





The nio protectors, Agyo (right) and Ungyo (left) are named after particular sounds; Agyo who sounds “*ah*”, meaning birth or beginning, and Ungyo who sounds “*un*”, meaning death or ending. They also represent overt strength and latent strength respectively. These concepts are prevalent throughout Kendo but especially so in the Nihon Kendo no Kata.

STEPHEN D. QUINLAN

# Nihon Kendo no Kata & Kihon Bokuto Waza

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Typeset by the author using the MiKTeX implementation of Xe<sub>La</sub>TeX. The revised formatting was inspired by the works of Edward R. Tufte.



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Fourth Edition, May 2014

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## *The Concept & Purpose of Kendo*

*Concept.* To discipline the human character through the application of the principles of the sword.

*Purpose.* To mold the mind and body, to cultivate a vigorous spirit and through correct and rigid training, to strive for improvement in the art of Kendo, to hold in esteem human courtesy and honour, to associate with others with sincerity and forever pursue the cultivation of oneself. This will make one be able to love his/her country and society, to contribute to the development of culture and to promote peace and prosperity among all peoples.

## *The Mindset of Kendo Instruction*

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

Kendo is a way where the individual cultivates ones mind (the self) by aiming for shin-ki-ryoku-ichi<sup>1</sup> utilizing the shinai. The “*shinai-sword*” should be not only directed at ones opponent but also at the self. Thus, the primary aim of instruction is to encourage the unification of mind, body and shinai through training in this discipline.

*Reiho - Etiquette.* Emphasis should be placed on etiquette to encourage respect for partners, and nurture people with a dignified and humane character. Even in competitive matches, importance is placed on upholding etiquette in Kendo. The primary emphasis should thus be placed on instruction in the spirit and forms of reiho (etiquette) so that the practitioner can develop a modest attitude to life, and realize the ideal of koken-chiai<sup>2</sup>.

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

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



Figure 1: The AJKFs *concept and purpose* and the *mindset of instruction* embodies “do”.

*The Concept and Purpose of Kendo and the Mindset of Kendo Instruction* were established by the All Japan Kendo Federation in 1975 and 2007 respectively.

<sup>1</sup> Unification of mind, spirit and technique.

<sup>2</sup> The desire to achieve mutual understanding and betterment of humanity through Kendo.

# *Nihon Kendo no Kata: “The Forms of Japanese Kendo”*

## *Chapter Preview*

THIS CHAPTER WILL SERVE as an introduction to the benefits of practicing and the formalities of the **nihon kendo no kata**<sup>3</sup> (日本剣道の形, hereafter **kata**). There are ten **kata** in total, and these ten forms serve as the foundation for modern **kendo** (剣道) itself. Thus, grading requirements aside, diligent practice of the **kata** are essential to learning correct **kendo** form, technique, and meaning.

## *A Short History of the Kendo no Kata*

The following excerpt<sup>4</sup> discusses the history of the **kata**:

*“Modern Kendo developed from actual armed combat into a Kendo involving Kata (Kumi-dachi), and ultimately into the kind of Kendo practiced today, in which the Shinai has replaced the sword. In other words, from serious dueling in which the opponents protected themselves with armor and fought with swords, Kendo developed sets of Kata, which are performed without the protection of armor but which make use of the experience gained in true combat.*

*These Kata<sup>5</sup> were the object of repeated, diligent practice. As peace came to prevail in the world and as combat techniques altered entirely from those used in the past, actual-combat Kendo became impossible. Still Kendoka found that they could not be satisfied with nothing more than Kata in which no contact is made. Consequently, they evolved a Kendo in which actual strikes are possible because the weapon is the harmless Shinai instead of a sword.*

*Kata Kendo and Shinai Kendo, starting from the same point in the tradition of the martial arts, grew to perfection as they complimented and reinforced each other.*

*They have, however, come to be considered two entirely separate branches: Kata Kendo is called Koryu, the older style, Shinai Kendo is called Kendo proper. Each has its own distinct characteristics.*

*But perhaps a complete separation of the two is not so entirely desirable. At least they ought to interact on the technical level for the sake of improving and enriching the nature of Kendo as a part of physical training culture.”*

Correct and proper form is essential to learning kendo. This is why regular and diligent practice of the kata is of the utmost importance.

<sup>3</sup> Terms within this text which appear in **bold font** are entries within the glossary which begins on p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> All Japan Kendo Federation. *Nippon Kendo Kata Manual*. All Japan Kendo Federation, 2002 [ 2].

<sup>5</sup> According to John Donohue. *The Overlook Martial Arts Reader, vol 2*. The Overlook Press, Peter Mayer Publishers, Inc., 2004 [ 5], “Kata were the embodiment of a given schools hyoho/heiho, te-no-uchi, and waza. Hyoho is the strategy behind or the methodology of a given school. Te-no-uchi is the skills necessary for the application of the hyoho, and waza are the situation specific application of the hyoho and te-no-uchi. These three components are inseparable from one another; hyoho is manifested in and by waza through te-no-uchi.” This is still true of the kendo no kata; they are the collection of waza through which we learn the hyoho and te-no-uchi of modern day kendo.

## Benefits & Purpose of Practicing Kata

The following excerpt<sup>6</sup> discusses the benefits of **kata**:

<sup>6</sup> All Japan Kendo Federation [2].

*Correct directions for the datotsu. The Kata, which are executed with a wooden sword with an oval section hilt and a linear part called the Hasuji, demand strict attention to the directions of the Datotsu (Strikes or Thrusts). If these directions are wrong, the movements of the Datotsu will be retarded, and stability will be lost. Because they require careful attention to this point, Kata help develop harmonious action among the muscles. They also enable one to perceive correct Datotsu directions and to execute thrusts with stability.*

*Correct attack intervals. In competitive Kendo, so much attention is placed on striking quickly and to avoid being struck that the proper interval (Maai) between the contestants is often lost. Kata, however, are always performed with correct Datotsu no Maai, or intervals; and since all practice is executed in accordance with this interval, proper distances between the partners is clearly observed.*

*Correct body movements. In contrast with other Kendo, Kata are performed without protective coverings of any kind. They are, therefore, accompanied with a special kind of psychological tension. This mood helps ensure that the body movements are logical and effective because they are natural, accurate, and agile.*

*Sincerity inherent in martial techniques. Of course, in competitive Kendo, too, sincerity and concentration are important, but often the desire to win overrides other considerations. In Kata, on the other hand, the object of the Datotsu movements is to execute a cut (of course, no physical harm results). Furthermore, since no protective coverings are used on the body, in their uneasiness and desire to prevent themselves from being scored against, participants become more basically involved and intensely concentrated on their actions.*

*Developing kigurai. Kata are related to more than physical activity: they are in addition a pursuit of spiritual beauty. What is the spiritual beauty of Kendo? It derives from what is called Ki in Japanese. Ki is generally translated to spirit or heart, and its workings nurture a sense of dignity and strength in the mind and body. The physical movements of a man in whom the spirit of Ki is active reflect loftiness in agility and grace. For this reason the Kata require a kind of pride, or Kigurai. True progress in Kendo, too, leads to the same kind of pride that is nurtured by devoted training in the Kata.*



## The Uchidachi-Shidachi Relationship

The relationship<sup>7</sup> between **uchidachi** and **shidachi** may appear to be nothing more than “winner” and “loser”. The following sections are dedicated to giving some insight into the true relationship.

### Interpretation of “Uchidachi” and “Shidachi”

**Uchidachi.** The kanji for **uchidachi**, 打太刀, is made up of two components. The first is *uchi* (打) and the second *tachi* (太刀). *Uchi* translates to “striking” or “to strike”, but it also translates to “present” (verb), i.e. to present something to someone. *Tachi* translates into “sword” or, more specifically, “long sword”. **Uchidachi** can be interpreted as “the striking sword” or “the presenting sword”, hence the role of the teacher.

**Shidachi.** The kanji for **shidachi**, 仕太刀, has two parts. The first *shi* (仕) and the second *tachi* (太刀). *Shi* translates as “to serve” or “to do” (in a polite context), and *tachi* translates to “long sword”. **Shidachi** can be interpreted as “the serving” or “the doing sword”, hence the role of the student.

### Practicing the Kata

**Uchidachi** leads **shidachi** through each **kata** and presents them with opportunities and situations in which they must react with a certain **waza** (技). **Uchidachi** verifies each of **shidachi**’s steps, helps correct for proper **maai** (間合), and ensures that **shidachi** maintains a strong spiritual focus (**zanshin**, 残心) throughout.

**Shidachi** follows the **uchidachi**’s lead in each **kata**. The student knows intellectually how to react to the situations **uchidachi** presents through **waza**. The **kata** serve as a means to put this knowledge to use physically by performing the **waza**, and spiritually by exercising **sen**, **seme**, and **zanshin**.

The **kata** can only be learned through regular practice, but in order for the **kata** to be of value a **connection** must be developed between the **uchidachi** and the **shidachi**. Initially, the **kata** are merely “a sort of dance” with one person winning and one person losing. The **connection** between **uchidachi** and **shidachi** is, and must become, much more than this.

For beginners, this **connection** will simply be learning the steps of the **kata**, and proper **maai**. Then, with practice, learning the timing of the **waza**, learning to develop a spiritual presence in your posture and **waza**, until finally mastering the **kata**. It is at this point the **kata** can no longer be viewed as “a dance” and the **connection** between the two roles simply as “winner and loser”, but as an actual battle between two opponents. This is the ultimate goal of the **kata**; to teach us how to perform **waza** correctly and efficiently against our opponent in a calm and accurate fashion, but with the spirit and presence of two people who are striking and reacting as if their lives depended on it.

<sup>7</sup> The relationship between the **uchidachi** and **shidachi** is difficult to fully understand, especially in modern times as the type of respect and devotion usually associated with it is rarely seen.

The **uchidachi**, with the intent of guiding the **shidachi**, strikes properly, accurately, at the correct time, and with full spirit in order to present the **shidachi** with an opportunity to practice their **waza**. By doing so, he fulfills his duty as teacher.

The **shidachi** is doing each of the **waza** in the **kata**, but by respectfully accepting the opportunities given to him by the **uchidachi**, he is also serving his commitment and obligation as student to his teacher.

There are different explanations as to the reason behind the steps in the **kata**. One is **uchidachi** gives opportunities to **shidachi** *on purpose*. The other is **uchidachi** is *forced* to move due to **shidachi**’s pressure. **Uchidachi** leads **shidachi** through **kata**, but how does this correspond to **shidachi** forcing **uchidachi** to move? The key is that **uchidachi** must *verify* the **shidachi**’s response before continuing. By verifying their response the **uchidachi** teaches **shidachi** how an opponent outside of the **kata** will react to this pressure. **Uchidachi** reacts in the sense of a teacher verifying a student’s progress and continuing with the lesson.

The following excerpt<sup>8</sup> elaborates on the **connection** between **uchidachi** and **shidachi**.

*“The heart of bujutsu is rei. The responsibility of a teacher is to communicate this to students. If this communication fails, students can develop incorrect attitudes and the true meaning of training is lost. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of abuse of power in Japanese budo<sup>9</sup> today. In my opinion few teachers are teaching the principles of budo correctly. Rei in budo has become very artificial, resembling the old-style Japanese military hierarchy. The true meaning of rei is no longer expressed. We seem to be preserving only the worst parts of Japanese traditions and culture, and we need to consider ways to change this situation.*

*Bujutsu leads to rei. The instructor ideally behaves as an exemplar to lead students toward something higher. Rei is an expression of humility toward that higher existence. But some people, as they develop their skills and achieve higher rank, dismiss what they ought to have learned about rei. Those who fail to work as diligently to improve the spirit as they do to improve their techniques are likely to forget the proper humility of true rei. They are apt to become overconfident, proud, and patronizing. Spiritual development and technical development are entirely different things and there is not necessarily any relationship between them. Training in jojutsu, for example, has a wonderful quality because it can result in both sorts of development; spiritual growth leads to technical growth and vice versa. Development is not merely a matter of technique. However, if physical techniques are taught improperly or superficially, students will become confused. There will be even greater misunderstanding if the focus is only on the process of polishing techniques. We must never lose sight of the intent to ‘correct and improve the spirit.’ The only way to ensure this is to study under a master teacher.*

*In general, people misunderstand what a master teacher is. They can become confused, equating the idea of a master with that of an instructor or a senior. Unfortunately, as ones skill level increases, so, often, does the size of ones ego. Too frequently, younger people who are of high rank or who have received a license or scroll assume that they are qualified to be a teacher just because they have instructor certification, own a dojo, or have students. It is a grave error to believe that a person is a master teacher just because of a high rank or license.*

<sup>8</sup> Tsuneo Nishioka. *Uchidachi and Shidachi*. From the book ‘Sword and Spirit’. Koryu Books, 1999 [ 11].

<sup>9</sup> Budo and bujutsu both translate to “military arts”, however budo refers to the spiritual side (improving oneself and spirit) while bujutsu refers to the technical side (mastering combat techniques). The author of this article considers the two as different aspects of a single, greater whole.

