te body and toes should face towards Moto-dachi).

9. Uchiotoshi-waza : Do - Uchiotoshi - Men

Motodachi strikes to Kakari-te's right Do. Kakari-te see Motodachi move and strikes his Bokuto diagonally downward to the right, stepping back to the left side. Then, Kakari-te strikes Motodachi Men taking one step forward.

Kendo

Techniques - Waza

This next part of “The Beginners Guide” represents the next important steps in your kendo journey. Here, you will be introduced to the different techniques (waza) that are used in the art of kendo.

The first section describes and illustrates the techniques (waza) that are used to attack and counter attack an opponent.

These techniques are broken down in to two different groups:-

- ◆ The first group of techniques are called **Shikake waza**. These waza are used when making a direct attack on your opponent .
- ◆ The second group are called **Oji waza**. These waza are used to make a counter attack on your opponent.

We are going to look at those techniques that are used in the training system known as Kihon keiko ho. They consist of the nine forms (see page 20) using a wooden sword (bokuto) in a series of prearranged movements performed without wearing armour (bogu).

This step by step guide and illustrations will allow you to better understand the basic kendo movements before putting on armour and beginning training with a shinai.

There are many different techniques within these two groups. We start with the first group of attacking techniques Shikake waza beginning with the very basic ones before moving onto the more advanced techniques within this group.

Types of Techniques (Waza)

Shikake waza

Ippon waza

Nidan waza

Harai waza

Hiki waza

Debana waza (page 31)

Attacking Technique

single strike attack

double consecutive strike attack

breaking an opponent's guard with a side or upward sweeping motion

attacking when stepping backwards

pre-emptive attack

The following techniques shown below are not included in the Kihon Keiko Ho system but can be taught to you later by your sensei.

Katsugi waza starting an attack from your shoulder.

Maki waza breaking through your opponents guard by rolling his shinai

Osae waza pushing down on your opponents shinai to break his guard

Jodan waza starting an attack with the shinai held over your head

On page 35 you will find a list of all kendo technique (waza) that are used in both groups

Ippon-Waza

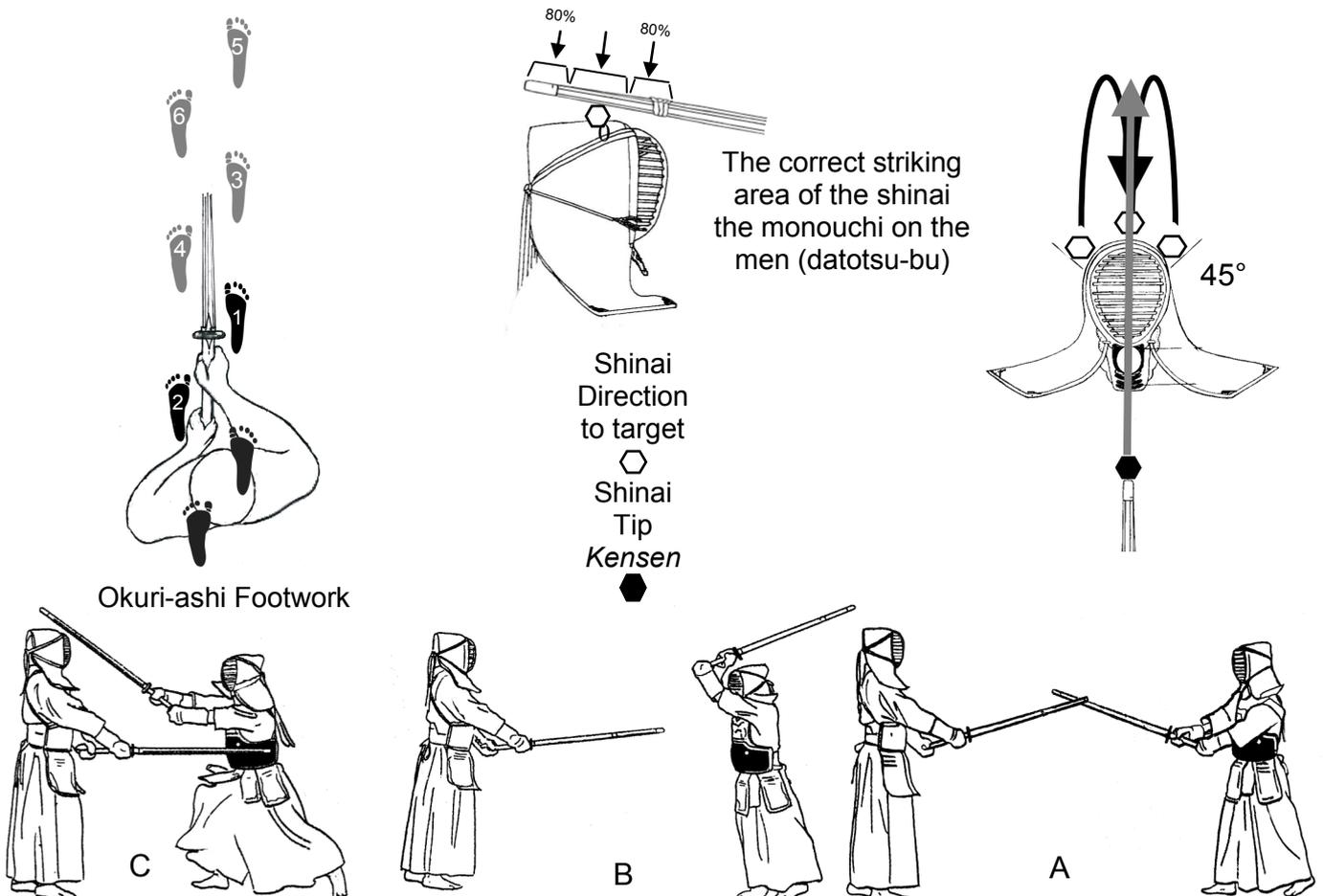
Single strike techniques

Shomen

We are going to start with a one step Men attack called (*Shomen-uchi*) striking to the center of your opponents head (men), with the correct part of your shinai (monouchi) and from the appropriate distance (*maai*). This technique is one of the most important strikes in kendo. From this you will learn how to do many more techniques.

- Starting in *chudan-no-kamae* and at a distance that you can strike your opponents men with one step only (Fig A), this distance is called (*Issoku-itto-no-maai*.) Establishing this distance depends on your own personal height, length of stride and ability. You must find your own optimum distance from which you can make the correct strike to the target area on your opponents head (men) with the right part of our shinai (monouchi). This type of practice is ideal for establishing your correct distance. Start at a close distance then with each strike pull back a little until you cannot reach anymore then step in again until you find the best place to commence an attack, this is your *Issoku-itto-no-maai* or one step distance.
- The receiver of your attack (*motodachi*) will open their guard by moving their shinai point (*kensen*) to the right and at the same time move forward (Fig B) to give you (*kakarite*) the opportunity to make an attack. Moving your right foot forward while lifting your shinai over your head and as your right foot hits the ground striking *motodachi's* men, then bring your left foot quickly forward and follow through past *motodachi* using (*Okuri-ashi*) footwork. All the time through the attack, maintaining good fighting spirit (*zanshin*) and strong *Kiai* sound, projecting your fighting spirit at the moment of attack (Fig C). If passing on your opponents left side you must turn in on your left showing (*zanshin*), when passing on the other side turn in to your right.

Hidari Men (Left) Migi Men (Right) Men attacks can be made to the right and left side of the men but only 45° to the right or left side with the correct angle (Hasuji) of your shinai, be careful as if you hit any lower you could hit your opponent on the ear and hurt or puncture their ear drum.

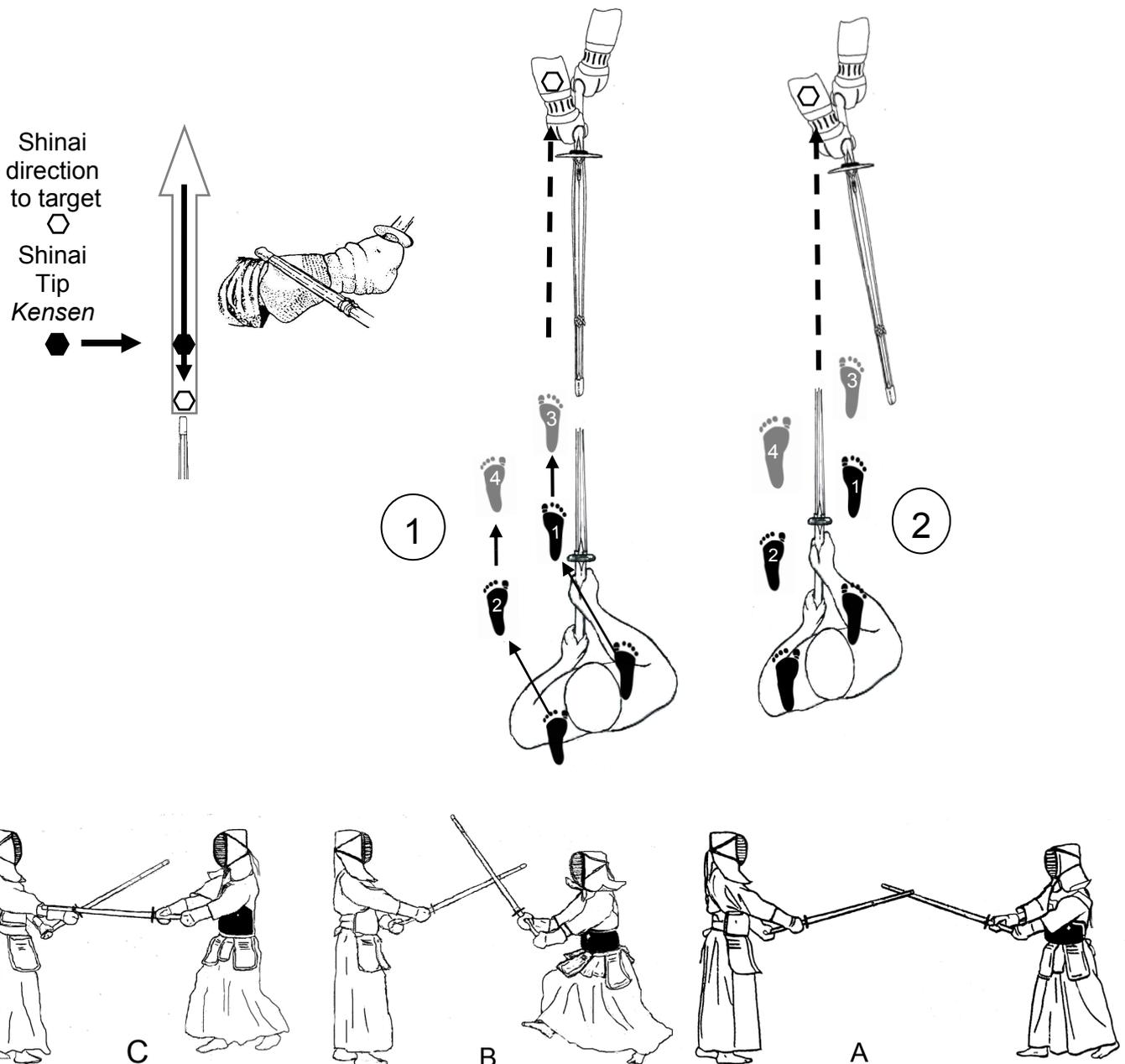


KOTE

The next technique is the strike to your opponents right wrist (Kote) shown in the diagram below. This technique is mainly used on your opponents right wrist as the left is protected when in chudan-kamae. The only time the left wrist is open to attack is when your opponent lifts his hands above chest height or when in Jodan-kamae where the shinai is held above the head.