*Once, my teacher, Shimizu Takaji Sensei (1896-1978), told me not to copy the jo practiced by his junior fellow student Otofujii Ichizo Sensei. Unless one carefully reflects on what Shimizu Sensei really meant, this statement can be easily misunderstood. He knew that there were some differences between his way of using jo and tachi, and the way in which Otofujii Sensei used these weapons. Even in kata bujutsu, it is very natural for there to be differences in the form. That's because different people have different levels of technical understanding and different mindsets. This leads them to make movements in slightly different ways and they pass on these individual characteristics in their teaching. Shimizu Sensei was afraid that young students would notice these differences, get confused or suspicious, and think that one way or the other was wrong. He seemed to have been concerned about the inevitable errors that result when a student is unable or unwilling to follow just one teacher. He urged me to follow a single teacher, to the greatest extent possible, and to avoid confusing myself unnecessarily by looking around at other teachers.*

*Having more than one teacher can create serious problems in your training. On the other hand, insisting that students blindly 'follow one and only one teacher' can result in separatist cliques and prevent students of different teachers from being able to practice together. This distasteful situation still occurs in the Japanese martial arts world. The only solution is to wait for the spiritual growth of both the teacher and the disciple; then students can train under a single teacher and still benefit from interacting with students from other groups.*

*This is why an understanding of rei is so essential to the process of spiritual growth in bujutsu. One of the most profound expressions of rei lies in the interaction between uchidachi, the one who receives the technique, and shidachi, the one who does the technique. Unfortunately, even teachers often misunderstand the subtleties of uchidachi and shidachi in kata training. They fail to pass on to their students the difference in intent inherent in these two roles. Particularly in the classical traditions, the roles of uchidachi and shidachi are quite distinctive. Each has its own unique psychological viewpoint. It is essential that this distinct quality always be maintained. I believe that the difference in these two roles is the defining characteristic of kata training. Recently, I've come to the realization that it is not even worth training unless both partners properly understand this.*

*When an outsider watches kata, it appears that uchidachi loses and shidachi wins. This is intentional. But there's much more to it than that. Uchidachi must have the spirit of a nurturing parent. Uchidachi leads shidachi by providing a true attack; this allows shidachi to learn correct body displacement, combative distancing, proper spirit, and the perception of opportunity. A humble spirit is as necessary as correct technique for uchidachi. Deceit, arrogance, and a patronizing attitude must never be allowed in practice. Uchidachi's mission is vital. In the past, this role was only performed by senior practitioners who were capable of performing accurate technique and who pos-*

*essed the right spirit and understanding of the role. Uchidachi must provide an example of clean, precise cutting lines and correct targeting, and must also convey focused intensity and an air of authority.*

*If uchidachi is the parent or teacher, then shidachi is the child or disciple. The goal is to acquire the skills presented by uchidachi's technique. Unfortunately, students often act as though they want to test their skills against those of the higher-ranked uchidachi. They consider this competition to be their practice. In fact, this leads to neither better technique, nor greater spiritual development, because the correct relationship between uchidachi and shidachi has been obscured. It is the repetition of the techniques in this parent/child or senior/junior relationship that allows for the growth of the spirit through the practice of technique.*

*The roles of uchidachi as senior and shidachi as junior are preserved regardless of the actual respective experience levels of the pair. Kata must be practiced so that trainees learn both to give and to receive. This is what makes technical improvement and spiritual development possible. Unfortunately, in jo practice, people sometimes think that they practice both roles merely to memorize the sequential movements of the two different weapons, tachi and jo. There are even some instructors who teach that the aim of Shinto Muso-ryu jojutsu is to learn how to defeat a sword with a stick. This is an error. If it continues, kata bujutsu may die out, because both the technique and the spirit of uchidachi will not improve.*

*These days there are fewer people who can perform the role of uchidachi correctly. I believe that bujutsu evolved into budo only by maintaining the idea of uchidachi and shidachi. This idea is a fundamental characteristic of the classical bujutsu. Although the Japanese arts, such as kenjutsu, iaijutsu, and jojutsu, have been transformed from 'jutsu' into 'do', if the proper roles in training are not preserved, the 'do' arts will veer off in the wrong direction. Obviously, there is a difference between attempting to preserve the proper distinction between uchidachi and shidachi yet not achieving perfection, and a complete lack of effort or understanding about the distinction. The existence of the intent or the quality of the intent is manifested in daily practice and actions. Those who have the eyes and experience to see can tell the difference.*

*However, my concern is that these days fewer people understand this concept. In the future there will be fewer still. People seem no longer to recognize that the existence of uchidachi and shidachi is the essence of budo training.*

*All things considered, I am convinced that the most important things I have learned from Shinto Muso-ryu and Shimizu Takaji Sensei are the roles of uchidachi and shidachi in kata. There is no way to transmit the kata of the Japanese classical traditions without a proper understanding of this spirit of giving and receiving. It is not right for seniors in the uchidachi role to mistreat, bully, or torment their juniors. On the contrary, their job is to guide and educate. In the same sense, it is also terrible to see shidachi assume an attitude that is essentially patricidal, and attempt to destroy the uchidachi. I can only say that such a spirit should never exist.*

*Shimizu Sensei always said, 'You must train with me' [i.e. directly with your own teacher]. He constantly took the role of uchidachi. Even with beginners, he never relaxed his attention. He was always serious with everyone. He was never arrogant and never lorded it over another person. I believe that this attitude is the most important teaching of kata bujutsu, and Shimizu Sensei's training was a wonderful example. This spirit is difficult to nurture, not only in jojutsu but in other situations as well. It is entirely different from a senior student or teacher showing off his skills to his juniors by treating them with arrogance and condescension. It is so easy to become trapped in a cycle of interaction that causes shidachi to react by attempting to compete with uchidachi. The guidance of a master teacher is absolutely essential to avoid this situation.*

*Uchidachi teaches shidachi by sacrificing himself, training as if he were going to be killed at any moment; this self-sacrifice embodies the spirit of teachers and parents. Kata training is of no use without understanding this. It is this spirit that allows shidachi to grow and polish his or her own spirit. Kata bujutsu teaches neither victory nor defeat, but rather how to nurture others and pull them to a higher level. That is budo."*

### *Performing as Uchidachi & Shidachi*

As **uchidachi** your goal is to present **shidachi** opportunities to practice **waza**. **Uchidachi** teaches **shidachi** by controlling pace, distance, attacking with strong spirit, and verifying **shidachi**'s spirit before proceeding.

**Shidachi** uses the opportunities presented by **uchidachi** to practice **waza**. **Uchidachi** is the teacher and you must *follow* him; wait for them to verify the steps you have done before continuing.

### *Key Ideas for Uchidachi & Shidachi*

**Breathing.** **Uchidachi** and **shidachi** should inhale as they assume their **kamae** and exhale until **hodoku**, breathing in unison.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> All Japan Kendo Federation [2].

**Pace.** **Uchidachi** sets the pace of the **kata** and is the one who moves first.

**Maai.** **Uchidachi** corrects for distance if needed, never **shidachi**.

**Verify.** **Uchidachi** must verify **shidachi**'s **zanshin**, **kamae**, **maai**, posture, spirit, etc... at *each step* of the **kata** *before* continuing.

**Patience.** **Shidachi** must be patient and let the **uchidachi** lead.

**Spirit.** **Shidachi** must entice **uchidachi** to act or continue.

**Beginning.** **Tachi** (太刀) **kata** begin when **uchidachi** finds a chance to strike, **kodachi** (小太刀) **kata** begin when **shidachi** threatens with the **kodachi**.

This short paragraph on when the **kata** "begins" encodes a lot of information relating to both the **uchidachi**-**shidachi** relation and to the **riai** (p. 59) of the **kata**.

# Kata Conventions & Formalities

## Kata Conventions

**Footwork.** All footwork in the **kata** is to be **suri-ashi** (摺り足).

**Kiai.** **Uchidachi's** **kiai** (気合い) is “Yah!”, **shidachi's** is “Toh!”.

## Issoku Itto no Maai & Yokote-Kosa

There are two different **maai** used in the **kata**: **issoku itto no maai** (一足一刀の間合) and what is referred to as **yokote-kosa** (横手交差).

**Issoku itto no maai.** This is used when **uchidachi** and **shidachi** meet to perform a **kata's** **waza**. For **kata** this is usually when the **bokuto** (木刀) cross at the **monouchi** (物打) just behind the **kensen** (剣先). It must be noted that **issoku itto no maai** is different for everybody and thus must be learned by the individual through practice. The position given here is a generalized approximation to be used as a starting point.

**Yokote-kosa.** **Yokote-kosa** is used when **uchidachi** and **shidachi** meet and will be performing *formality based actions*. This formal **maai** is when the **bokuto** meet with the **yokote** (横手) crossing.

## Specifications of the Bokuto

	Total Length of Bokuto	Length of Tsuka
<b>Tachi</b>	Approx. 102cm	Approx. 24cm
- <i>Monouchi</i>	Approx. 20cm from the tip downward	
<b>Kodachi</b>	Approx. 55cm	Approx. 14cm
- <i>Monouchi</i>	N/A	

## Bokuto Components

The components of the **bokuto** are shown in figure 4.

According to Paul Budden. *Looking at a Far Mountain: A Study of Kendo Kata*. Tuttle Publishing, 2000 [ 3], “as recorded in the minutes of the 1932 Dai Nihon Kendo no Kata committee of inquiry, the kiai decided on were “yah” and “toh” as they correspond to the breathing of ‘a’ and ‘un’; positive and negative. Traditionally ‘yah’ shows that one is mentally prepared and ‘toh’ is made at the moment of counter attack.”



Figure 2: Issoku itto no maai.

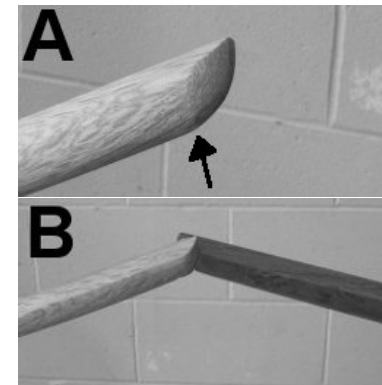


Figure 3: (A): Yokote. (B): yokote-kosa.

Table 1: Bokuto specifications.

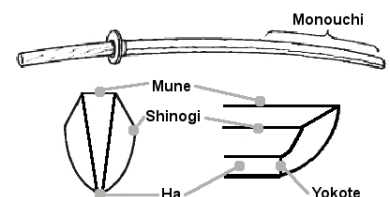


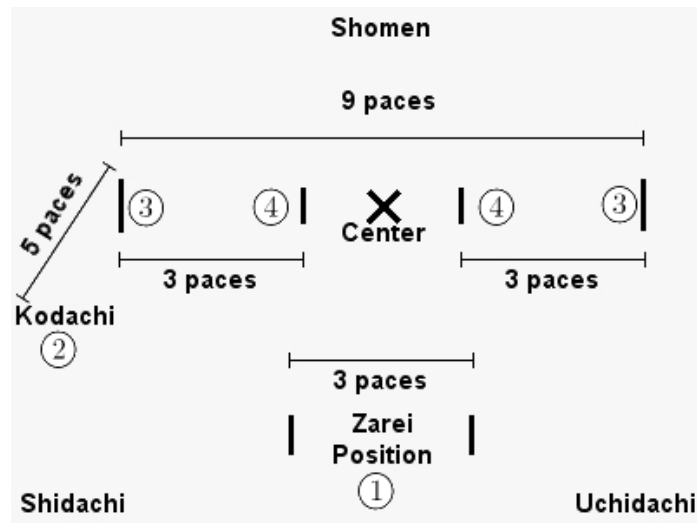
Figure 4: Components of the bokuto.

## Kata Formalities

The following refer to numbered positions in figure 5 on p. 13.

### Formalities Prior to the Kata

**Kata initiation.** Hold the **bokuto** (**shidachi** holds both **tachi** and **kodachi**) in your right hand. Assume **seiza** (正座), **bokuto** on your right, **tsuba** (鐙) level with your knee, and **za rei** (座礼) to your partner at ①. Stand up, **bokuto** in your right, and advance to the starting positions at ③. Before reaching ③, **shidachi** sets the **kodachi** down at ②. Turn toward the **shomen** (正面) and perform a 30° **ritsu rei** (立礼).



The **za rei** at ① and movement to the starting positions at ③ portion of **kata** formality are often not done regularly in order to allow for the space and time restrictions of **dojo** (道場) practices. Usually **kendoka** (剣道家) will simply start **kata** practice at ③ and do the formalities indicated on p.14.

If the **kendoka** carry a **kodachi** with them, however, it is set down at ② before meeting their partner at ③.

Full kata formalities are sometimes cut short during practice in the dojo simply for time constraints. One should not assume that the full formalities are not practiced or that they are only important during demonstrations or gradings.

When **shidachi** is in **seiza** with both the **tachi** and **kodachi**, the **kodachi** is placed on the ground closest to the thigh. The blades of both **tachi** and **kodachi** must face toward the **shidachi**.

Figure 5: Formal layout and positions for the kata.



Figure 6: Holding the tachi and kodachi. The kodachi is held by the thumb and index finger and the tachi is held by the middle, ring, and little fingers.

## Beginning the Kata

These formalities are done at the start of the **tachi** and **kodachi kata**.