1) To make a successful strike to the right kote, move off centre to your left slightly aiming your right foot toward the opponents right foot. This gives you an unobstructed way through, past the tip of your opponents shinai (*kensen*) allowing contact to be made to the correct part of the kote, as shown, and you will not run straight on to the tip of your opponents shinai.

2) A good time to strike your opponents kote is when he moves the tip of the shinai off centre, allowing you a way in to strike. This can occur when your opponent is about to make an attack on you. Start your kote attack in the same way as when making a men attack but this time the target is closer than your opponent's head so you have to think about not moving your right foot too far forward, if you do make this mistake you will be too close to your opponent to strike correctly.

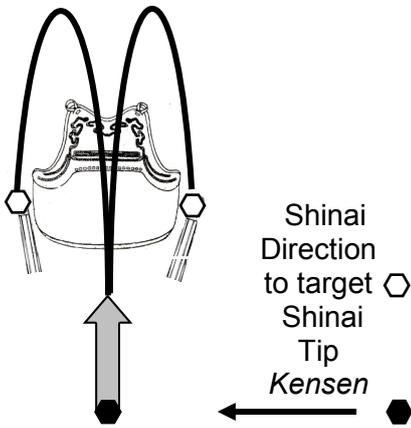


DO

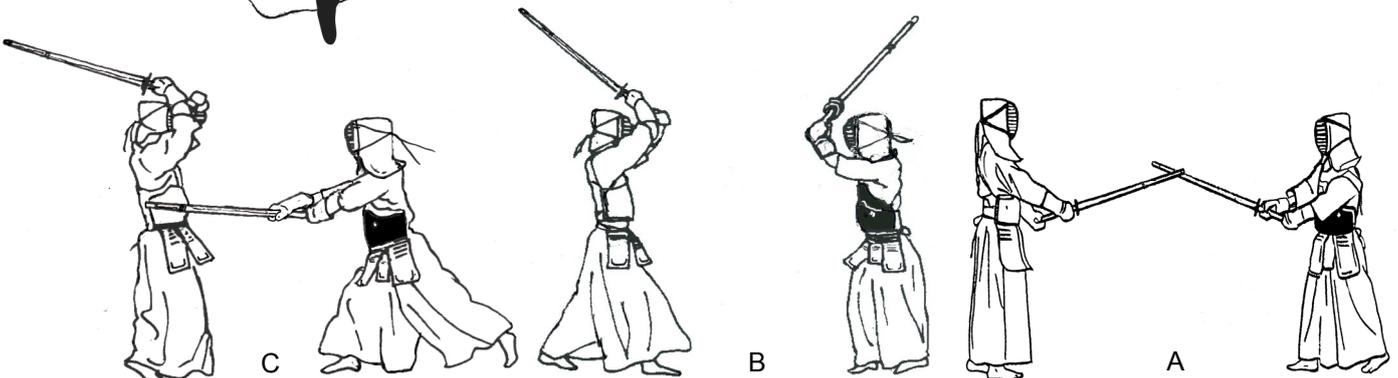
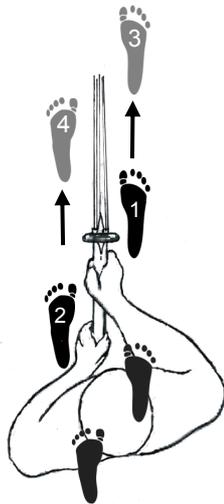
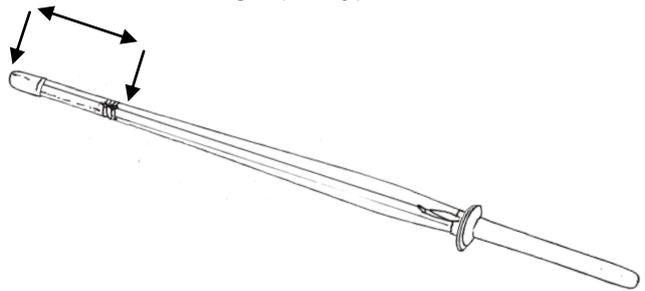
Now let us look at the next target, this is the trunk of the body protected by the *Do* plate. *Do* attacks can be made on either the right or left side of the body armour but it is very important that you strike with the correct part of your shinai (*monouchi*) and your shinai is at the proper angle (*hasuji*).

After striking the *Do* correctly it is very important to show good *zanshin* and be prepared to follow-up with a counter attack immediately. In order to do this you must relax your hands immediately after the *Do* strike is made so that you can pass through, try not to let go of the shinai with the left hand and turn immediately one step past your opponent.

Shinai
Direction



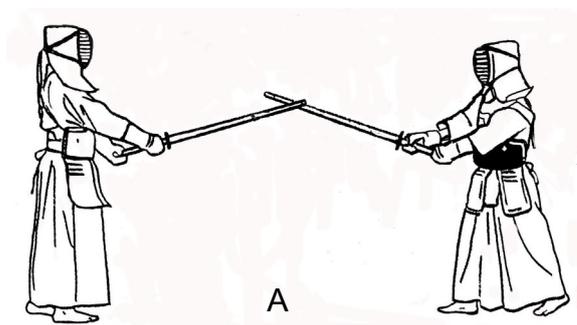
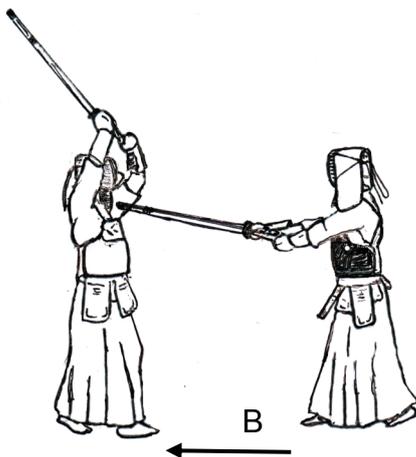
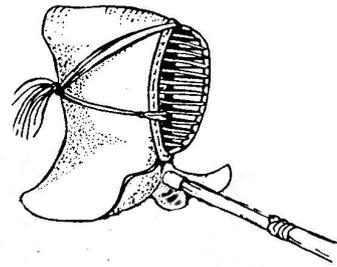
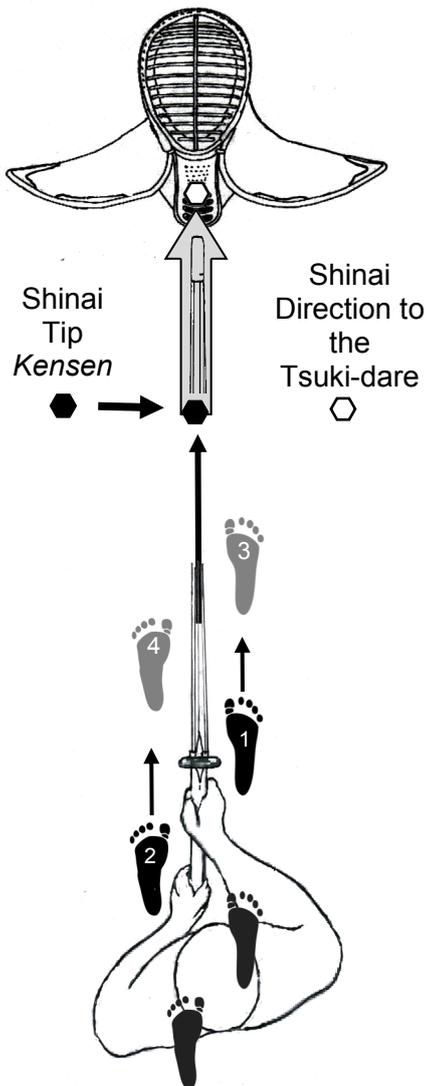
The correct striking area of the shinai is the monouchi on the DO datotsu-bu) and at the right angle (hasuji)



TSUKI

This next target in kendo is a thrust to the throat (tsuki). To perform a correct tsuki, push forward with your whole body maintaining good posture, extending your shinai tip (*kensen*) to the target (*tsuki-dare*) and after, relaxing your hands (*tenouchi*) while maintaining your posture and fighting spirit (*zanshin*).

Tsuki can be performed in two ways, stepping forward and extending your shinai with both arms or by using one hand only.



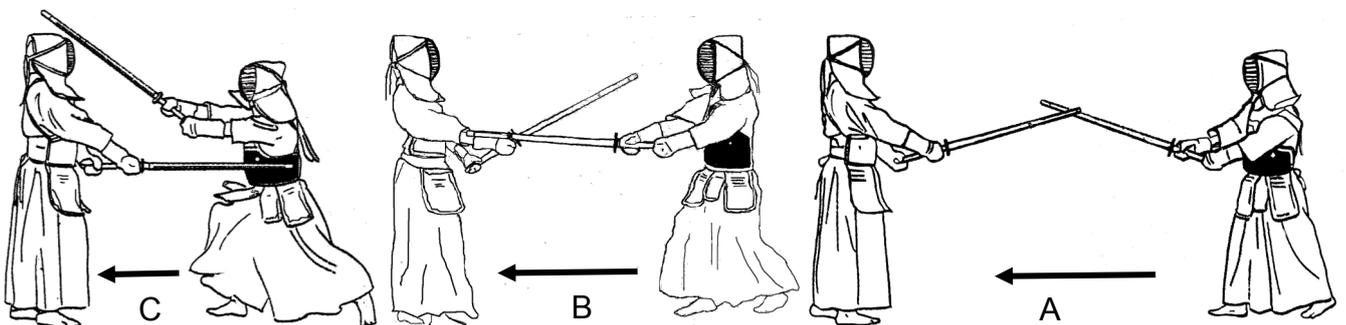
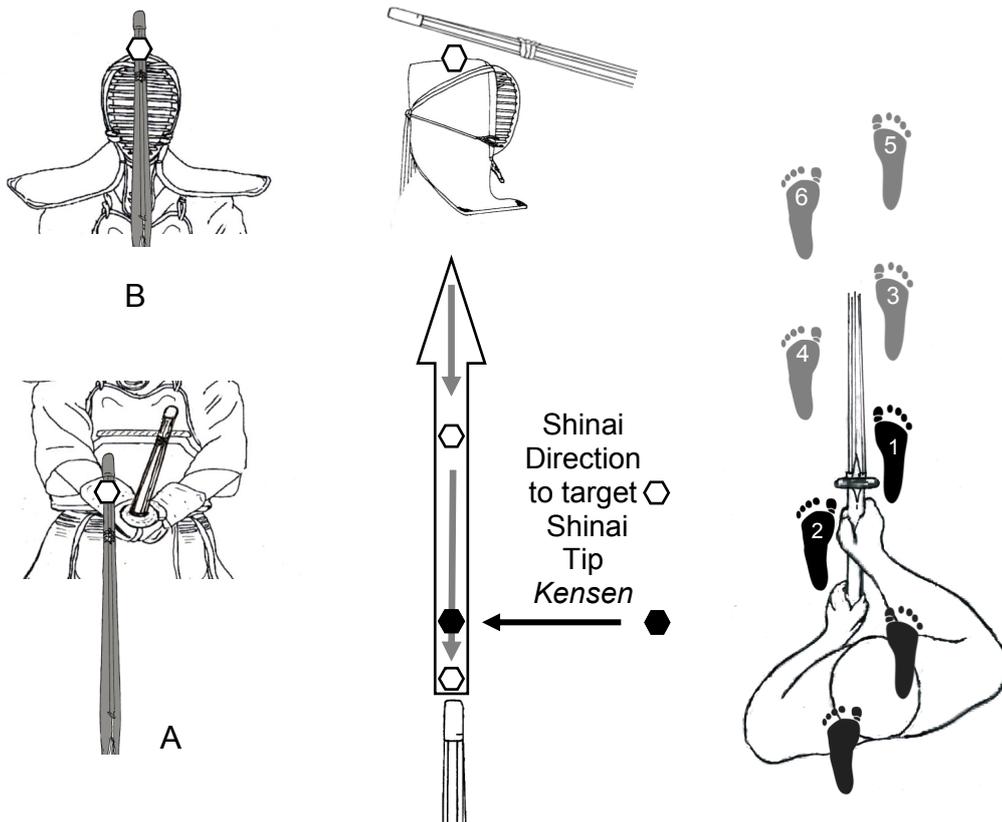
Ni-Dan-San-Dan Waza

Two or Three consecutive strikes

Now we move on to the next stage, and start to understand about combination techniques (*waza*). There are many technique that fall within this group, they come under the category of (*ni-dan-san-dan waza*) which is the combination of two or three techniques that are performed one after the other. This helps you learn how to make a second or third strike should your shikake *waza* attack fail or when it is deflected by your opponent.

In this section we will concentrate on the combination attack of Kote/ Men. This is a very good technique (*waza*) that will help you understand about all the other combinations of strikes that form the *ni-dan, san-dan* attacks.

To perform the Kote/ Men technique from (*Issoku-itto-no-mai*) move in and attack your opponent with the kote strike as shown below (Fig A). *Motodachi* should give you an opening to the kote by moving their shinai to the left. To make the next strike (Fig B), you have to understand about the distance (*mai*) before you can make the strike to the top of the head (*men*). Has *motodachi* moved back after your first strike? Or has *motodachi* not moved at all? You have to judge this distance quickly to determine if you should make a big second step forward or just a little one in order for your shinai to strike the correct target area. Not too close, not too faraway. When you master these techniques it will become much easier to understand all the others within this group of combination attacks.



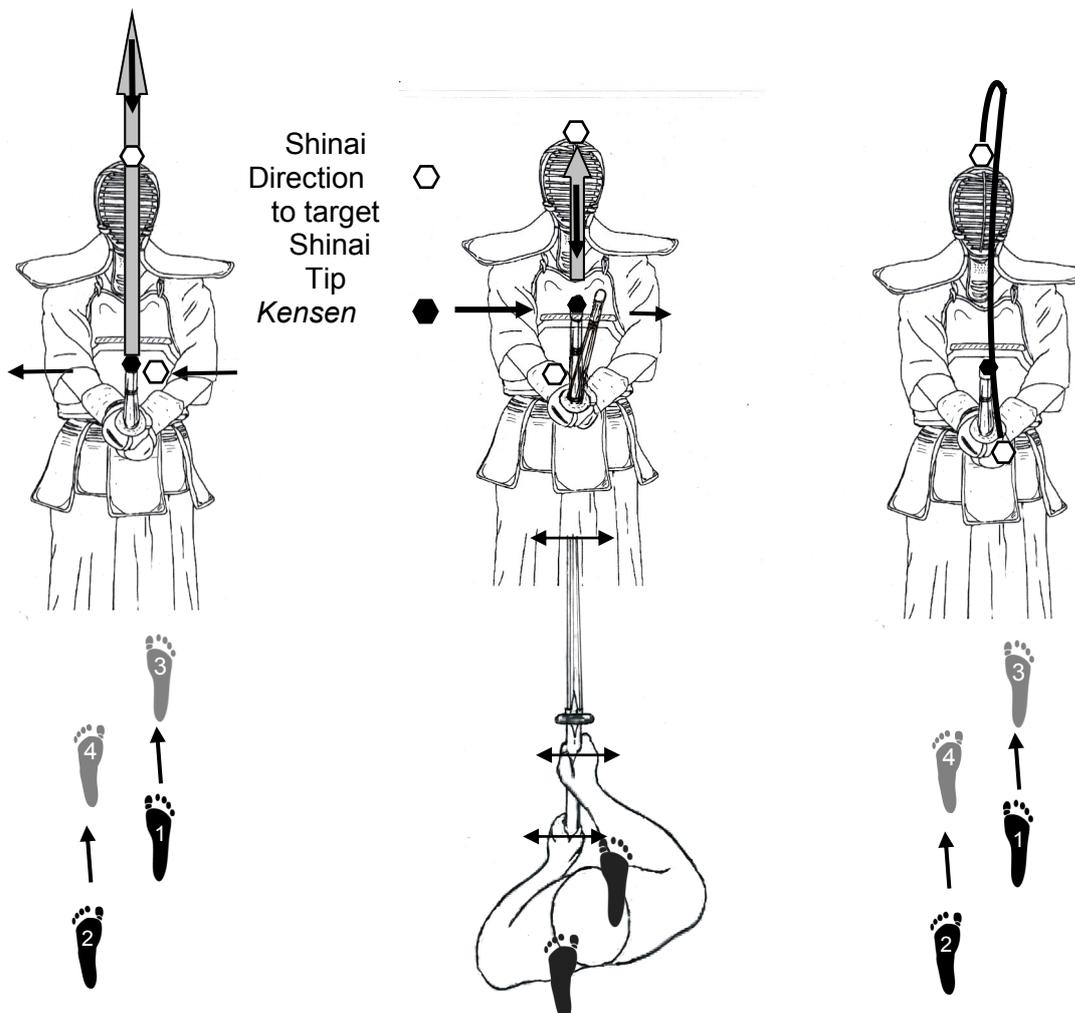
Harai Waza

Opening technique

When commencing an attack you should understand that your opponent may still have control of the centre, so you will have to find a way of getting past their guard. If you attack when your opponent has control of the centre with the point of his shinai (*kensen*) you will run straight onto the tip and sacrifice yourself. There are many ways to win the centre and get past your opponents guard. In this section we are going to look at a very important technique (*harai waza*) that moves your opponents kensen off of the centre line so you can make your attack to the Men, Kote, Do, or Tsuki target areas.

The first harai method is to use your hands in such away on your shinai that you hit your opponents shinai with a sharp slap near the top. You must have a light grip and strike sharply horizontally from left to right or right to left so that you hit the opponents shinai off the centre line leaving your shinai in the centre.

The second method is to hit your opponents shinai upward with a glancing blow, striking your opponents shinai out of the way and moving in at the same time as you raise your shinai to strike the intended target. This way can only be used when your opponents kensen is held in a higher position than normal.



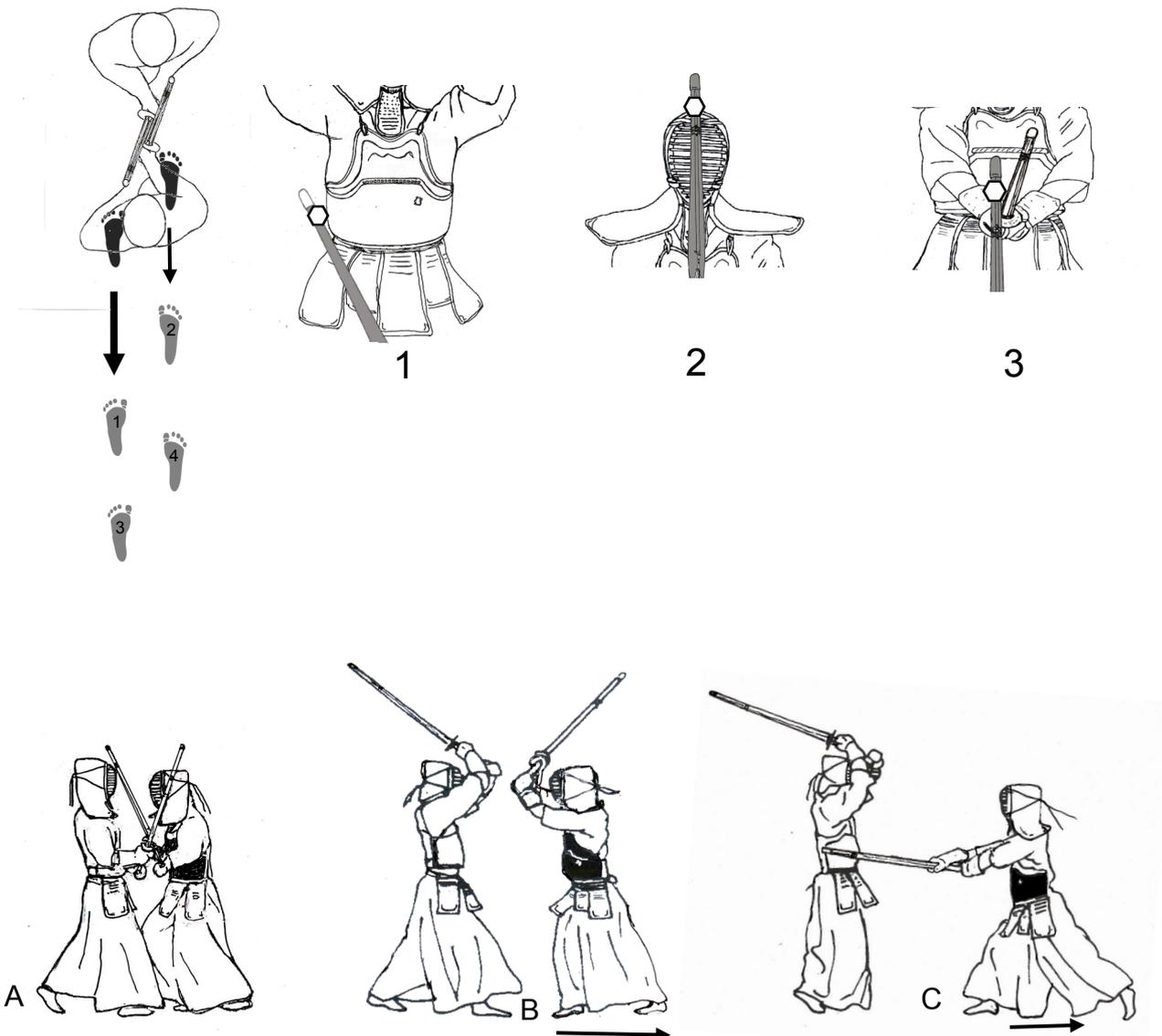
Hiki-Waza

Striking while stepping backwards

When you are close to your opponent following an attack you may take up a position known as *tsubazeriai*, that is, hand guard (tsuba) to hand guard, with both shinai crossed and your kensen pointing over your opponents left shoulder. Your shinai should not touch your opponents shoulder.