*Formal beginning.* From the starting positions<sup>11</sup>, perform a 15° **ritsu rei** to your partner. Bring both hands to the front center of your body, **tsukagashira** (柄頭) at approximately chest level, and switch the **bokuto** to your left hand. Assume **tai-to** (帯刀). Take three steps forward using sliding **ayumi-ashi** (歩み足) to ④. On the third step, draw your **bokuto** and assume **sonkyo** (蹲踞). Stand up into **ai-chudan** (相中段). Simultaneously break (figure 7 p. 14) your **kamae** (構え) and take five steps back, using sliding **ayumi-ashi**, to ③. Assume **ai-chudan**.

### 👉 Key Points:

1. Breaking **kamae**, or **hodoku**<sup>12</sup> (解く), refers to the **uchidachi** and **shidachi** lowering their **kensen** to knee level and turning the blade slightly to the left. The **kensen** must remain in a position between the width of ones shoulders.
2. You must always use sliding **ayumi-ashi** throughout the **kata**; never step, or worse, “stomp” with your feet.
3. Draw the **bokuto** simultaneously with your partner as you assume **sonkyo**.



Even though the movements and outcome are known in advance, the **kata** still represent a battle between opponents. Keeping this in mind, **hodoku** is not a signal of ones defeat, but a mutual agreement between opponents to end the current practice and move on to the next. Moving the **kensen** far outside the width of your shoulders degrades the connection between you and your opponent, breaking the feeling of tension that naturally comes from a sense of mutual fighting spirit. While practicing the **kata**, during **rei**, **sonkyo**, and even **hodoku**, maintain your spirit throughout. This is the essence of proper execution of the **kata**. See All Japan Kendo Federation [2].

<sup>11</sup> The **kata** begin at these positions (9 paces apart) as this is the distance at which one begins to feel threatened by a real blade. Information courtesy of Sensei M. Raymond.

Figure 7: (Left) Correct and (Right) incorrect **hodoku** positions.

<sup>12</sup> **Hodoku** is the verb meaning “to loosen”. In all of the **kata** descriptions, the term **hodoku** is used exclusively to reference this breaking of **kamae**. Also referred to as **kamae otoku**.

The **bokuto** (and **katana**) have an oval shaped handle instead of the round handle of most **shinai**. If one holds the oval handle properly and does not adjust, or open, or loosen their grip in some manner when taking **hodoku**, the natural range of motion of the wrists makes it difficult not to assume the proper **hodoku** position.



## *Kamae*

This section briefly describes the **kamae** used in the kata.

### *Chudan no Kamae* (中段の構え)



Figure 8: Chudan no kamae. All kata begin and end with chudan no kamae. In chudan the left hand is one fists width in front of the navel and the kensen is directed toward the eyes or throat of the opponent. When changing from chudan to a kamae which requires ones feet to be altered, the feet ought to begin moving before the kensen.

### *Jodan no Kamae* (上段の構え)



Figure 9: (Left to Right) Migi (右) and hidari (左) jodan no kamae both from the front and side respectively. When assuming migi jodan, raise your weapon straight over your head at a 30-45 degree angle. When assuming hidari jodan, step forward with your left foot and then bring your weapon overhead at a 30-45 degree angle. In hidari jodan, the weapon is also angled to your right 30-45 degrees.

*Gedan no Kamae* (下段の構え)



Figure 10: *Gedan no kamae*. When assuming *gedan* lower your *kensen* such that it points toward your opponents knees.

*Hasso no Kamae* (八相の構え)



Figure 11: *Hasso no kamae*. When assuming *hasso* step forward with your left foot and bring your weapon up and over to the right shoulder. The weapon has the same angle as *hidari jodan*.

*Wakigamae* (脇構え)



Figure 12: *Wakigamae*. When assuming *wakigamae* step backward with your right foot and bring your right hand up and over your right hip. Be sure your weapon is hidden behind your body.

*Seigan no Kamae* (正眼の構え)



Figure 13: *Seigan no kamae*. This form of *chudan* is used against a *jodan* player. The left hand is one fist width above and two fists in front of the navel with the *kensen* directed toward the opponents left *kote*. Compare this to *chudan* which has the left hand in line with and only one fist in front of the navel with the *kensen* directed toward the eyes or throat of the opponent.

*Hanmi Kamae* (半身構え)



Figure 14: (Left) Chudan hanmi v.s. jodan, (Centre) chudan hanmi v.s. gedan, and (Right) gedan hanmi no kamae. Against jodan the kensen is level with the opponents face, against gedan it is level with the chest. In gedan hanmi the kensen is at knee level and angled slightly to the right representing mugamae (無構え).

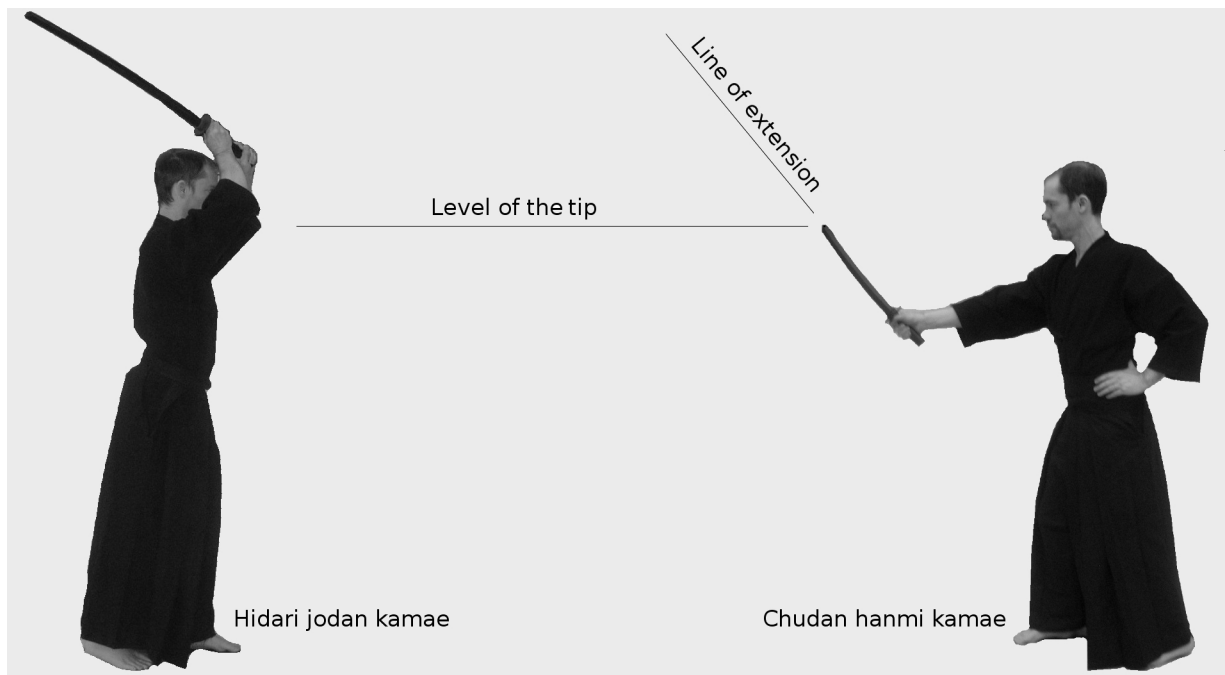


Figure 15: When assuming a hanmi kamae the kensen of the kodachi is level with the target area instead of its line of extension being aimed toward it. As shown here for kodachi kata #1, the kensen is level with the face of uchidachi instead of its line of extension being aimed toward it.



Demonstration of the precursor to the Nihon Kendo no Kata, the Dai Nihon Teikoku Kendo Kata (Great Imperial Japan Kendo Kata), by kendo masters (left) Hakudo Nakayama, Hanshi, 10<sup>th</sup> dan and (right) Takano Sasaburo, Hanshi, 10<sup>th</sup> dan before the emperor of Japan in 1929. Both men contributed to the creation of the standardized Nihon Kendo no Kata in 1917 with the official, finalized versions being published in 1933.



Kodachi Kata: Ipponme. (Left) Takano Sasaburo, Hanshi, 10<sup>th</sup> dan (uchidachi) and (Right) Hakudo Nakayama, Hanshi, 10<sup>th</sup> dan (shidachi).

# Tachi Kata: “Long Sword Forms”

## Chapter Preview

THE LONG SWORD FORMS, or **tachi kata**, refer to the first seven forms from the **nihon kendo no kata** in which both the **uchidachi** and **shidachi** use the **tachi**. This chapter will outline the steps for each of these **kata**. The details are by no means complete, but should be more than enough to serve as a reference. Following each **kata** is a list of key points which indicate common errors **kendoka** are likely to make, or important points on which one should focus.

The **tachi kata** can be subdivided into two groups.<sup>13</sup> The first, containing **kata** 1-3, were designed specifically for use in schools to teach the notion of **shu-ha-ri** (守破離). The second group, containing **kata** 4-7, embodied the concept of **in-yo** (陰陽) as well as more complex ideas from Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

After the final (seventh) **tachi kata**, the finishing formalities are outlined for where only the **tachi kata** are being performed, or where the **kodachi kata**, p.39, are to follow immediately.

<sup>13</sup> Yoshihiko Inoue. *Kendo Kata: Essence and Application*. Translated by Alex Bennett. Kendo World Productions, 2003 [ 8].

In the **tachi kata**, both opponents face off using the long sword. The **uchidachi** presents **shidachi** with various opportunities or reacts in particular ways to allow the **shidachi** to practice a number of different **waza**.



Figure 16: Dual tachi: kendo no kata 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

*Ipponme: “The First” (Shu)***Uchidachi**

1. From **chudan** assume **hidari jodan**.
2. Starting with your left foot take three steps forward such that you end up at **issoku itto no maai**.
3. With strong **kiai** step forward with your right foot and strike **shomen** with a feeling of **sutemi** (捨て身); try to cut through the **shidachi** entirely.
4. Your strike has missed and your **bokuto** is now below the **gedan** level, your torso leaning forward slightly, approximately 10°-15°.
5. Verify **shidachi**'s strike then try to escape, taking a small step back. Maintain the bend in your hips.
6. Try to escape again taking one more small step back.
7. Verify **shidachi**'s **zanshin**, straighten your torso, and assume **chudan**.
8. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

**Shidachi**

1. From **chudan** assume **migi jodan**.
2. Starting with your right foot, take three steps forward.
3. Dodge **uchidachi**'s strike by taking a small step back raising your hands up and back. Maintain the **jodan** angle.
4. Immediately step forward and strike the **uchidachi**'s **shomen** with strong **kiai**.
5. Show alertness and exert control over the **uchidachi**, hindering their escape, by lowering your **bokuto** to the bridge of their nose.
6. Prevent the **uchidachi**'s escape by stepping forward on your left foot and assuming **hidari jodan**; exert **zanshin**.
7. As **uchidachi** returns to **chudan**, step back on your left foot and assume **ai-chudan**.
8. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

According to Jinichi Tokeshi. *Kendo: Elements, Rules, and Philosophy*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2003 [14]: “The first tachi kata teaches ‘gi’ and ‘sen’. Gi translates to ‘honesty, virtue, conviction, faith, justice, truth, and power’. Sen is an abbreviation for sente which means “initiative” (of attack). Inoue [8] translates gi as righteousness and indicates that this kata represents ‘shu’ in shu-ha-ri.

Righteousness v.s. Justice

Other interpretations this kata are that **uchidachi** represents gi as “righteousness” and **shidachi** represents gi as “justice”, giving us the scenario of “righteousness v.s. justice”. This extends the meaning of the kata to a much larger scale, i.e., the ethics of an entire society. What constitutes as righteous can be interpreted on a personal level, differing from individual to individual depending on their singular points of view, motivations, and morals. “Justice” however must serve the society as a whole and is driven by the society's ethical beliefs. Hence **shidachi** must overcome **uchidachi**.



👉 Key Points:

- After step 2 **uchidachi** and **shidachi** should be at **issoku itto no maai**, i.e., if the **shidachi** does not dodge the **uchidachi**'s strike in step 3 they will be hit by the bokuto. *This is critical.*
- In steps 3 and 4 the **uchidachi**'s eye contact with **shidachi** is never broken.
- In step 3 for **shidachi** it is critical that you perform **nuki (抜き) waza** correctly; don't just step back, move your hands as well.
- **Shidachi**'s **nuki waza** and counter attack should be one motion.
- In step 6 for **shidachi** assume **jodan** with a strong presence. This is what stops **uchidachi** from continuing their escape attempts.



Figure 17: Ipponme: first kata.

*Nihonme: “The Second” (Ha)***Uchidachi**

1. Assume **chudan**.
2. Starting with your right foot, take three steps to **issoku itto no maai**.
3. On your right foot, step forward and strike **shidachi**'s **kote** (小手) with strong **kiai**.
4. **Shidachi**, after dodging your strike, counter attacks.
5. **Shidachi** shows **zanshin**.
6. Verify **shidachi**'s **zanshin**, step back one step, assume **chudan**.
7. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

**Shidachi**

1. Assume **chudan**.
2. Starting with your right foot, take three steps forward.
3. Dodge the **uchidachi**'s **kote** strike by lowering your **bokuto** to **gedan** and, starting with your left foot, step to your rear left.
4. Step forward immediately with your right foot, and with strong **kiai** strike the **uchidachi**'s **kote**.
5. After the counter strike, exert **zanshin**. Your **kensen** should be on the centerline of the **uchidachi** while still maintaining the position of your **kote** strike.
6. In response to **uchidachi** stepping back angle your **kensen** to their throat, step back into **ai-chudan**.
7. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back the starting position.

According to Tokeshi [14]: “Nihonme teaches us ‘jin’. Jin is translated as ‘benevolence’, ‘endurance’, or ‘patience’. Thus although the **shidachi** is capable of fatally striking the **uchidachi**, he strikes the **kote** instead and spares his life.” Inoue [8] indicates that this kata represents ‘ha’ in *shu-ha-ri*.

 **Key Points:**


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- **Uchidachi** must complete the cut made toward the **kote**. The blade of the **bokuto** should be stopped at a position below where the **kote** of the **shidachi** was and parallel to the floor.
- The dodging/counter attacking motion of the **shidachi** is two steps, but it should be smooth and quick.
- In step 4 the **shidachi** should assume **migi jodan** as he raises up to strike.

- In step 5 the **shidachi's kensen** should point toward the centerline of the **uchidachi** after the **kote** strike. **Shidachi** changing their angle toward **uchidachi** by too much, by dodging too far to the left during the **nuki waza**, will end up causing the **kensen** to point at **uchidachi's** left shoulder or even farther outside their body upon striking **kote**.
- In step 6 as **shidachi** steps back into **chudan** be sure to control the **uchi-dachi** by directing your **kensen** toward their eyes.



Figure 18: Nihonme: second kata.

## Sanbonme: “The Third” (Ri)

## Uchidachi

1. From **chudan no kamae** assume **gedan no kamae**.
2. Starting with your right foot take three steps forward to **issoku itto no maai**.
3. Raise your **kensen** up from **gedan** to **chudan**.
4. Before reaching **ai-chudan**, turn your **bokuto** slightly to the left, step forward with your right foot, and with strong **kiai** thrust to the **shidachi**'s solar plexus<sup>14</sup>.
5. **Shidachi**, after parrying, immediately counter attacks. Parry the **shidachi**'s thrust.
  - Step back, starting on your right foot, and, in a small circular motion, bring your **bokuto** under and to the left of the **shidachi**'s **bokuto**.
  - Deflect the **shidachi**'s thrust with the right **shinogi** (鑓) of your **bokuto**, making sure your **kensen** finishes centered at **shidachi**'s throat.

## Shidachi

1. From **chudan no kamae** assume **gedan no kamae**.
2. Starting with your right foot take three steps forward.
3. Responding to **uchidachi**, raise your **kensen** from **gedan** to **ai-chudan**.
4. **Nayashi ire-zuki** (萎し入れ突き): parry **uchidachi**'s thrust.
  - Step back, starting with your left foot, and turn your **bokuto** slightly to the left. Pull your hands back and use the left **shinogi** to parry the **uchidachi**'s thrust by pushing their **bokuto** slightly down and left, making sure **uchidachi**'s **kensen** is outside of your body. The **uchidachi**'s blade is now **dead** allowing a counter attack.
5. Immediately counter thrust.
  - Straighten your blade, step forward with your right foot, and thrust to **uchidachi**'s chest.

According to Tokeshi [14]: “Sanbonme teaches ‘yu’ or ‘courage’. It also shows us ‘kuraizume’ which means ‘to seize with superior poise.’” All Japan Kendo Federation [2] defines *kuraizume* as “The feeling of walking forward, intent on an unstoppable thrust.” Inoue [8] indicates that this kata represents ‘ri’ in *shu-ha-ri*.

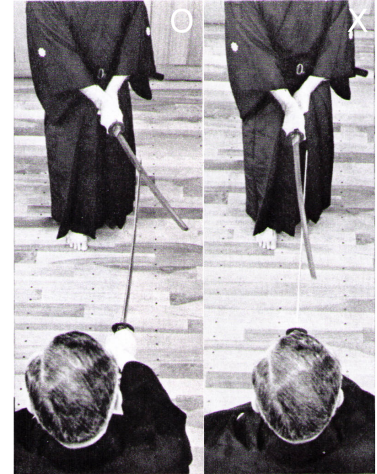


Figure 19: From Noboru Shigeoka. *Detailed Explanation of Japanese Kendo Kata* (詳解日本剣道形). 1st Edition. Ski Journal Limited, 1977 [13]. (Left) correct and (Right) incorrect parry of the **uchidachi**'s thrust. **Shidachi** (Top) must be sure to actually move **uchidachi**'s **kensen** such that its line of extension is *outside* of the **shidachi**'s body. This renders the **uchidachi**'s weapon “dead”, putting **uchidachi** on the defensive, allowing the **shidachi** to press forward with a counter attack.

<sup>14</sup> “Solar plexus” refers to the soft, depressed area just below the sternum.

**Uchidachi**


6. The **shidachi** threatens your **maai** with his **kensen** by advancing forward again. Parry the second thrust of the **shidachi**.
  - Step back, starting with your left foot, and, in a small circular motion, bring your **bokuto** under and to the right of the **shidachi**'s **bokuto**.
  - Deflect the **shidachi**'s thrust using the left **shinogi**. Again, be sure your **kensen** finishes centered on **shidachi**'s throat.
7. Lower your **bokuto** down and toward the right. **Shidachi** takes advantage of the opening; take three steps back attempting to escape.
8. **Shidachi** exerts **zanshin**.
9. Verify **shidachi**'s **zanshin** then raise your **bokuto** back up to **chudan**.
10. You're in **ai-chudan** with the **shidachi**. Take three steps forward.
11. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

**Shidachi**

6. Pressure the **uchidachi** with a thrust by stepping forward with your left foot. Thrust by returning to **chudan** and stepping forward powerfully, not by extending the arms (**kuraizume**, 位詰め).
7. **Uchidachi** creates an opening. Step forward confidently three more steps, pressing into **uchidachi**'s **maai**. With each step, raise the **kensen** slightly until on the third step it is between **uchidachi**'s eyes. When pressuring **uchidachi** in this manner (**kuraizume**) the **kensen** is angled upward while holding **chudan**, not by extending the arms.
8. Show **zanshin**.
9. As **uchidachi** begins to raise his **bokuto**, lower yours and take five steps back. By the end of the second step you should be in **ai-chudan** with **uchidachi**.
10. In **ai-chudan** continue moving back.
11. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.



Figure 20: Movement of the uchidachi's feet during their retreat, steps 5 through 7. Foot movement 1 corresponds to the uchidachi's step 5 and the assumption of a hidari shizentai and foot movement 2 corresponds to the uchidachi's step 6 and the assumption of a migi shizentai. Foot movements 3, 4, & 5 correspond to the uchidachi's step 7.

 **Key Points:**

- In step 3, the **uchidachi** and **shidachi** must raise their **kensen** maintaining a sense of "tension".
- **Shidachi**'s steps 4 and 5 should be one smooth motion.

- In steps 5 and 6 the **uchidachi** should turn his body slightly but naturally, bringing the shoulder corresponding to his rear foot back slightly more than the other (**migi** and **hidari shizentai** (自然体)).
- In step 6, the **shidachi**'s thrust is not done by extending the arms but by moving forward from the hips.
- In step 7, **shidachi** raises the **kensen** from chest level to eye level as they move forward,<sup>15</sup> not at the end of the movement or after they have stopped moving.

<sup>15</sup> Inoue [8].



Figure 21: Sanbonme: third kata.

## Yonhonme: "The Fourth" (In-Yo)

## Uchidachi

1. From **chudan** assume **hasso no kamae**.
2. Starting with your left foot, take three steps forward.
3. Raise your **bokuto** to **hidari jodan** and stepping forward with your right foot strike **men**.
4. Upon **ai-uchi** your **kensen** should be at eye level, and crossing the **shidachi's** at the **monouchi**.
5. Lower your **bokuto** to **chudan** with the feeling of **shinogi o kezuru**; "shaving" the **shinogi** (鑄を削る) against the **shidachi's**. Adjust the **maai** if too close to the **shidachi**.
6. After verifying **ai-chudan** with the **shidachi**, turn your **bokuto** slightly to the left, step forward on your right foot and with strong **kiai** thrust at the **shidachi's** right lung. **Uchidachi** should lean forward slightly upon thrusting and maintain his gaze on the **shidachi** throughout.
7. **Shidachi** shows **zanshin**.
8. Verify **shidachi's** **zanshin**, then step back and assume **chudan**.

## Shidachi

1. From **chudan** assume **wakigamae**.
2. Starting with your left foot, take three steps forward.
3. In response to **uchidachi's** **jodan** and cut, assume **hidari jodan**, step forward with your right foot and strike **men** ending in **ai-uchi** (相打ち) with **uchidachi**.
4. Upon **ai-uchi** your **kensen** should be at eye level, and crossing the **uchidachi's** at the **monouchi**.
5. Lower your **bokuto** to **chudan** with the feeling of **shinogi o kezuru**.
6. Parry **uchidachi's** thrust and counter attack:
  - Push your left hand straight up tipping your **kensen** down to the right, and parry the **uchidachi's** thrust with the left **shinogi**.
  - While parrying, **hiraki-ashi** (開き足) to the front left.
  - Complete your step, bring the **bokuto** above your head and with **kiai** strike the **uchidachi's** **men**.
7. Exert **zanshin**.
8. Step back and to the right and assume **ai-chudan**.

According to Tokeshi [14]: "This kata teaches the concept of *tsubazeriai*." This refers to the idea of "shinogi o kezuru", or "shaving the shinogi" as one fights for center to both fight for and guard against an opening for attack. Inoue [8] indicates that these two kamae correspond to 'in' and 'yo' or 'yin' and 'yang'. Kata 4 through 7 all incorporate the concepts of 'in' and 'yo'.




Figure 22: Movement of the feet for uchidachi (Top) and shidachi (Bottom) during the thrust, parry, and counter attack, step 6.

## Uchidachi

9. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back using sliding **ayumi-ashi** to the starting position.

## Shidachi

9. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back using sliding **ayumi-ashi** to the starting position.

 Key Points:

- In step 3 **uchidachi** and **shidachi** should cut straight at men, not angled trying to hit into the opponents **bokuto**. The two **bokuto** should connect at the **monouchi** at about eye level.
- In step 5 **uchidachi** and **shidachi** should both be fighting for center. The sense of “combative tension” must not be relaxed while lowering the **to chudan**.
- In step 6 **uchidachi** should keep eye contact with **shidachi**.
- In step 6 **shidachi**’s **bokuto** should cover the **do** while parrying. Also, the **shidachi**’s left hand should be well *above* his head as he parries the **uchidachi**’s thrust.
- During the parry in step 6 the **bokuto** should be in contact until **shidachi** begins the overhead cut.

Ai-Uchi and “Locking Swords”

The ai-uchi is often done incorrectly with **uchidachi** and **shidachi** striking at a right-to-left angle from **jodan**, cutting *into* the opponents **bokuto** in order to “stop it”, when the strikes ought to come from overhead along the centerline as with any other men cut in kendo. This is from a misconception as to *why/how* the “locked swords” occur. The strike(s) are stopped by properly timed **te-no-uchi**, not by hitting into the oncoming sword. This relates to the use of **kiri-otoshi** (切り落とし) **waza**. In a potential ai-uchi, one can perform **kiri-otoshi** against their opponent by using **te-no-uchi** mid-strike while the other “waits” to do **te-no-uchi** at the usual time (upon striking). This causes a **kiri-otoshi** deflection allowing the user to strike men while simultaneously deflecting the opponents strike with their cut. If both do **te-no-uchi** early, as in this kata, the ai-uchi occurs with the **bokuto** naturally “locking” to each other stopping the incoming strike and any attempt at **kiri-otoshi**. Information courtesy of sensei K. Taylor. This also coincides with **shidachi** applying **go sen no sen** in this kata, see table 5, p. 59.



Figure 23: Yonhonme: fourth kata.




## Gohonme: "The Fifth" (In-Yo)

Uchidachi	Shidachi
1. From <b>chudan no kamae</b> assume <b>hidari jodan</b> .	1. From <b>chudan</b> assume <b>seigan no kamae</b> .
2. Starting with your left foot, take three steps forward.	2. Starting with your right foot, take three steps forward.
3. With strong <b>kiai</b> , strike the <b>shidachi's shomen</b> with the intent of cutting him all the way through to his chin.	3. Step back and with the left <b>shinogi</b> use <b>suriage</b> (すり上げ) <b>waza</b> to parry the <b>uchidachi's</b> strike.
4. Due to the <b>shidachi's</b> parry, the <b>uchidachi's</b> sword becomes <b>dead</b> and is smoothly lowered to <b>gedan</b> level, the <b>kensen</b> outside of the <b>shidachi's</b> body. <b>Shidachi</b> counter attacks.	4. Immediately after parrying the <b>uchidachi's</b> strike, step forward and with strong <b>kiai</b> strike the <b>uchidachi's shomen</b> .
5. <b>Shidachi</b> exerts <b>zanshin</b> .	5. Lower your <b>kensen</b> to the bridge of the nose of the <b>uchidachi</b> while beginning to step back your right foot. Once at the bridge of the nose, finish your step back and assume <b>hidari jodan</b> .
6. Verify <b>shidachi's zanshin</b> and begin raising your <b>kensen</b> up to <b>chudan</b> .	6. Step back lowering your <b>kensen</b> to <b>chudan</b> .
7. Assume <b>chudan no kamae</b> .	7. Assume <b>ai-chudan</b> with the <b>uchidachi</b> .
8. Verify <b>ai-chudan</b> and take three steps backwards starting on your left foot.	8. Take three steps forward starting on your right foot.
9. <b>Hodoku</b> , and take five steps back to the starting position.	9. <b>Hodoku</b> , and take five steps back to the starting position.