From this close position we can make attacks by stepping backwards. These techniques are called *Hiki-waza*. We are going to look at *Hiki-do* (Pic 1) but there are two other techniques, striking Men (Pic 2) and striking Kote (Pic 3). All these hiki waza techniques use the same basic movements. To perform *Hiki-do* from *tsubazeriai*, first you should apply downward pressure on your opponents tsuba. As soon as you feel them resist this pressure, lift your hands up quickly and step back with your left foot. This action makes your opponent open up so you can now strike their Do.

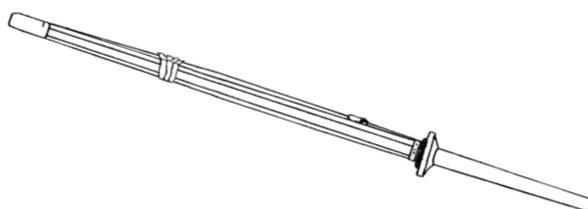
When striking Do it is very important that the cutting angle of your shinai (*hasuji*) is correct (about 45 degrees) so that the *monouchi*, the striking part of the shinai makes correct contact with the Do breast plate, at the same time you strike you must bring up your right foot quickly and move back using *Okuri-ashi* foot work. See the diagram below A/B/C for body movement and footwork. Also it is very important that you always keep your hands facing forward when doing hiki-waza so that your shinai comes down the centre line every time.



Oji- Waza

Counter attacks

We are now going to look at the second group of techniques called *Oji-waza* and learn how and when it is appropriate to use these techniques. Counter attacks (*oji-waza*) can only be performed when your opponent attempts to strike you. This could be any one of the *shikake-waza* attacks that we mentioned earlier, Men, Kote, Do or Tsuki. You must wait till they are totally committed to making their attack so that they cannot recover from your counter. If you respond to soon they will see your counter and react differently. These techniques are of a much higher level and when you become more advanced in your kendo you will start to use pressure (*seme*) on your opponent to make them feel that you are going to start an attack in order to make them make the first move. Use the appropriate *oji-waza* for the type of attack which is delivered against you.



Oji waza

Counter attacks

Nuki waza	.....	avoid the attack and then counter attacking
Suriage waza	.....	using your shinai to deflect opponents attack
Debana waza	.....	pre-emptive attack
(This is show as Shikake-waza but can be between both)		
Kaeshi waza	.....	receiving the attack on your shinai with relaxed hands, turn the shinai over and counterattack
Uchiotoshi waza	.....	striking down the opponents shinai

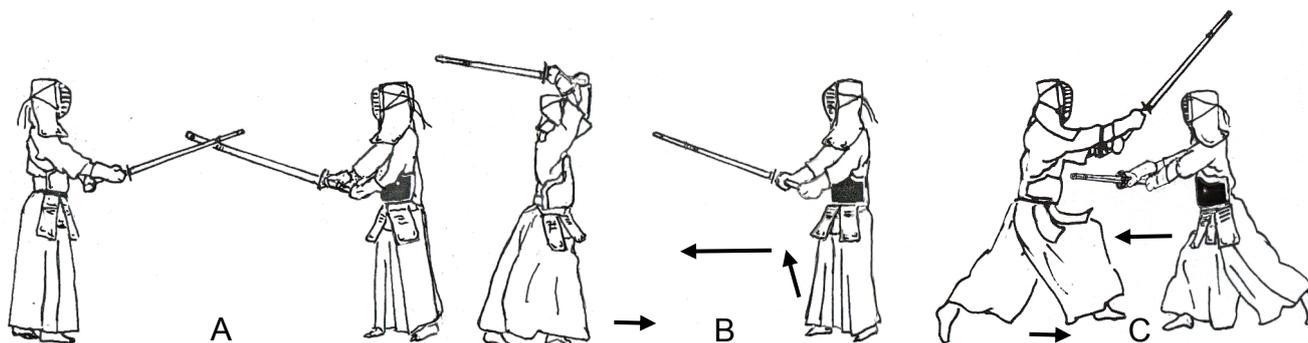
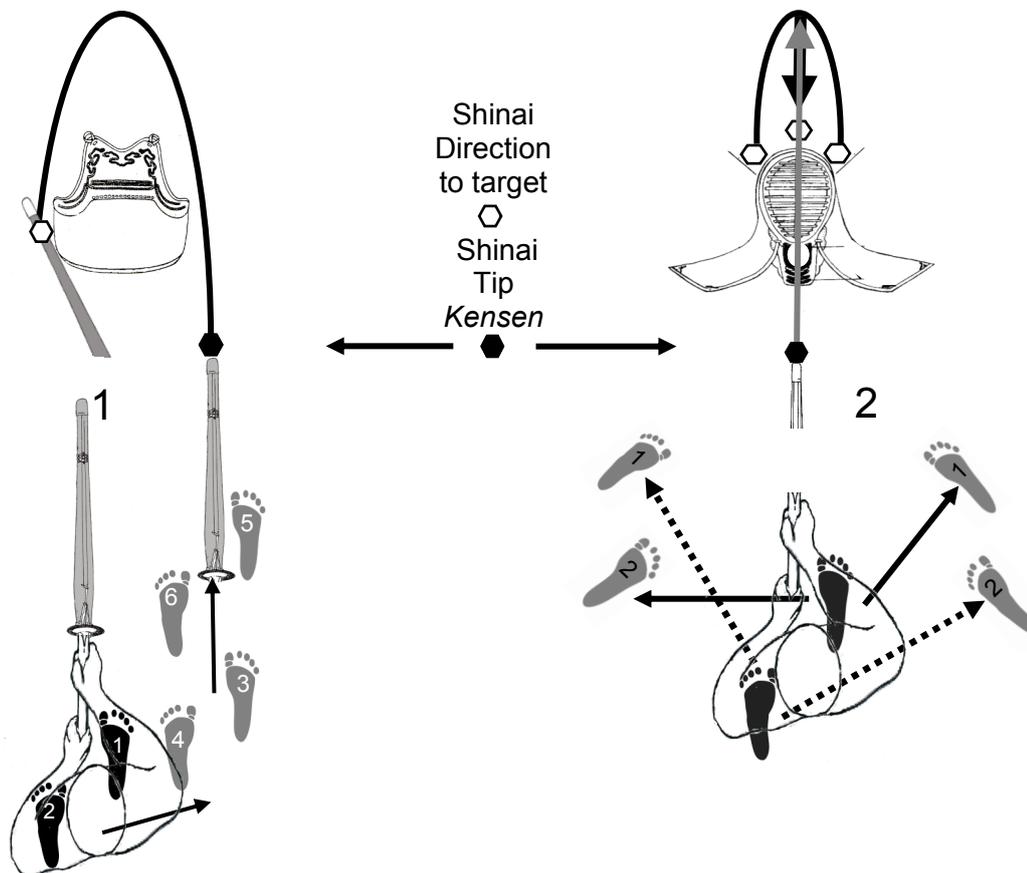


Nuki-Waza

Evasion techniques

Evasion techniques (*Nuki-waza*) require you to move your entire body out of the path of your opponents attack. You must wait until they are totally committed to making their attack before you respond. If you respond too early they will see this and change their attack. There are a number of *nuki-waza* techniques that can be used. Here we are looking at two that will help you understand all the others. These you will learn about as you progress in your kendo.

The first evasion technique is *men-nuki-do*. It should be used when your opponent attempts to make a *shikake waza* attack to your head (*men*). When you see this, and they fully commit to their attack, you take a small step to your right and slightly forward as you strike their *Do*. Take care that you do not step too far forward as you will not be able to strike their *Do* with the correct part of your shinai as shown in Pic.1. Because you have moved your entire body off the centre line, your opponent can pass by without any body contact, allowing you to turn and show strong *Zanshin* awareness. *Men-nuki-men* (Pic 2) is performed in almost the same way. Again wait until your opponent is fully committed to their attack before you take any action. You can make this *waza* by moving your body to the right or left side of your opponent, however the footwork is different in relation to which side you choose. The type of footwork used in *Men-nuki-men* is *Hiraki-ashi* as show below.



Suriage-waza

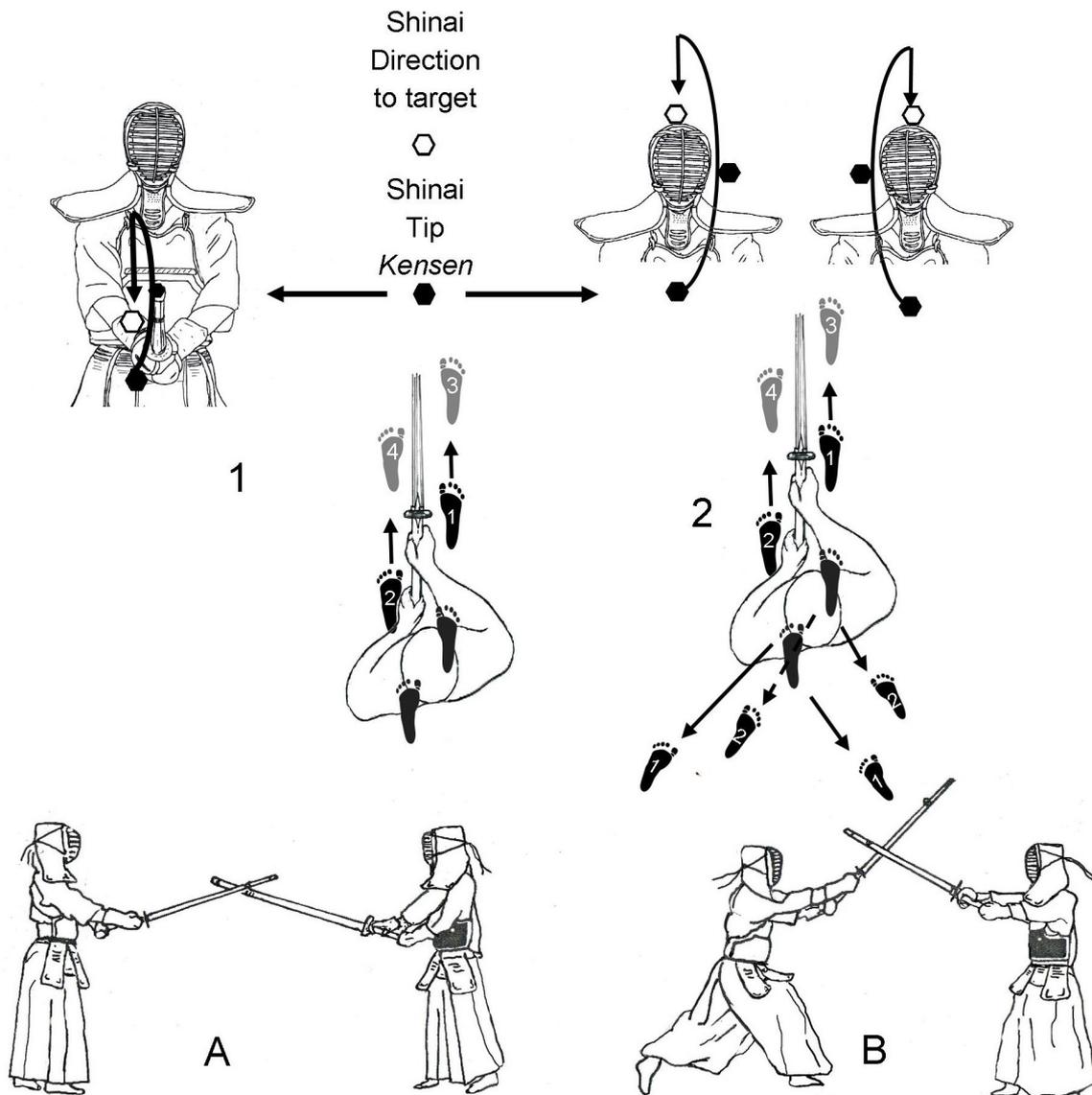
Upward Sliding Deflection

Suriage techniques are used to parry an attack with either side of your shinai. Suriage is not a blocking technique. It is a deflection technique where you meet your opponents attack with your shinai in a curved, sliding, upward motion against their downward shinai attack. This action causes your opponents shinai to slide out of the way allowing you to control their centre and make your counter strike. Suriage techniques can be made using either the right or left side (*shinogi*) of your shinai.