Modern Kata: Chudan & Seigan

This is the only kata which retains the specifically named "seigan no kamae" after the 1981 revision to the kata descriptions by the AJKF. Previously chudan and seigan were interchangeable and it was to be understood which one was appropriate given the specific situation or kata. Specifically, kata 5, 6, and 7 all originally indicated the use of seigan no kamae.

 Key Points:

- In step 3, **shidachi's suriage waza** must be done when **uchidachi's** strike is *just* at the "point of no return", i.e., their strike is fully committed and unalterable. This is approximately when their **kensen** moves forward past their hands.
- **Shidachi** must perform steps 3 and 4 as one continuous motion.

- In step 4 the **uchidachi**'s sword becomes **dead**, due to **shidachi**'s parry, and is lowered to **gedan**. This is *not* part of the strike.
- In step 5 the **shidachi** should not bend their arms when lowering the **kensen**. Keep them straight as you lower and then transition into **jo-dan**<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Information courtesy of H. Chiba Sensei, 8th Dan.



Figure 24: Gohonme: fifth kata.

*Ropponme: “The Sixth” (In–Yo)***Uchidachi**

1. Assume and maintain **chudan no kamae**.
2. Starting with your right foot take three steps forward.
3. **Shidachi** begins to raise his **kensen** up into **chudan**.
4. In an attempt to control **shidachi** press your **kensen** down before **shidachi** assumes **chudan**.
5. Unable to stop **shidachi**, step back on your right foot and assume **hidari jodan** attempting to regain control.
6. In response to the **shidachi**'s pressure step back on your left foot foregoing **jodan** and assume **chudan**.
7. After verifying **ai-chudan** step forward on your right foot and with strong **kiai** attack **shidachi** with small **kote**.
8. After **shidachi**'s parry they counter with small **kote**. Keep your **bokuto** at **kote** level.
9. Drop your **kensen** to **gedan**, take a step to the diagonal back left. **Shidachi** exerts **zanshin**. Turn your hands to the left slightly to angle your blade toward **shidachi**.

**Shidachi**

1. From **chudan** assume **gedan no kamae**<sup>17</sup>.
2. Starting with your right foot take three steps forward.
3. Raise your **kensen** to **chudan**.
4. **Uchidachi** attempts to assert control by pressing his **kensen** down. Continue to pressure him by ignoring this attempt and assume **chudan**.
5. **Uchidachi** attempts to assert control with **hidari jodan**. With your right foot immediately step forward powerfully aiming your **kensen** at his left **kote** (**seigan**).
6. Due to the threat of your **kensen** **uchidachi** forgoes **jodan** and retreats into **chudan**. Assume **ai-chudan**.
7. Parry **uchidachi**'s **kote** strike.
  - Take a small step to the left with your left foot.
  - Use the right **shinogi** to perform **suriage waza**.
8. Immediately after the **suriage waza** with strong **kiai** step forward with the right foot and strike small **kote**.
9. Inhibit the **uchidachi** from escaping with **zanshin**. Direct your **kensen** toward **uchidachi**'s eyes and step forward on your left foot. As you finish your step assume a strong **hidari jodan**.

<sup>17</sup> It is important to make a subtle distinction at this point in the kata; **shidachi** does not move first in this kata but, as in all of the other kata, **shidachi** responds to **uchidachi**'s **kamae**, i.e., moves second. Each of All Japan Kendo Federation [2], Inoue [8], and Budden [3] indicate **uchidachi** assumes and maintains a **chudan kamae** first to which **shidachi** responds by assuming **gedan**.

Advancing Against Jodan

In this kata **shidachi** stepping forward powerfully (with **seigan**) against **uchidachi**'s **jodan** implies both a physically and spiritually powerful advance. It is the **shidachi**'s **seme** toward **uchidachi**'s left **kote**, one of the primary targets against a **jodan** opponent, which forces **uchidachi** to forgo the **kamae**. From S.D. Quinlan. *Defeating Jodan*. Article published at [http://www.kingstonkendo.org/kendo\\_info.html](http://www.kingstonkendo.org/kendo_info.html). 2011 [ 12], **jodan** is the aggressive “**kamae of fire**” with a *modus operandi* of initiating the attack and *never* retreating. If **uchidachi** doesn't feel threatened by your **kensen**, why would they retreat into **chudan** instead of initiating an attack as their **kamae** dictates? **Shidachi** must press toward the **uchidachi** powerfully upon the **uchidachi** assuming **jodan**, overwhelming them spiritually. Otherwise the movement is meaningless. *This is crucial!*

**Uchidachi**

10. Verify **shidachi's zanshin**. Assume **ai-chudan** and then take three small steps<sup>18</sup> back to the center.


11. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

**Shidachi**

10. In response to the **uchidachi** step back on your left foot and assume **ai-chudan**. Take three small steps back to the center.

11. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

<sup>18</sup> Shidachi moved to the diagonal left during the kata and hence the return to ai-chudan is at a slightly off-center angle. After assuming ai-chudan both take three small steps to their right to return to their original starting positions.

 **Key Points:**

- In step 5, the **shidachi** does not thrust as in **tsuki**, but invades the **uchidachi's maai** with his **kensen** by stepping forward powerfully.
- In step 6, at **ai-chudan**, **shidachi** must pressure **uchidachi** again, enticing his desperate **kote** attempt in step 7.
- In steps 7 and 8, the **uchidachi's** blade becomes **dead** due to **shidachi's suriage waza** but it remains at **kote** level.
- Steps 5, 6, 7, and 8 should be done smoothly and continuously.

According to H. Chiba Sensei there is no directly specified number of steps one must take to return to the starting position. The number of steps indicated here is specific to a particular group of senseis method of performing the kata.



Figure 25: Ropponme: sixth kata.

*Nanahonme: "The Seventh" (In-Yo)*

**Uchidachi**

1. From **chudan** take three steps forward starting with your right foot.
2. Stepping forward on your right foot, turn your hands slightly to the left and make a thrust<sup>19</sup> toward the **shidachi's** chest. The **shidachi** parries the thrust.
3. Return to **chudan**.
4. Verify **ai-chudan**, then attack the **shidachi**.
  - Take two steps forward starting with your left foot.
  - On the first step, raise the **bokuto** straight overhead, as in **migi jodan**, and prepare to strike the **shomen** of the **shidachi**.
  - On the second step, and with strong **kiai**, strike the **shidachi's shomen** with a feeling of **sutemi**; strike with the intent to cut all the way through as in **ipponme**.
  - Your gaze will momentarily leave the **shidachi** as you finish your cut.

**Shidachi**

1. From **chudan** take three steps forward starting with your right foot.
2. Parry the **uchidachi's** thrust.
  - Turn the **bokuto** slightly to the right, take a step back on your left foot, and extend your arms forward in a thrust. Receive the **uchidachi's** thrust with the left **shinogi** pressing it upward.
3. Assume **ai-chudan**.
4. Respond to the **uchidachi's** attack with **nuki waza**.
  - Maintain your gaze on **uchidachi** throughout the **nuki waza**.
  - Take a small step to the right with your right foot, bringing the **bokuto** to your left shoulder.
  - With strong **kiai**, step forward on your left foot cutting the **uchidachi's do** at the normal 45° angle.
  - Step forward with your right and, using your left as a pivot, turn toward the **uchidachi** as you drop down on your right knee, completing the cut to the **do**.

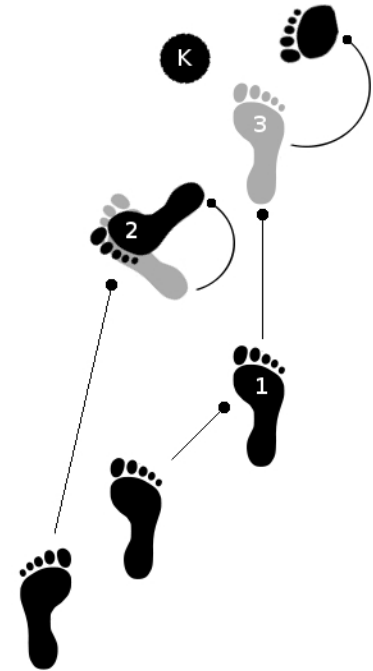


Figure 26: Shidachi's foot movements performing the nuki do, step 4.

<sup>19</sup> According to Inoue [8], uchidachi is said to thrust with the feeling of *ki-atari*; a physical and spiritual attack but then waiting to see the resultant reaction.


This waza is known as "orishiki" or "kneeling" do. It is unused in modern kendo save for this kata.

## Uchidachi

5. After **shidachi** completes his counterattack, turn your gaze to the left to look directly at him.
6. Verify **shidachi**'s **zanshin** and pivot to face the **shidachi**, returning to **chudan**.
  - Straighten up from your lean.
  - In a large swing, bring the **bokuto** straight overhead as with **migi jodan**.
  - Leaving your feet in their current positions, pivot to the left to face the **shidachi**. Your left foot is now forward.
  - Step back with your left foot, and lower the **bokuto** to **chudan**.
7. Take another step back with your left foot.
8. Verify **ai-chudan**, then take seven circular steps to the left in order to return to center.

## Shidachi

5. As the **uchidachi** returns his gaze to you, assume **wakigamae** while in the crouching position; exert **zanshin**.
6. As the **uchidachi** pivots to face you assume a crouched **chudan**.
  - As the **uchidachi** swings his **bokuto** up, the **shidachi** in a large swing raises his **bokuto** above his head.
  - Using the right knee as a pivot, straighten your legs to face the **uchidachi**.
  - Assume a crouched **ai-chudan** with **uchidachi**.
7. As the **uchidachi** steps back, step forward with your right foot to assume a standing **ai-chudan**.
8. Take seven circular steps to the left in order to return to center.

 Key Points:

- In step 2, **shidachi** parries with the **shinogi** at the **monouchi**. The point of contact between the two **monouchi** should be shoulder height upon parrying.
- In step 4 **uchidachi** must strike with **sutemi** similar to **ipponme**, p.22; the torso leans forward approximately 10°-15°, **kensen** finishing at knee level.
- In step 4 as **shidachi**'s drops to his right knee, it should stay in line with the path along which he was stepping. **Shidachi** must maintain his gaze on **uchidachi** during the **do** cut.
- **Shidachi**'s **kiai** ought to occur *during* **uchidachi**'s, i.e., *ya-toh!-h!* v.s. *yah!-toh!*
- Step 6 must be done quickly and smoothly.

- During step 6, it is a common error for the **uchidachi** to first assume **wakigamae** as he returns his gaze toward the **shidachi**, and then return the **bokuto** to **chudan**. This is incorrect.<sup>20</sup> The motion to return the **bokuto** to **chudan** appears to pass through **wakigamae**, but the **kamae** itself is not taken.

<sup>20</sup> All Japan Kendo Federation [2].



Figure 27: Nanahonme: seventh kata.

The numbers ①-④ refer to those found in figure 5 on p.13, duplicated here as figure 28.

### Ending the Tachi Kata

*Tachi kata end.* The **uchidachi** and **shidachi** assume **sonkyo** at ④ and **osame-to**. **Uchidachi** and **shidachi** stand and take five steps back to ③. **Bokuto** are changed to the right hands and both partners perform a 15° **ritsu rei**.

### If Kata Practice Ends After Tachi Kata

*Kata practice finished.* **Uchidachi** and **shidachi** turn to the **shomen** and perform a 30° **ritsu rei**. **Uchidachi** and **shidachi** return to ① to again perform **za rei** to one another. Before reaching ①, the **shidachi** stops at ②, kneels, and retrieves his second **bokuto**.

### If Kodachi Kata Follows Tachi Kata

*Kodachi kata follow.* The **uchidachi** assumes **sonkyo** at ③. **Shidachi** steps back then moves to ②, kneels, sets the **tachi** down, and then picks up the **kodachi**. As **shidachi** returns to ③, the **uchidachi** rises from **sonkyo** to meet him. The formalities for the **tachi kata** are then repeated: three steps to ④, draw and **sonkyo**, stand, **hodoku**, and finally five steps back to ③.

### Tachi Kata Kamae & Waza Summary

Kata	Uchidachi	Shidachi	Waza
<b>Ipponme</b>	Jodan	Jodan	Nuki
<b>Nihonme</b>	Chudan	Chudan	Nuki
<b>Sanbonme</b>	Gedan	Gedan	
<i>-transition</i> <sup>21</sup>	Chudan	Chudan	Nayashi ire-zuki
<b>Yonhonme</b>	Hasso	Waki	Ai-uchi
<i>-transition</i>	Chudan	Chudan	Kaeshi
<b>Gohonme</b>	Jodan	Seigan	Suriage
<b>Ropponme</b>	Chudan	Gedan	
<i>-transition</i>	Jodan	Seigan	
<i>-transition</i>	Chudan	Chudan	Suriage
<b>Nanahonme</b>	Chudan	Chudan	Ai-tsuki
<i>-transition</i>	Jodan	Chudan	Nuki

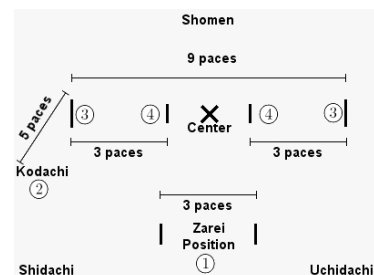


Figure 28: Formal layout and positions for the kata.

Table 2: Tachi kendo no kata: kamae and waza.

<sup>21</sup> The term “-transition” refers to a kamae change from the current kamae to another mid-kata.



# Kodachi Kata: “Short Sword Forms”

## Chapter Preview

THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS OUTLINE the **kodachi**, or short sword, forms from the **nihon kendo no kata** (hereafter **kata**). The details are by no means complete, but should be more than enough to serve as a reference. Following each **kata** is a list of key points which indicate common errors **kendoka** are likely to make, or important points on which one should focus.

The **kodachi kata** are fundamentally different from the **tachi kata** due to the weapon used. Specifically, it is said the **kodachi kata** begin when the **shidachi** threatens **uchidachi** with **iri-mi** (入り身, “entering blade/body”) which is a threat unique to the **kodachi**. Whereas in the **tachi kata**, it is said the **kata** begin when **uchidachi** perceives an opportunity to strike. Both situations are dependent on the **shidachi**, however the implementation is different. See the chapter on “principles”, p.59, for more information.

After the final (third) **kodachi kata**, the finishing formalities are briefly outlined.

During the **kodachi kata** the **shidachi** must defend himself against the **uchidachi** using only a **kodachi**. The mentality of the **kodachi kata**, and the traits **shidachi** must learn and show in order to succeed against the **uchidachi**, is that of a strong and continuous spirit. If the **shidachi** stops, or allows **uchidachi** to move unchecked, he will lose. The **shidachi** must understand the spirit of “**iri-mi**” in order to succeed.



Figure 29: The tachi and kodachi: kendo no kata 8, 9, and 10.

*Ipponme: "The First" (Shin)***Uchidachi**

1. From **chudan no kamae** assume **hidari jodan**.
2. Starting with your left foot, take three steps forward.
3. **Shidachi** exerts pressure.
4. Verify the **shidachi's** spiritual **iri-mi** and, stepping forward on your right foot, strike the **shidachi's shomen** with the intent of cutting all the way through to the chin.
5. Due to the **shidachi's** parry, **uchidachi's** sword becomes **dead** and is smoothly lowered to **gedan** level. **Shidachi** counter attacks.
6. **Shidachi** exerts **zanshin**.

**Shidachi**


1. From **chudan**, assume a **chudan hanmi no kamae**.
2. Starting with your right foot, take three steps forward keeping the mentality of "never stopping once you start".
3. Pressure the **uchidachi** by "spiritually" assuming **iri-mi**.
4. Parry the **uchidachi's** strike:
  - Using shallow **hiraki-ashi**, take a step to the forward right, and raise your right hand straight above your head.
  - As you lift up, turn your **bokuto** so the **kensen** points left, the blade toward you, and use the left **shinogi** to parry the **uchidachi's** strike (**uke-nagashi**, 受け流し).
5. Upon deflecting the **uchidachi's** strike, complete your step, and with **kiai** strike the **uchidachi's shomen**.
6. Step back on your left foot assuming **katate** (片手) **migi jodan** and exert **zanshin**.

This kata teaches the confident spirit required for the kodachi to win over the tachi; the feeling of 'shin' or 'truth'. Inoue [8] indicates that this kata also represents 'shu' in shu-ha-ri.



Figure 30: Movement of the feet for uchidachi (Top) and shidachi (Bottom) during the parry and counter attack, steps 4 and 5.

Uchidachi	Shidachi
7. Verify <b>shidachi's zanshin</b> and, turning to face <b>shidachi</b> , raise your <b>bokuto</b> to <b>chudan</b> .	7. Lower your <b>bokuto</b> to assume <b>ai-chudan</b> .
8. Stepping diagonally back on your left, return to your original position.	8. Stepping left, return to your original position.
9. <b>Hodoku</b> , and take five steps back to the starting position.	9. <b>Hodoku</b> , and take five steps back to the starting position.

 **Key Points:**

- In step 1, **shidachi's kensen** is at the level of **uchidachi's** face.
- In step 3, **shidachi's iri-mi** is not physical but spiritual; you are applying **seme** (攻め).
- The timing for steps 1–4 is crucial. Even though there is a “physical” pause in this **kata** at step 3 the spirit of both must continue to press forward, especially for the **shidachi**.

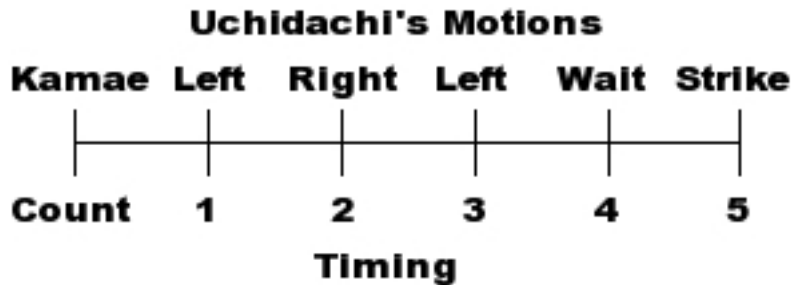


Figure 31: Timing for the uchidachi's movements in steps one through four of kodachi ipponme.

- The goal<sup>22</sup> of the **kodachi kata** is to teach **shidachi** to maintain a forward moving spirit, i.e., if **shidachi** “stops” they will die.
- In step 5, shallow **hiraki-ashi** refers to the fact that **shidachi** should step forward more than they do to the right. About 90% forward 10% to the right would be accurate.
- **Shidachi** must perform steps 4 and 5 as one smooth motion.
- **Uchidachi's** blade becomes **dead** after the **shidachi's** deflection in step 4, and it is lowered to knee level. This is not part of the strike.

<sup>22</sup> Information courtesy of H. Chiba Sensei.

The term “stop” refers to stopping both the physical and spiritual motion of shidachi toward uchidachi. If shidachi can maintain these forward motions then the kodachi can succeed v.s. the tachi. This is the key to correct and meaningful kodachi kata.



Figure 32: Kodachi ipponme: first kodachi kata.

*Nihonme: "The Second" (Gyo)***Uchidachi**

1. From **chudan no kamae** assume **gedan no kamae**.
2. Starting with your right foot, take three steps forward.
3. Raise your **bokuto** to **chudan**.
4. Verify the **shidachi's** control over your **bokuto** and, in an attempt to regain control, draw back your right foot and assume **wakigamae**.
5. **Shidachi** maintains control threatening your **maai** with **iri-mi**. Shift from **wakigamae** to **hidari jodan** and with strong **kiai** strike **shidachi's** **men** with the intent to cut through to the chin.
6. Due to **shidachi's** parry **uchidachi's** sword becomes **dead** and is lowered to **gedan** level. **Shidachi** counter attacks.
7. **Shidachi** exerts **zanshin**.

**Shidachi**

1. From **chudan** assume a **chudan hanmi no kamae**.
2. Starting on your right foot take three steps forward.
3. Control **uchidachi's** **bokuto** by pressing yours downward, blade to the right.
4. Straighten your blade (**iri-mi, kensen** toward the throat) and step forward (**seme-komu, 攻め込む**) threatening **uchidachi**.
5. Parry **uchidachi's** strike:
  - Using shallow **hiraki-ashi** take a step to the front left, and raise your right hand above your head.
  - As you lift, turn the **bokuto** so the **kensen** points right, the blade faces you. Receive **uchidachi's** strike using the right **shinogi (uke-nagashi)**.
6. Having parried **uchidachi's** strike complete your step and with **kiai** strike **shomen**.
7. Exert **zanshin**:
  - Grab **uchidachi's** right forearm with your left hand; pull slightly to restrict movement. At the same time shift your right hand to your right hip.
  - Point your **kensen** at **uchidachi's** throat, blade angled slightly to the right.

This kata embodies the feeling of 'gyo' from 'shin-gyo-so'; a transition from the absolute. Also according to Inoue [8] this corresponds to 'ha' in 'shu-ha-ri'.



Figure 33: Movement of the feet for uchidachi (Top) and shidachi (Bottom) during the parry and counter attack, step 5.

**Uchidachi**


**Shidachi**

8. Verify **shidachi's zanshin** and return to your original position, assuming **chudan**.

8. Return to your original position, controlling **uchidachi's blade**. Assume **ai-chudan**.

9. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

9. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

 **Key Points:**

- In step 1 **shidachi's kensen** is at the level of **uchidachi's chest**.
- In step 4 as **uchidachi** takes **wakigamae** be sure the **bokuto** does not come above the level of **shidachi's kensen**.
- In step 5 shallow **hiraki-ashi** is the same as **kodachi ipponme**.
- In step 7 **shidachi's bokuto** moves to his hip as he restrains **uchidachi**.



Figure 34: Kodachi nihonme: second kodachi kata.

## Sanbonme: "The Third" (So)

## Uchidachi

1. Assume **chudan no kamae**.
2. Starting with your right foot, take three steps forward.
  - As you begin the second step, swing your **bokuto** up into the **migi jodan** position. On the third step, and with strong **kiai**, strike the **shidachi's men** with the intent of cutting through to the chin.
3. **Shidachi** parries your strike.
4. After the **shidachi** has parried your attack, maintain your spirit and strike again. Quickly swing your **bokuto** up above your head, step forward on your left foot, and strike the **shidachi's** right **do** (no **kiai**).

## Shidachi

1. From **chudan** assume a **gedan hanmi no kamae**.
2. Starting with your right foot, take three steps forward.
  - As you begin the second step, bring the **kodachi** to **hanmi chudan**, **kensen** at approximately chest level, and attempt **iri-mi**. Parry their strike on your third step.
3. Parry the **uchidachi's** strike.
  - On your third step, raise your **bokuto** up from **iri-mi**, receive the strike on the left **shinogi** (**suriage**).
  - Using the momentum of their strike, push their **bokuto** down and to the left (**suriotoshi**, すり落とし).
4. Parry the **uchidachi's** strike.
  - Use shallow **hiraki-ashi** to the forward left.
  - Swing your **bokuto** and torso to your right as if cutting. Your **kodachi** should be angled at about 30°-45° to match the angle of the incoming **do** strike.
  - Parry the **uchidachi's do** strike with your left **shinogi** (**suri-nagashi**, すり流し).

According to Tokeshi [14]: "This kata teaches the value of life. The ultimate goal of kendo is harmonious existence, not annihilation. No one is harmed in this kata." Also, the **shidachi's** assuming of the **gedan hanmi no kamae** is said to express or relate to the notion of **mugamae**. This kata embodies the feeling of 'so' from 'shin-gyo-so'; the essence of a form but independent from it. Also according to Inoue [8] this corresponds to 'ri' in 'shu-ha-ri'.



Figure 35: Movement of the feet for uchidachi (Top) and shidachi (Bottom) during the **suri-nagashi** and **suri-komi**, steps 4 and 5.

**Uchidachi**

5. **Shidachi** performs **suri-komi** (すり込み).
6. **Shidachi** attempts to restrict your mobility. The **shidachi**'s hold on you will cause you to have **dead hands**.
7. Try to escape the **shidachi** by taking three diagonal steps to your left rear. **Shidachi** follows and exerts **zanshin**.
8. Verify **shidachi**'s **zanshin**, return to your original position, and assume **chudan**.
9. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

**Shidachi**

5. Advance on the **uchidachi** with **suri-komi**.
  - With strong **kiai**, slide your **bokuto** up to **uchidachi**'s **tsuba** as you step toward them.
6. Restrict the **uchidachi**.
  - Grab underneath **uchidachi**'s right arm above the elbow; push up to lock it.
7. Maintain control over **uchidachi** and exert **zanshin**.
  - Follow **uchidachi** as he takes three steps.
  - At the end of the third step bring your right hand to your hip, blade angled slightly to the right, **kensen** toward the **uchidachi**'s throat. Exert **zanshin**.
8. Release **uchidachi** and return to your original position, in **ai-chudan**.
9. **Hodoku**, and take five steps back to the starting position.

 **Key Points:**


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- In step 3, the **shidachi**'s **kensen** ought to still be toward the **uchidachi** after the **suri-otoshi**; don't bring it outside of their body while sweeping their **bokuto** aside<sup>23</sup>.
- In step 4, **shidachi** should not raise their arm up, exposing their **do**, as they pivot to the right to perform **suri-nagashi**; move the **kodachi** across your body from the **suri-otoshi** position while covering the **do** with the arm/elbow.
- In step 5 when the **shidachi** performs **suri-komi**, at the moment the **kodachi** meets the **tsuba** of the **uchidachi**'s **tachi**, the **shidachi**'s blade should be pointing downward.

<sup>23</sup> Information courtesy of H. Chiba Sensei.



- When the **shidachi** restrains the **uchidachi**, the upward push from the **shidachi** on **uchidachi**'s arm along with the **kodachi** acting as a sort of pivot, causes **uchidachi** to be in a position where he has **dead hands**.
- In step 7, **uchidachi** steps right-left-right and **shidachi** steps left-right-left.