The best opportunity to use this counter attack is when your opponent attacks your *kote* or your *men*. The first technique we will look at is *kote-suriage-men* Pic 1

Like *nuki-waza*, it is important that your opponent is fully committed to their attack before you start your action. As their shinai is coming down to hit your *kote*, bring your shinai up to meet their shinai in a curving, half moon shape on the right side as it comes down. As the two shinais connect, your opponents slides away from the centre allowing you to strike their *men* with a forward movement.

The other *waza* is *men-suriage-men* Pic 2. This can be used on the right and left side of your opponents shinai. You must judge the speed of your opponents attack. If it is a fast, spirited attack you may have to step backwards diagonally to the side so that you can strike their *men* with the correct part of your shinai (*monouchi*). It is very important for you to understand about distance (*maai*) between each other as well as timing when using these techniques.



Debana waza

Anticipation

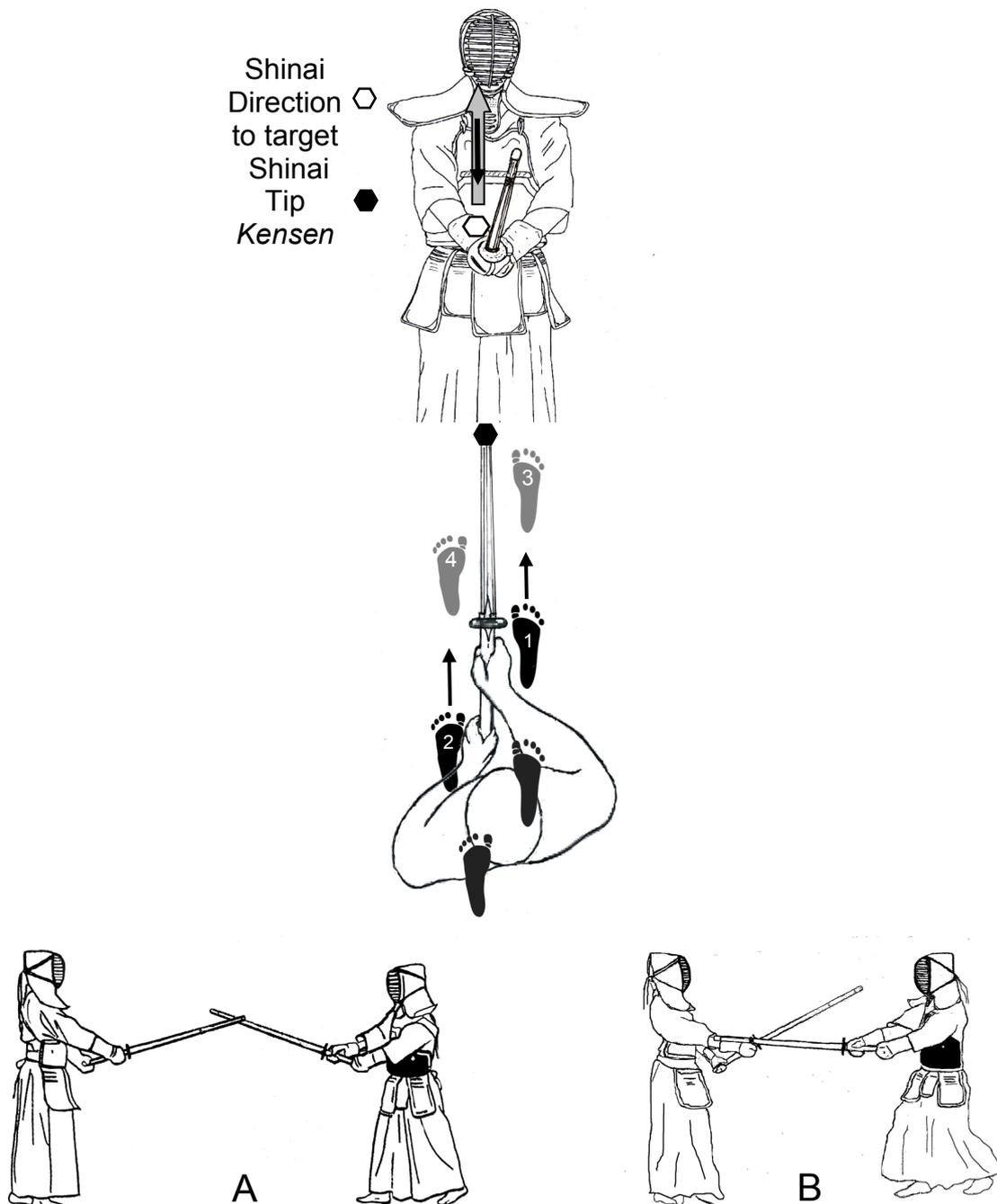
The use of debana-waza is considered to be one of the highest techniques in kendo. Debana-waza relies on you anticipating your opponents next move and starting your counter the moment your opponent begins to apply seme or starts an attack.

To carry this out effectively you must have an understanding of intuitive response, sensing your opponents intentions before they occur.

When your opponent starts to move their shinai tip (*kensen*) up just a little this can be assumed to be the start of an attack. Your timing should coincide with this movement and you should be ready to move immediately with your kensen going forward down the centre line and striking your opponents kote with good hand and finger control *tenouchi*. Show strong *zanshin* following your debana waza attack.

You can use debana-waza against all attacking strikes, Men / Kote / Do / Tsuki.

The most important consideration is that you should learn how to recognize your opponents intentions in order to know when their attack is going to start.



Kaeshi-waza

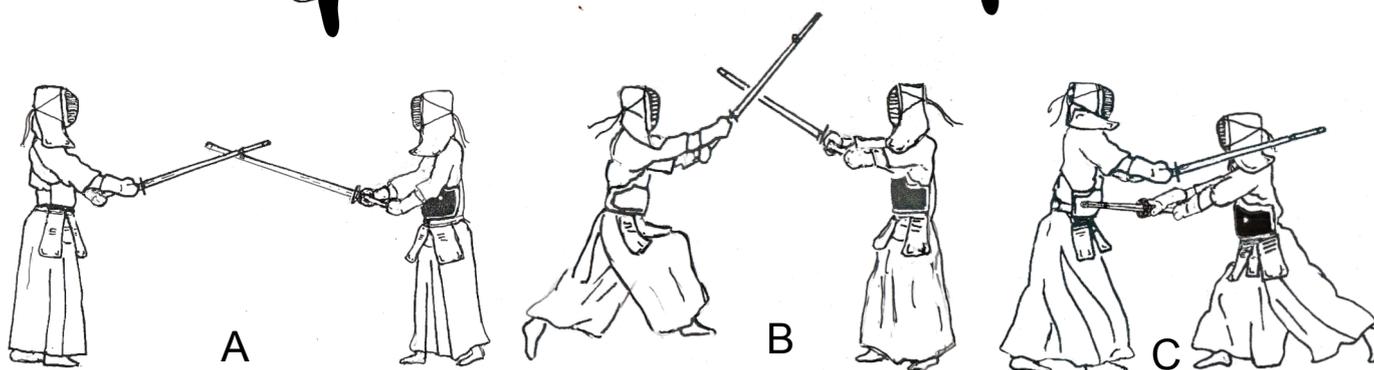
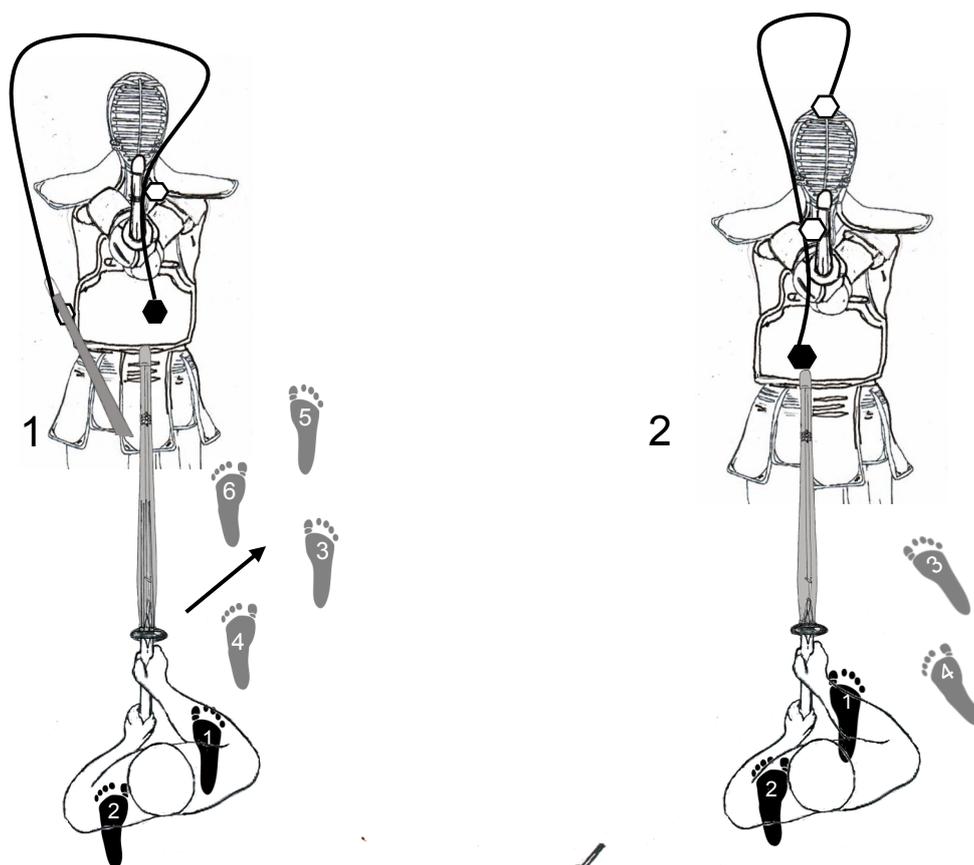
Relaxed hands and wrists

In Kaeshi waza, the opponents shinai is parried before turning your shinai on to the opposite side and making a counter attack. To perform *kaeshi waza* you must keep your hands and wrists relaxed in order to receive the power of your opponents shinai on your upward parry. As the two shinai's meet, let your hands and wrists relax and allow the tip of your shinai to turn over to the other side of your opponents shinai. Now you have the opportunity to strike your chosen target .