Figure 36: Kodachi sanbonme: third kodachi kata.

The numbers ①-④ refer to those found in figure 5 on p.13, duplicated here as figure 37.

### Ending the Kodachi Kata

*Kodachi kata end.* The **uchidachi** and **shidachi** assume **sonkyo** at ④ and **osame-to**. Both opponent stand and take five steps back to ③. **Bokuto** are changed to the right hand and both opponent perform a 15° **ritsu rei**.

### Ending Kata Practice

*Kata practice finished.* Both opponent turn to the **shomen** and perform a 30° **ritsu rei**. **Uchidachi** and **shidachi** return to ① to again perform **za rei** to one another. Before reaching ①, the **shidachi** stops at ②, kneels, and retrieves his second **bokuto**.

### Kodachi Kata Kamae & Waza Summary

Kata	Uchidachi	Shidachi	Waza
<b>Ipponme</b>	Jodan	Chudan hanmi	
-transition <sup>24</sup>	Jodan	Iri-mi (S)	Uke-nagashi
<b>Nihonme</b>	Gedan	Chudan hanmi	
-transition	Chudan	Iri-mi (S)	
-transition	Waki	Iri-mi (P)	
-transition	Jodan	Chudan hanmi	Uke-nagashi
<b>Sanbonme</b>	Chudan	Gedan hanmi	
-transition	Chudan	Iri-mi (P)	Suriage, Suri-otoshi, Suri-nagashi, Suri-komi

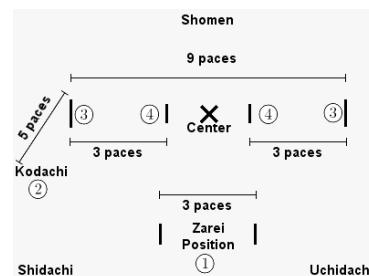


Figure 37: Formal layout and positions for the kata.

Table 3: Kodachi kendo no kata: kamae and waza.

<sup>24</sup> The term “-transition” refers to a kamae change from the current kamae to another mid-kata. Also note that “Iri-mi (S)” and “Iri-mi (P)” refer to spiritual and physical iri-mi respectively.

# Kihon Bokuto Waza: “Fundamental Techniques Using Bokuto”

## Chapter Preview

THIS CHAPTER GIVES A brief summary on the purpose and practice of the **bokuto ni yoru kendo kihon waza keiko ho** (木刀による剣道基本稽古法) or “*basic kendo practice method by using bokuto*”.

Shikake Waza: Attack Initiation Techniques		
1.	Ippon Uchi no Waza	(Single strike techniques)
2.	Ni/Sandan no Waza	(Two/three step techniques)
3.	Harai Waza	(“Sweeping aside” opponents weapon)
4.	Hiki Waza	(Techniques while withdrawing)
Oji Waza: Techniques for Responding to Attack		
5.	Nuki Waza	(Dodge and counter attack techniques)
6.	Suriage Waza	(Parrying opponents incoming strike)
7.	Debana Waza	(Attacking at the initiation of a strike)
8.	Kaeshi Waza	(Receive and counter attack techniques)
9.	Uchi-otoshi Waza	(“Redirection” techniques)

Table 4: The Bokuto Waza.

## Purpose of the Bokuto Waza

*Purpose.* A means through which **shikake** (しかけ) and **oji** (応じ) **waza** can be introduced, an introductory exercise in **zanshin**, a stepping stone for more difficult **waza**, and a way in which to remind **kendoka** of the connection between the **shinai** (竹刀) and **bokuto** to the **katana** (刀).

### *Bokuto Waza or “Bokuto Kata”?*

**Bokuto waza** have much in common with the **nihon kendo no kata**, however they are also fundamentally different.

**Bokuto waza** are performed in pairs as are the **kata**, however the formal roles of **uchidachi** and **shidachi** do not exist. Instead, **motodachi** (元立ち) and **kakari-te** (掛手) are both *equal* participants.

The formalities for the **bokuto waza** are the same as those for the **kata**, however the initial and final **za rei** done in the **kata** are not present. See p.14.

The **bokuto waza** are a stepping stone to teach other **waza** as seen fit by the instructor. The intent is to serve as *adaptable* teaching aids, hence **bokuto waza** v.s. **bokuto kata**<sup>25</sup>.

The **bokuto waza** can be directly translated into **shinai kendo**. Because of this direct link, use of the **bokuto** during practice will help illustrate the connection between a **shinai** and the **katana**.

### *Formalities of the Bokuto Waza*

Formalities for the opening, practice, and closing of the **bokuto waza** are the same as that of the **nihon kendo no kata** save for the **za rei**. These formalities can be shortened, in a predefined manner<sup>26</sup>, in order to speed up the process during repeated practice.

#### *Shortened Bokuto Waza Formalities*

*Initial formality.* **Motodachi** and **kakari-te** perform **rei**, **tai-to**, three steps into **sonkyo**, stand, **hodoku**, and five steps back. **Motodachi** and **kakari-te** come to **chudan no kamae** and take three steps toward one another coming to **issoku itto no maai**. This is the same standard formality done in the **nihon kendo no kata**. However when using the shortened formalities for the **bokuto waza** this is done only once at the start of practice. At the very end of practice **sonkyo** is again done followed by the standard five steps back and **rei**.

During the remainder of practice a shortened version of **hodoku**, withdraw, **kamae**, advance can be used.

*Shortened formality.* **Motodachi** and **kakari-te** **hodoku** and **kakari-te** takes one step back while the **motodachi** stays in place. Both return to **chudan** together. **Kakari-te** steps forward to **issoku itto no maai** and performs the required **waza**.

<sup>25</sup> Kata have a more static connotation to them; they are unchanging over many years. The bokuto waza are meant to introduce basics, but to also be freely adaptable by the instructor as an aid in teaching various waza.

<sup>26</sup> This shortening of formality was defined by the AJKF. Information courtesy of M. Kawabe Sensei.

# Kihon Bokuto Shikake Waza

## Chapter Preview

THE DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH of the **bokuto waza** begin with the **motodachi** and **kakari-te** in **chudan no kamae** *after* the **kakari-te** has stepped into **issoku itto no maai**, i.e., the, long or short version, intro formalities for the exercise have already been completed.

The final step in each description is that of both sides returning to **chudan no kamae** at **yokote-kosa**, p.12, where the appropriate formalities can be performed.

Note that in the bokuto waza one through four, the kakari-te must enter issoku itto no maai before striking each target.

## Important Points for the Kihon Bokuto Shikake Waza

**Strikes.** It is important to note that all of the attacks in the **bokuto (shikake) waza** are to be “big” (overhead) strikes, **tsuki** being an obvious exception.

**Motodachi & Opening Targets.** Also important to note is that when **motodachi** opens a target for **kakari-te**, **motodachi** should *not* move their **kensen** outside of the width of **kakari-te**'s shoulders as well as keeping it near shoulder height<sup>27</sup>. More specifically, when opening **men** and **kote** the **motodachi**'s **kensen** ought to point to **kakari-te**'s shoulder, whereas for **tsuki** it ought to point toward their collarbone.

<sup>27</sup> Do is the exception to this as motodachi should raise the bokuto fully overhead into *migi jodan*.

The **kihon bokuto shikake waza** are:

1. **Ippon uchi no waza**: **men** (面), **kote** (小手), **do** (胴), **tsuki** (突き), p.52
2. **kote**→**men**, p.53
3. **harai men** (払面), p.53
4. **hiki-do** (ひき胴), p.54

*Ipponme: Men, Kote, Do, Tsuki*

<b>Motodachi</b>	<b>Kakari-te</b>
(1) Open <b>men</b> by moving the <b>kensen</b> to the right.	(1) Step forward and strike <b>men</b> .
(2) Wait for <b>kakari-te</b> 's <b>zanshin</b> .	(2) Take a small step back and point toward the <b>motodachi</b> 's throat <sup>28</sup> .
(3) Move the <b>kensen</b> back to <b>ai-chudan</b>	(3) Step back into proper <b>maai</b> .
(4) Open <b>kote</b> by moving the <b>kensen</b> up and to the left.	(4) Step forward and strike <b>kote</b> .
(5) Wait for <b>kakari-te</b> 's <b>zanshin</b> .	(5) Take a small step back and point toward the <b>motodachi</b> 's throat.
(6) Move the <b>kensen</b> back to <b>ai-chudan</b> .	(6) Step back into proper <b>maai</b> .
(7) Open <b>do</b> by raising the <b>bokuto</b> overhead at 45°.	(7) Step forward and strike <b>migi do</b> .
(8) Wait for <b>kakari-te</b> 's <b>zanshin</b> .	(8) Take a small step back and point toward the <b>motodachi</b> 's throat.
(9) Move the <b>kensen</b> down to <b>ai-chudan</b> .	(9) Step back into proper <b>maai</b> .
(10) Open <b>tsuki</b> by moving the <b>kensen</b> slightly to the right. Step backward one step when <b>kakari-te</b> thrusts.	(10) Step forward and thrust <b>tsuki</b> .
(11) Wait for <b>kakari-te</b> 's <b>zanshin</b> .	(11) Pull your thrust back, then take a small step back and point toward the <b>motodachi</b> 's throat.
(12) Return to <b>chudan</b> and step forward.	(12) Step back into <b>ai-chudan</b> at <b>yokote-kosa</b> .

While each person has their own *issoku itto no maai*, it is an obvious extension that it is also different for *each target* which is why the descriptions state “*step back into proper maai*” instead of “*...into ai-chudan*” in steps 3, 6, and 9. As a general approximation for men, the monouchi should cross at the midpoint, while for kote the tips should just cross. Do is slightly closer than men, and tsuki is between both men and kote. The desired depth of the “cut” in the bokuto waza is deeper than in shinai kendo which is why, to some, these distances seem a bit close.

It is important to note that your bokuto must be pulled back from the tsuki *before* you step back for zanshin in step 11.

<sup>28</sup> The step back is relatively small as the kakari-te needs to maintain control over the motodachi and be ready for a potential counter. Also, one does not simply step back and leave their hands and bokuto extended in the same position of their strike. As one steps back to exert zanshin, the hands are pulled back into a slightly “extended chudan” position; a transition between their strike and chudan kamae.

*Nihonme: Kote→Men*

**Motodachi**

- (1) Open **kote** by moving the **kensen** up and to the left.
- (2) Step back and move your **kensen** to the right. Move the **kensen** to the right by going underneath the **kakari-te**'s **bokuto**.
- (3) Wait for **kakari-te**'s **zanshin**.
- (4) Return to **ai-chudan**.
- (5) Step forward while in **ai-chudan**.

**Kakari-te**

- (1) Step forward and strike **kote**.
- (2) Step forward and strike **men**.
- (3) Take a small step back and point toward the **motodachi**'s throat.
- (4) Step back into **ai-chudan** at **yokote-kosa**.
- (5) Step back while in **ai-chudan**.

The **kote** and **men** strikes ought to both be large swings.

*Sanbonme: Harai Men*

**Motodachi**

- (1) From **issoku itto no maai** the **kakari-te** breaks your **kamae** by using **harai waza**.
- (2) The **kakari-te** continues forward and strikes **shomen**.
- (3) Wait for **kakari-te**'s **zanshin**.
- (4) Return to **ai-chudan**.

**Kakari-te**

- (1) From **issoku itto no maai** and using the **omote** (表) **shinogi**, begin<sup>29</sup> your step forward and as you move break the **motodachi**'s **kamae** by sweeping their **kensen** to the left.
- (2) After breaking their **kamae** finish your step forward and strike the **motodachi**'s **men**.
- (3) Take a small step back and point toward the **motodachi**'s throat.
- (4) Step back into **ai-chudan** at **yokote-kosa**.

Do not “wind up” for the **harai** motion by moving the **kensen** in the opposite direction first. The **kensen** ought to move from center to the left, not right-then-left. The **harai** motion should also originate equally as much from the hips as the hands.

<sup>29</sup> The difficult part of this **waza** is that the **harai** motion and the **men** strike are *not* two distinct steps. The **harai** motion should be done as you are stepping in and the **men** strike coming out on the same step.

## Yonhonme: Hiki-Do

**Motodachi**

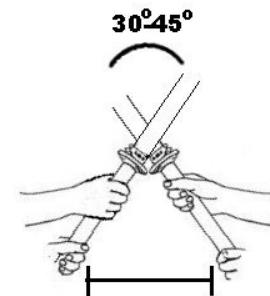
- (1) Receive the **kakari-te**'s men strike with the **omote shinogi** of the **bokuto**.
- (2) Step forward and enter **tsubazeriai**<sup>30</sup> (鋦迫り合い) with the **kakari-te**.
- (3) The **kakari-te** presses your hands down as if to create a **shomen suki** (隙).
- (4) Press your hands upward in response to the **kakari-te**.
- (5) Wait for **kakari-te**'s **zanshin**.
- (6) Step back and assume **ai-chudan**.

**Kakari-te**

- (1) Step forward and strike **shomen**.
- (2) Your strike having been received, step forward and into **tsubazeriai** with the **motodachi**.
- (3) Press the hands of the **motodachi** downward<sup>31</sup>.
- (4) As the **motodachi** begins to bring his **bokuto** up, bring your **bokuto** up overhead, step back and strike **migi do**.
- (5) Take a small step back and point toward the **motodachi**'s throat.
- (6) Step back into **ai-chudan** at **yokote-kosa**.