There are a number of ways of using this *waza*, here we are looking at just two.

The first is *men-kaeshi-do* and like all counter attacks you must wait till your opponent is fully committed to their action before you respond. As they make their attack, stand still and raise your shinai to meet theirs. On contact, relax your hands and let your shinai turn over in a small arc as you step to the side and strike their *Do* as shown in Pic 1

The second *waza* is *men-kaeshi-migi* or *hidari-men*. This technique can be used from either side. In Pic 2 below we show how to parry on the right side of your opponents shinai before striking the left side of their *Men*. On the opposite side, you perform it in the same way but this time you parry on the left side of their shinai, turn your shinai over in the other direction and then strike on the left side of your opponents men.



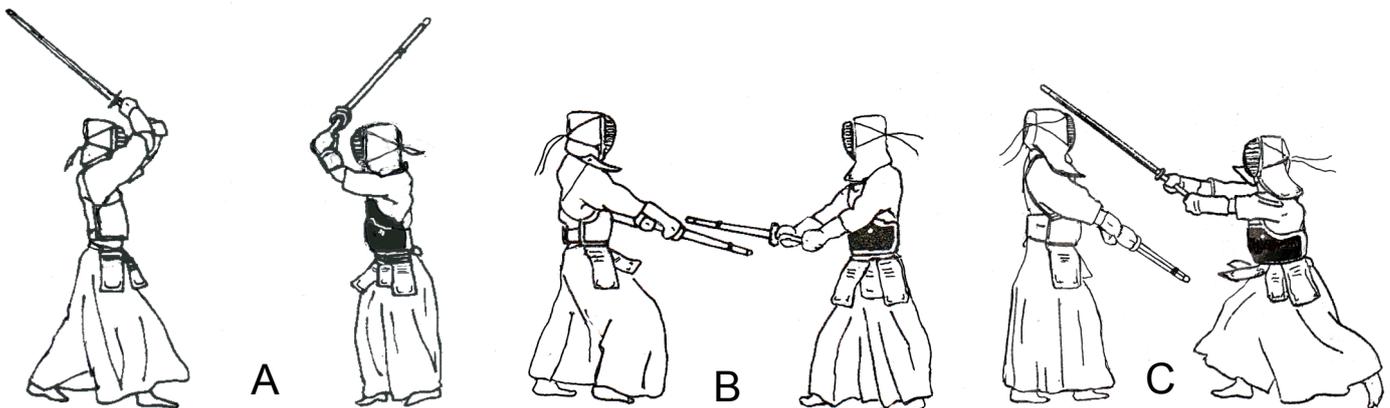
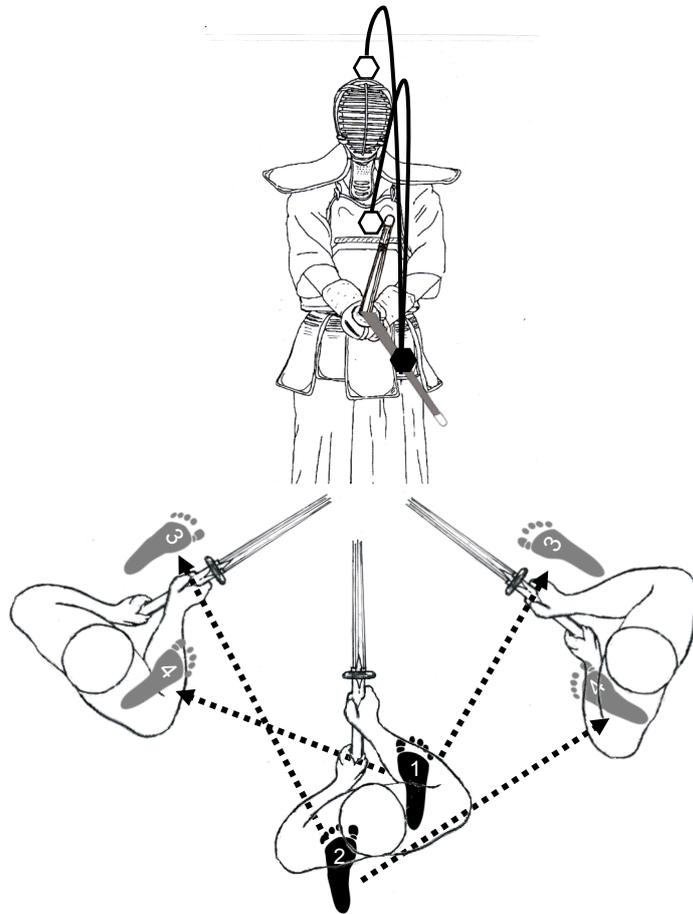
Uchiotoshi-waza

Striking downwards

There are a number of ways to use Uchiotoshi waza. The technique we are going to look at here is *do-uchiotoshi-men* as this will give you a clear understanding of how you can use uchiotoshi-men and when. Like the other oji waza we have shown, you must wait until your opponent has fully committed to their action before you start. In this technique, it is of the utmost importance that you do not show any intention of making a counter attack, as you have to make a very strong striking action in a downward motion to the oncoming shinai while moving your whole body around to side at the same time.

Because of these two big actions it is easy to give away your intention to counterattack, so you will have to practice many times to perform it correctly.

The other opportunities to use *uchiotoshi-waza* are from *tsubazeriai*, close together, shinai-guard to shinai-guard. When your opponent steps backward and goes to strike your Do / Kote / Men is also a good time to use this waza .



A list of all the different types of Waza (Techniques) in Kendo

Shikake-waza (Attacking)

Ippon-uchi-no-waza

Seme Men
Seme Kote
Seme Do (migi) right
Seme Tsuki (omote/ura) of the sword

Renzoku-waza

Ni-sandan-no-waza

Kote Men
Kote Do
Men Men
Men Taiatari Hiki-Men
Men Taiatari Hiki-Kote
Men Do
Men Taiatari Hiki-Do
Tsuki Kote
Tsuki Men
Kote Men Do
Kote Men Taiatari Hiki-Do

Harai-waza

Omote (Left side) Harai-Men
Ura (Right side) Harai-Men
Haraiotoshi Men
Harai Kote
Harai Do
Harai Tsuki (Left)
Harai Tsuki (Right)

Maki-waza

Makiage - Kote (to rotate downwards)
Makiotoshi - Men (to rotate upwards)

Debana-waza

Debana Men (Anticipation)
Debana Kote

Hiki-waza

Hiki Men (Stepping back)
Hiki Kote
Hiki Do

Katsugi-waza

Katsugi -Men (Swinging shinai on to left shoulder)
Katsugi -Kote

Katate-waza

Katate - Migi (right) men (One handed)
Katate - Tsuki

Jodan-waza

Men from Jodan (Shinai held over head)
Kote from Jodan

Oji-waza (Counter Attacking)

Nuki -waza

Men Nuki - Men (stepping back)
Men Nuki - Men (stepping to the side)
Men Nuki - Do - (Right)
Men Nuki - Do - (Left)
Kote Nuki - Men
Kote Nuki - Kote
Men Nuki - Kote
Kote Nuki - Katate - Men - (Right)

Suriage-waza

Men Suriage - Men - (Right)
Men Suriage - Men - (Left)
Men Suriage - Kote
Men Suriage - Do
Kote Suriage - Kote
Kote Suriage - Men
Tsuki Suriage - Men - (Right)
Tsuki Suriage - Men - (Left)

Kaeshi-waza

Men Kaeshi - Men - (Right)
Men Kaeshi - Men - (Left)
Men Kaeshi - Do - (Right)
Men Kaeshi - Do - (Left)
Kote Kaeshi - Men
Kote Kaeshi - Kote
Do Kaeshi - Men

Uchiotoshi- waza

Men Uchiotoshi - Men
Do Uchiotoshi - Men
Kote Uchiotoshi - Men
Tsuki Uchiotoshi - Men

Kendo saying and Subjects .

Ichi-Gan Ni-Soku San-Tan Shi-Riki

	<u>The four elements of kendo:</u>
Gan	Sight: the ability to see your opponents physical presence, and also their personality, state of mind and intentions.
Soku	Footwork: the movement of the body.
Tan	Courage: one's spirit and feeling toward one's self and others.
Riki	Competent: to have ability to put into practice Ki-ken-tai-no-ichi (spirit-sword-body) and to produce forceful strikes and show strong presence.

Ki Ken Tai no ichi

Spirit-sword-body as one. To be able to perform this properly takes many years of hard work and effort.

Shikai

	<u>The four Sicknesses you must overcome</u>
Kyō	Surprise: do not be scared or be taken by surprise.
Ku	Fear: do not let fear of your opponent overcome you.
Gi	Doubt: do not hesitate or enter into half-hearted actions.
Waku	Confusion: do not let your mind wander and become confused.

Seme

To attack. Seme means to apply pressure to your opponent
There are three basic kinds of seme.

Ki wo korosu:	To break the opponents spirit
Waza wo korosu:	To overcome the opponents technique, by changing timing or distance.
Ken wo korosu:	To overcome the sword, by knocking, pushing or twisting the shinai to make an opening through their kensen.

Datotsu no Kikai

Chance to strike. The five most important chances are:
When your opponents attack is beginning.
When the opponents attack is finished.
When the opponent is at a stand still, watch their breathing or movement.
After a block or parry.
When the opponent is uncertain.

Mittsu no Sen

	<u>The three Methods of counter-attack</u>
Sen sen no sen:	At the start of the opponents attack (debana waza).
Sen zen no sen:	When the opponents attack is fully committed too but can be avoided (Nuki waza).
Sen go no sen:	When the opponent has committed to attack but can be countered with a parrying technique using suriage waza, kaeshi waza, or uchi otoshi waza.

Maai

The distance between you and your opponent.
The ability understand and to control this distance, and to apply waza techniques appropriate to a particular distance, this is very important to learn.

The basic kinds of maai are:

Tō maai:	Long distance (shinai tips apart)
Issoku itto no maai:	Distance from which one can strike the opponent with one step (shinai tips slightly crossed).
Chika maai:	Close distance (shinai crossed close together).

(Knowing your own one step distance is very important so you can make correct strikes)

Kendo saying and Subjects .

Takegoe (Kiai)

Takegoe is an integral part of the Kiai process used in kendo to strengthen resolve and focus intentions. While it can appear as simply a shout or vocalisation, takegoe is in fact the finalisation of the internal development of the power we create in our lower abdomen, the Tanden. Takegoe is utilised to increase kendo performance and is based on specific breathing techniques using the diaphragm rather than only using the vocal chords. It can also improve the connection with the opponent, allowing you to anticipate their actions and respond to their attacks. Another important aspect of Takegoe is maintaining correct posture as you breath. As you breathe in, direct the air into the lower stomach area maintaining a firm contact between your abdomen and the inside of your tare. Continue to breath without slackening this pressure or leaning backward or forward. Stay relaxed and erect as you move and deliver your attacks. At the moment of impact, release the air in your stomach ensuring that the shout coincides with ki ken tai no ichi.

Fumikomi Ashi

Fumikomi Ashi describes the action of the right leg and foot during an attack. The action is used to determine the distance between you and your opponent, which is appropriate to the chosen attack. During kihon practice, ensure that the right foot makes contact with the floor at exactly the same time as the shinai strikes the target. This can be achieved by either delaying the downward motion of the shinai or accelerating the shinai's speed. Make sure that the left hand rises as the right foot begins the forward step. The foot should strike the floor firmly and evenly using the entire sole.

Fumikiri Ashi

Again this refers to the forward movement of the body during an attack. In this case however it describes the action of the left foot. Fumikiri Ashi is the action of the left foot as it kicks back into the floor to project the body forward. Practice this action during kihon waza ensuring that your forward momentum is only provided by the left foot and not by stepping forward with the right foot. You can practice the fumikiri action during ashi sabaki when practicing okuri-ashi, suri-ashi and fumikomi-ashi. Make certain that you have stretched the achilles in your legs during warm up to avoid injury.

Tsuba Zerai

During a match, contact between both kendoka can be reduced to a very close distance. In this case the tsuba and kote are touching. This is called tsuba zerai. Correct tsuba zerai can determine the strength and intention of the opponent. Maintain contact with your opponent during this engagement. Hold your shoulders and arms relaxed but firm with your shinai angled slightly to the right. Keep your posture erect and direct your forward pressure through your abdomen. Do not push with your upper body and arms.

During the tsuba zerai action try and determine the intension of your opponent and the level of pressure that is being directed against you. This will allow you to either be ready to make a counter attack or to apply a hiki waza as you separate. Use tsuba zerai to control or upset your opponent's actions. Avoid resting you shinai on your opponents shoulder during tsuba zerai as this is an infringement of the rules and can result in a point being scored against you. Practice in the dojo with a partner first by moving around the dojo in tsuba zerai with okuri-ashi in all directions followed by hiki waza from tsuba zerai. One side should take the dominant position

Zan - shin

Zanshin is primarily a state of mind and although considered as a single entity it can be separated into two distinct aspects. Before we look at how to develop zanshin it is important to note that zanshin should be practiced as an integral part of all your kendo training. The most common part of zanshin refers to the state that a kendoka should adopt of remaining alert and guarded against either a counter attack or a retaliation following a failed attack. The other aspect of zanshin is ensuring that an attack is made without holding anything back. A simple way of practicing the former is to make sure your Kiai continues following a strike and that, after following through, you establish a threat posture against your opponent showing that you are ready to make a second attack or receive a counter attack. Practicing kakegoe and developing your posture can assist with the latter part of zanshin. Correct use of zanshin can also determine the effectiveness of ni-dan and san-dan waza making sure that each consecutive strike is forceful and determined. Remember that correct zanshin is part of yuko-datotsu and an ippon will not be awarded if zanshin is lacking.

Seme San Sappo

Seme-ai describes the state of mind where a kendoka maintains an attitude of dominance and determination over an opponent during a match. Seme contains both physical and mental aspects but not always in exacting amounts. To explain this we must consider the three ways in which seme can be utilized. This is referred to as San Sappo or the three types of attack that can be made against an opponent prior to executing a strike.

The first is the attack that can be made against an opponent's spirit. This can be achieved in a number of ways but here we will consider techniques we have already discussed. Kakegoe and Zanshin. When combined, both these techniques can have a profound effect on an opponent's spirit causing them to weaken their resolve and destroying their confidence thus creating a perfect opportunity for you to attack with Shikake waza.

The second aspect of Seme San sappo is the continuous attack made on the tip and mono uchi of your opponent's sword. Here you ensure that you always dominate the centre line and continually apply pressure to upset the opponent's kamae and counter seme. This can be achieved by either maintaining contact sword-to-sword using pressure or striking their sword off centre from both sides. Always be ready to deliver an attack when the opportunity arises. Do not pause or slacken your spirit during this action or the moment for attack will quickly pass. Practice this continually during kakari keiko against seniors and during ji keiko sessions.

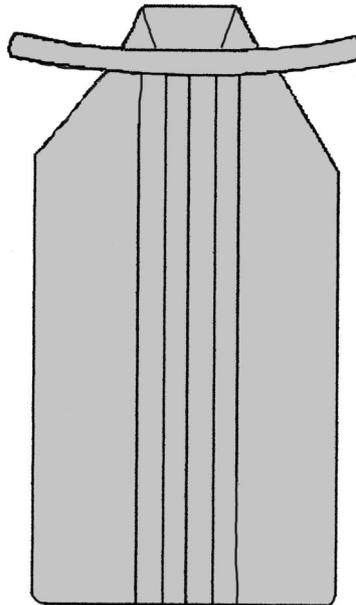
The third aspect of seme san sappo is attacking your opponent with strong and relevant strikes that are made without holding anything back and are followed in turn by positive zanshin. Therefore to practice this you should ensure that during kihon waza, all strikes are made with a big action, correct posture and a determined effort. You should always practice this third aspect of seme san sappo during uchi komi keiko against seniors, ensuring that you maintain the pressure throughout the session.

五倫五常 Gorin Gojyo

The meaning of the pleats

Gojyo

- 1 Jin 仁 Humanity
- 2 Gi 義 Loyalty
- 3 Rei 礼 Courtesy
- 4 Chi 智 Wisdom
- 5 Shin 信 Truth



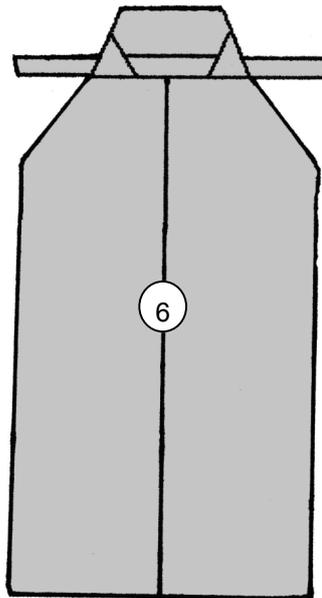
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Gorin

- 1 Chu 忠 Faithfulness
- 2 Ko 孝 Family
- 3 Wa 和 Harmony
- 4 Ai 愛 Love
- 5 Shin 信 Loyalty

6

Makoto 誠 = 忠孝 Sincerity



6

There used to be many types of Hakama, only two are still in common use. The top of the Hakama worn against the lower back is called "Koshi-ita" it helps naturally good posture. Each of the six pleats of the Hakama have a meaning from Confucianism, as described and shown in the diagrams.

5 original elements (chu, ko, wa, ai, shin) is also known as 'Gorin' or 'Filial piety' that teaches five relationships or bonds such as ruler and leader (gi), father to son (ko), husband to wife (wa), elder brother to younger brother (ai) and friend to friend (shin). (jin, gi, rei, chi, shin) is known as 'Gojyo' or 'five virtues' and was written by Confucius (551 - 479BC) 'Gorin' was written by his leading follower, Mencius (372 - 289BC) Both together 'Gorin and Gojyo' is used in Kendo teaching as it had the largest influence of Confucianism during Edo era.

Kendo Match (Shiai)

The strikes recognized in a kendo matches are

Figure 1- MEN, a strike to the crown of the head (A) or to either temple (B) (C)

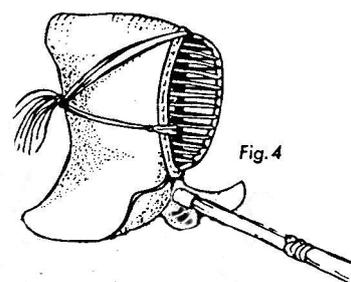
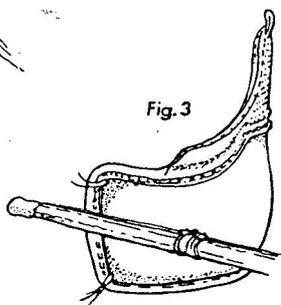
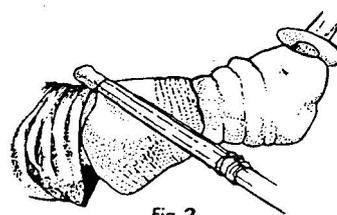
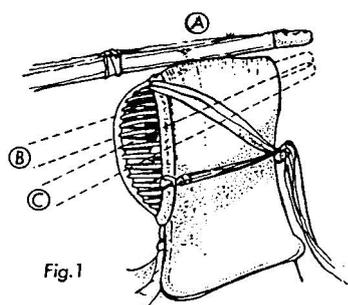
Figure 2- KOTE, a strike to the right wrist when the hands are at waist level or to either wrist when the hands are at or above chest height.

Figure 3- DO, a strike to either side of the trunk of the body.

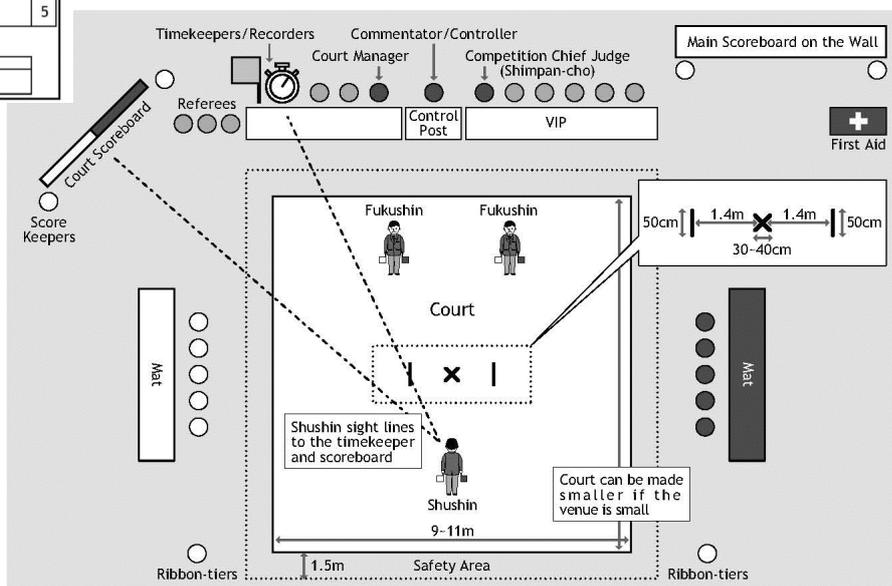
Figure 4- TSUKI, a thrust with the tip of the Shinai to the throat

(These are the only valid points.)

A match is won either when one contestant scores two points, or if only one point has been scored at the end of the match time they win the match.



Court	A				Shushin	Fukushin	Fukushin	Round #
Team Name							Team Name	
1	Name			(M)			Name 1	
2	Name	(D)					Name 2	
3	Name	● ●					Name 3	
4	Name	(H)	X	M			Name 4	
5	Name	△ K		T (M) △			Name 5	
		② Second Point	③ Third Point	① First Point				
Winners	Points	Points	Points	Points	Winners			



The diagrams shows the court layout with all the court officials and the three referees on the court and also the match scoreboard laid out for a team match showing how the points are made or lost in each match

Basic manners for competitors and spectators

- A. One should be polite and friendly to the other competitors, of course friendly rivalry is good and makes for a happy event, but do not over do it.
- B No food to be taken in to the hall, only water for re-hydration of the body.
- C Please keep well back from the courts etc. and do not cause any distraction in the hall.
- D Your equipment should be kept safely out of the way
- E When applauding do not shout, boo or whistle, please clap your hands in approval.

Shinai and clothing, control and regulation

A Shinai should be in good condition made of bamboo or synthetic

- 1 No broken, splintered or taped slats at any time
- 2 Saki-gawa should not be opening up, and tsuru should be at the right tension
- 3 Tsuba should fit tight to the top of the Tsuka
- 4 The naka-yui should be tied in the right place at $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total length
- 5 Shinai should be of the right length and weight for the age and group you are in.
- 6 No foreign bodies of any kind inside. Only the proper parts
- 7 Tsuba should not be bigger than 9 cm in diameter

B Kendo-gi and Hakama

- 1 Hakama should be clean and tidy with good creases
- 2 Hakama tied right with the front lower than the back
- 3 Kendo-gi can be white with blue pattern or blue or white, clean & tidy
- 4 Also you need a clean Tenugui every time you practice

C Bogu

- 1 Men / Kote / Do / Tare should be well kept and in good condition
- 2 Men himo in good condition and at the right length 40 cm when tied
- 3 Kote himo should not be long and hanging out, cut off or tie inside
- 4 Do should be tied at right height and himo tied correctly.

D Personal

- 1 Make sure your toenails are keep short so you do not hurt anyone
- 2 Make sure your personal hygiene is good
- 3 You are in good health before you start
- 4 Only wear foot supporters if you have medical problem and tell the shinpan
- 5 No necklaces or other jewellery to be worn, can be dangerous

How to enter and behave in the match area

- 1 Make sure you are ready to take part and you know which court you will be fighting on and you have the correct ribbon on (red or white), it is bad manners not to be ready and it slows down the event.
- 2 Do not walk across any courts, always walk around.
- 3 Walk to your starting position do not run. Go to the centre of the court in line with the X and the two starting lines on the court floor, wait here outside the court until you are both ready.
- 4 Both step in at the same time then bow at a position that is three steps from your starting line. Move in draw your shinai and go down into sonkyo and wait for the referee to call Hajime (start). If a team match, all step in at same time 1st and 2nd players in armour with shinai. At the end of the match only the last player in armour with shinai .
- 5 On winning a point a call will be made. Men-ari Kote-ari Do-ari etc.
- 6 When Yame is called you must always go back to your start position. Maybe you have won or lost a point or there was some infringement. If Wakare is called you stop where you are and part and the referee will call Hajime.
- 7 To start the match after one point is called, the referee will call Nihon-me, if both have a point each the referee will call Shobu and at the end of the match, the referee will call Shobu-ari. If it is a draw, the call is Hikiwake.
- 8 When Shobu-ari or Hikiwake is called you both go down in sonkyo. Put your shinai away, Osame-to, stand up holding your shinai at your waist, step back five small steps bow and leave the court smoothly without making any gesture to oncoming players or spectators.

What are the basic rules of Hansoku in a match?

- 1 There are quite a number of fouls (*Hansoku*) in the rules of kendo
- 2 The most common is stepping out of the court, others are laying your shinai on your opponent shoulder / dropping your shinai / touching any shinai / pushing out without making a cut / tripping / bad tsuba-zeriai / wasting time etc. These get one Hansoku awarded against you, if you receive another you lose a point.
- 3 Insulting or offensive behaviour/ drugs /prohibited equipment all carry the maximum hansoku disqualification. Shobu-ari is awarded to your opponent and you are out of the competition.

How to react to the Shinpan

- 1 You must be respectful to the shinpan referees on the court
- 2 If your opponent scores a point and you do not agree you must never show any dissatisfaction in any way to the shinpan.
- 3 **The decision of the Shinpan is final.**
- 4 This is Kendo respect, manners and tradition.

Some kendo words to help you

Arigato gozaimashita	thank you very much
Ashi	foot, leg
Ashi gamae	foot position
Ashi sabaki	foot work
Ato	backwards
Ayumi ashi	walking footwork
Batto	drawing of a sword
Bogu	kendo armor
Bokuto	wooden practice sword; used in kendo for kata and kihon
Chichigawa	leather loop to which himo is tied
Chika-ma	near interval
Chudan (no kamae)	shinai is held in front with the tip at the level of the throat or chest
Dan	level, grade.
Do	piece of kendo armor that protects the trunk also a cut to right or left
Dojo	place of practice (hall /room /etc) with wooden floor
Domo arigato gozaimashita	thank you very much indeed
Encho	extra time in a kendo match
Gedan (no kamae)	shinai is held in front with the tip at the knee level
Hajime	begin
Hakama	traditional loose pleated skirt worn by kendoka
Hansoku	a penalty incurred during a kendo match
Hara	belly, stomach
Hasso (no kamae)	holding the sword on the right side of the body with the tsuba at mouth level and the blade facing back 45°
Hasuji	line of the cut.
Himo	string, lace, tie
Hidari	left, the left side
Hiraki ashi	where it is necessary to move to right or left side of your opponents yet still remain facing them.
Issoku-ittou-no-maai	one step distance
Joseki.	high seat, see <i>kamiza</i>
Jigeiko	general practice; in kendo, usually refers to sparring practice
Jodan (no kamae)	high stance; the sword is held above one's head
Kakari geiko	continuous attacking practice, practice in which one person continuously attacks
Kiai	a shout or yell to generate power
Kamae	stance, position
Kamiza	shrine, focus of dojo
Kangeiko	special winter training
Kata	forms; in kendo, practice without bogu using bokuto in which two kendoka practice prearranged sets of attack and defense
Katana	long sword
Keiko	practice session

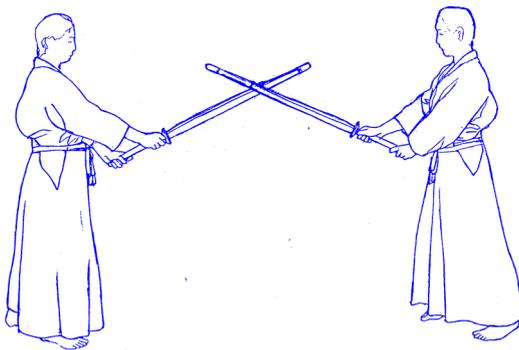
Keikogi	training jacket
Kendoka	practitioner of kendo
Kensen	sword point
Kodachi	short sword, wooden short sword used in kata
Kirikaeshi	an exercise in which one cuts to the right & left side of your opponents head whilst moving forward and backwards
kohai	one's junior
Koshi	hips, waist
Kote	glove, gauntlet; wrist; a cut or blow to the wrist
Kote uchi	a cut or blow to the wrist
Kyu	rank, grade. Kyu ranks are below dan ranks.
Mae	forward
maai	Interval between opponents, time and distance
Mengane	metal grill on front of men
Men	the helmet used in kendo; a cut or strike to the head
Men uchi	a cut or strike to the head
Metsuke	like looking at a far mountain, see everything from top to bottom
Migi	right, the right side
Mokuso	quiet contemplation. The period of meditation at the beginning and end of each practice session
Monouchi	the part of a sword blade used for cutting; approximately the quarter or third of a sword blade nearest the tip
Motodachi	the receiving person during exercises (such as kirikaeshi or kihon), the one who receives the strikes of the other.
Mune	the chest
Nakayui	leather tied around a shinai tied one 1/4 of the way from the tip.
Nihonme	"the second (point)." The command to begin fighting for the second point in a kendo match. Also, the second kata.
Okuri ashi	the basic footwork of kendo in which the lead foot is sent out, and the trailing foot then moves. The feet do not cross
Onegai shimasu	"please"; said when requesting something; usually said at the beginning of practice, or when engaging a new partner
Otagai ni rei	"bow to each other"
Rei	respect, bow, a command to bow
Reigi	courtesy, etiquette
Ritsurei	a standing bow
Sakigawa	the leather covering the tip of a shinai
Sakigomu	rubber plug inside sakigawa
Sayumen	the left and right sides of the face or head; cuts or blows to both sides of the head
Sempai	one's senior
Shidachi	partner in kata student or winners side
Shitsurei shimashita	I'm sorry
Shitsurei shimasu	excuse me
Shizentai	natural standing position

Seiretsu	"line up"; in an orderly line
Seiza	formal sitting position
Seme	to apply pressure to your opponent
Sensei	teacher, instructor;
Sensei ni rei	"bow to the instructors"
Shiai	match, a competitive bout between kendoka
Shiai geiko	match practice, practice in which the participants act as if in a tournament or match; can have referees or be self-refereed
Shiaijo	a match court.
Shinpan	a referee during a kendo match
Shinai	bamboo practice sword
Shinken	a real sword
Shobu	a command given in a match when both have a point each to restart the match
Shobu ari	"there is victory and defeat." The announcement that a kendo match is over.
Shogo	ranks outside the kyu--dan structure. They are only available to those with high dan.
Shomen	front side or wall; the front of the face or head; a cut or blow to the front or top of the head
Shomen ni rei	"bow to Joseki /Kamiza"
Sonkyo	squatting
Suburi	repeated swinging of a sword against an imaginary target
Suri ashi	sliding footwork; the general designation for the footwork used in kendo
Taikai	a tournament
Tachi	long sword; the long bokuto used in kendo kata
Tare	the apron equipment that protects the waist, hips, and thighs in kendo
Taitou	carrying the shinai as if in the belt
Tai-atari	body attack
Te no uchi	The correct way to grip the sword with your fingers
Tenugui	the towel worn on your head
Tobi komi ashi	leaping or springing footwork
Toma-maai	long distance
Tsuba	sword guard
Tsuba dome	a piece of leather or rubber to stop the tsuba from slipping down
Tsubazeriai	position where both opponents are face to face with tsubas touching
Tsugi ashi	footwork for continues cutting move forward
Tsuka	the hilt of a sword, the handle of a bokuto or shinai
Tsuki	a thrust
Tsukagawa	leather handle of shinai
Tsuru	string along back of shinai
Uchidachi	teacher side or losing side
Uchikomi geiko	practice in which one gives openings opponent then responds by striking them
Ushiro	backward stride
Waza	techniques
Yame	stop
Zanshin	state of alertness maintained after an attack
Zarei	bow from seiza



Numbers

Ichi	one
Ni	two
San	three
Shi or Yon	four
Go	five
Roku	six
Nana or Shichi	seven
Hachi	eight
Kyu	nine
Ju	ten



The Concept of Kendo

The purpose of practicing Kendo is

To mould the mind and body.

To cultivate a vigorous spirit, through correct and rigid training.

To strive for improvement in the art of Kendo.

To hold in esteem human courtesy and honour.

To associate with others with sincerity, and to 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.

The "Concept of Kendo" was established by the All Japan Kendo Federation in 1975.

The Spirit of Mumeishi Kendo Club

Hira Kareta Kokoro

Manabu Kokoro

Tomo Wo Omou Kokoro

*Open minds in learning
and
Friendship*

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By
Holt Sensei Kendo 7th Dan
Mumeishi Kendo Club International
Est. 1968
London - Melbourne - Tel-Aviv - Tehran

無名士剣道場

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Plus my family for their help

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