<sup>30</sup> It is important that the **motodachi** and **kakari-te** are in the proper **tsubazeriai** position for this **waza** to work correctly and smoothly. Figure 38 shows proper **tsubazeriai** with **shinai**. Note the separation of the left hands, the angle of the weapons, and especially where the weapons connect with one another; these points are crucial.

<sup>31</sup> Pressing the **motodachi**'s hands downward is done by using your left hand as a pivot and moving your right hand in a small forward/down semi-circle, see figure 39. Don't jerk your hands downward trying to pull their hands down. This **waza** will work well only if in proper **tsubazeriai**.



**Left hands are separated and are at the same position for that of Chudan no Kamae.**

Figure 38: Side view of the proper **tsubazeriai** position.

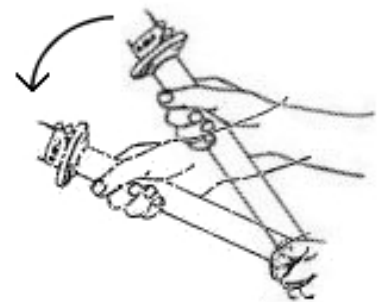


Figure 39: Use the left hand as a pivot to move the right hand forward and down to push the **motodachi**'s hands downward in step #3.



# *Kihon Bokuto Oji Waza*

## *Chapter Preview*

THE DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH of the **bokuto waza** begin with the **motodachi** and **kakari-te** in **chudan no kamae** *after* the **motodachi** has stepped into **issoku itto no maai**. It is assumed that the, long or short version of, intro formalities for the exercise have already been completed.

The final step in each description is that of both sides returning to **chudan no kamae** at **yokote-kosa**, where the appropriate formalities can be performed.

Note that it is the *motodachi* who enters *issoku itto no maai* during these waza and *not* the *kakari-te*. This is because the *motodachi* initiates all strikes in waza five through nine, not the *kakari-te*.

## *Important Points for the Kihon Bokuto Oji Waza*

*Strikes.* It is important to note that all of the attacks in the **bokuto (oji) waza** by both **motodachi** and **kakari-te** are to be “big” (overhead) strikes, save for **waza #7** where **kakari-te** performs a “small” **debana kote**.

*Zanshin.* In the **bokuto (oji) waza**, save for **waza #7**, there is no explicit movement used to represent **zanshin** as there were in the (**shikake**) **bokuto waza**, i.e. pointing to the throat of the **motodachi**. Instead, the **zanshin** is understood to occur during the motions after the **kakari-te** strikes.

The **kihon bokuto oji waza** are:

5. **Nuki waza: men, nuki do**, p.56
6. **Suriage waza: kote, suriage men**, p.56
7. **Debana waza: debana (出ばな) men**, p.57
8. **Kaeshi waza: men, kaeshi (返し) do**, p.57
9. **Uchi-otoshi waza: do, uchi-otoshi (打ち落とし) men**, p.58

*Gohonme: Men, Nuki Do***Motodachi**

- (1) Step forward and strike **shomen**.
- (2) While turning slightly to the left to align yourself to face the **kakari-te**, take a step back and assume **chudan**.
- (3) While in **ai-chudan** take a circular step to the left back to the starting positions.

**Kakari-te**

- (1) Dodge the **motodachi**'s strike by taking a step to the forward, diagonal right while simultaneously striking **migi do**; your body is facing forward however your gaze should be toward the **motodachi**.
- (2) The **motodachi** turns to face you. As he does, turn to face him and take a step back along the off-center angle and assume **chudan**.
- (3) While in **ai-chudan** take a circular step to the left back to the starting positions and into **yokote-kosa**.

*Ropponme: Kote, Suriage Men***Motodachi**

- (1) Step forward and strike the **kakari-te**'s **kote**.
- (2) Step back and assume **ai-chudan**.

**Kakari-te**

- (1) As the **motodachi** strikes, step back and perform **suriage waza** with the **ura shinogi**. Then immediately, i.e., in a continuous motion, step forward and strike **men**.
- (2) Step back and assume **ai-chudan** at **yokote-kosa**.

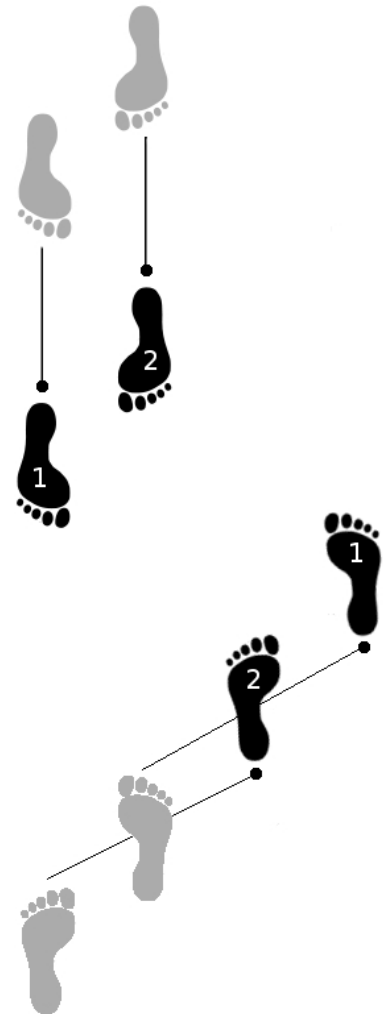


Figure 40: Kakari-te completes the do strike facing the motodachi.

As with bokuto waza #3, do not “wind up” and hit the opponents bokuto. The deflection comes from the wrists and originates in the hips. The kensen should remain primarily centered throughout the motion.

*Nanahonme: Dehana Kote*

**Motodachi**

- (1) Begin the motion of a small strike: take a half step<sup>32</sup> forward with the right foot and press the **kensen** slightly upward from **chudan** as if initiating a strike.
- (2) Wait for **kakari-te**'s **zanshin**.
- (3) Take a half step back and return to **chudan**.

**Kakari-te**

- (1) At the moment the **motodachi** begins to move, step forward and strike a "small" **kote**.
- (2) Take a small step back and point toward the **motodachi**'s throat.
- (3) Take a step back into **ai-chudan** at **yokote-kosa**.

<sup>32</sup> The half step refers to moving with only one foot, in this case the right, as compared to the standard complimentary stepping in Kendo in which you always move both, i.e., right-left.

This waza is primarily to help kendoka practice establishing **sen** and a connection between themselves and their opponent.

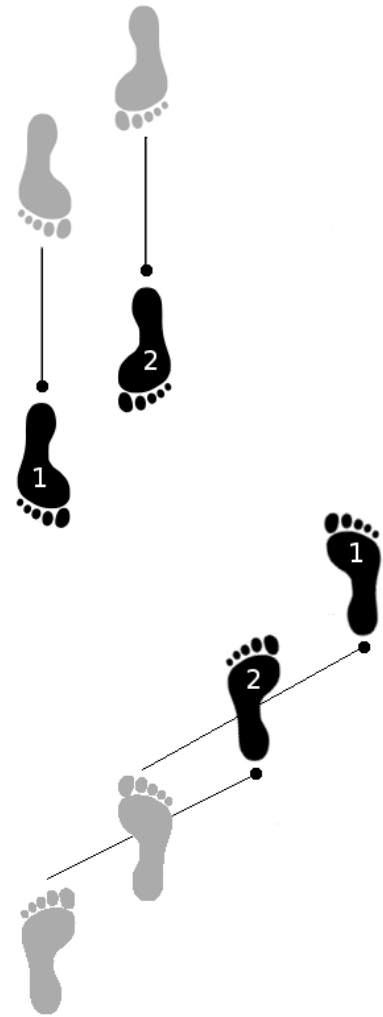


Figure 41: Kakari-te completes the do strike facing the motodachi.

<sup>33</sup> It is a common error to turn the bokuto horizontal while receiving strikes for kaeshi waza. Your bokuto is not to become a rigid "shield" that brings the opponents bokuto to a dead stop, but instead think of it as serving to disrupt the strike and move it off of the centerline.

*Happonme: Men, Kaeshi Do*

**Motodachi**

- (1) Step forward and strike **men**.
- (2) While turning slightly to the left to align yourself to face the **kakari-te**, take a step back and assume **chudan no kamae**.
- (3) While in **ai-chudan** take a circular step to the left back to the starting positions.

**Kakari-te**

- (1) As **motodachi** begins his strike, begin a step to the forward diagonal right similar to **nuki do**. During your step receive<sup>33</sup> the **motodachi**'s strike with the **omote shinogi** of the **bokuto**. Immediately upon receiving the strike, complete your step to the forward diagonal right and strike **migi do**.
- (2) The **motodachi** turns to face you. As he does, turn to face him and take a step back along the off-center angle and assume **chudan**.
- (3) While in **ai-chudan** take a circular step to the left back to the starting positions and into **yokote-kosa**.

*Kyuhonme: Do, Uchi-otoshi Men***Motodachi**

- (1) Step forward and strike **migi do**.
- (2) While turning slightly to the left to align yourself with the **kakari-te**, take a step back and assume **chudan no kamae**.
- (3) While in **ai-chudan** take a circular step to the left back to the starting positions.

**Kakari-te**

- (1) As the **motodachi** strikes, step to the diagonal back left and, in a large overhead swing, redirect the incoming strike by striking their weapon downward. Then in an immediate, continuous motion, step forward and strike **men**.
- (2) The **motodachi** turns to align himself with you. As he does, take a step back along your current off-center angle and assume **chudan no kamae**.
- (3) While in **ai-chudan** take a circular step to the left back to the starting positions and into **yokote-kosa**.

This ends the **kihon bokuto waza**. At this point the appropriate closing formalities are performed.

# Kendo no Kata Riai: “Principles of the Kendo Forms”

## Chapter Preview

THIS CHAPTER ADDS SOME advanced details to the information regarding **kata** already given on pp.5, 21, and 39. First, details are given regarding the theory behind the technique used by the **shidachi** to defeat the **uchidachi**. “*Technique*” does not refer to the **waza** itself, but to the underlying “why”, or **riai**, (from **riau** (*verb*), 理, “*logic, reason, principle*”, and 合う, “*to fit, match, agree with, to be correct*”)<sup>34</sup> behind them, i.e., the **mitsu no sen**: **sen no sen**, **go sen no sen**, and **sen sen no sen**<sup>35</sup>.

The **kodachi kata** are different than the **tachi kata** due to the different weapon used. Hence it is said that **shidachi** conducts these **kata** with a certain “feeling” referred to as **shin, gyo, and so** (真行草) or *truth, stream, and grass*<sup>36</sup> combined with the application of **iri-mi** (入り, “*entering*” and 身, “*body, person, blade*”), and hence **seme** unique to the **kodachi kata**. Both **tachi** and **kodachi kata**, however, are performed with a sense of **sen**, i.e., taking the initiative (of attack).

Finally, a *brief* look at concepts from Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism as present in the **kata**.

The following excerpts<sup>37</sup> discusses **kata riai**:

### Tachi Kata Riai

*“Sen: Stop your opponents attack by first movement, forestall, attitude of taking the initiative. This does not mean speed, more subconsciously seeing the origin of every real action, or the practiced ability to read a changing situation instantly.”*

*Sen sen no sen: Anticipating your opponents intention and capitalizing on this knowledge to have victory.*

*Go sen no sen: Responding to your opponents attacking movements by countering them, without knowing your opponents intention.*

<sup>34</sup> Translation from Jim Breen’s Online Japanese Dictionary. <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/cgi-bin/wwwjdic.cgi?1C> [ 9]. According to All Japan Kendo Federation [2], **riai** is “the condition in which the **waza** and movements between ones self and ones opponent are rational and purposeful and techniques make sense technically.”

<sup>35</sup> Some list the **mitsu no sen** in shorter form as “**sen**”, “**go no sen**”, and “**sen sen no sen**”.

<sup>36</sup> This is only one of many translations for **shin-gyo-so**. Inoue [8] offers the translation of **shin** being a ‘true’ shape/form, so is the essence of a shape/form, and **gyo** is a transition point between the two. Both translations are explaining the same concept albeit differently.

<sup>37</sup> Budden [3].

Kata	Uchidachi	Shidachi
1	Sen no sen	Sen sen no sen
2	Sen no sen	Sen sen no sen
3	Sen no sen	Sen sen no sen
4	Sen no sen	Go sen no sen
5	Sen no sen	Sen sen no sen
6	Sen no sen	Go sen no sen
7	Sen no sen	Go sen no sen

Table 5: The **mitsu no sen** are exemplified in the **nihon kendo kata**. **Uchidachi** attempts **sen no sen** throughout while **shidachi** performs **sen sen no sen** in **kata 1, 2, 3, and 5** and **go sen no sen** in **kata 4, 6, and 7**.

*Reaction in sen sen no sen and go sen no sen must be faster than the actions of the attacker. Having a sincere and pure attitude of the single mind, unwavering and of a high and delicately refined quality. This is kigurai and should be combined with sen attitude.”*

### *Kodachi Kata Riai*

*“Shin: ‘Truth’. Strike directly and attack strongly, rush in with the feeling of truth without fear and into ten no kamae showing true strength.*

*Gyo: ‘Stream’. Using your opponents force, flowing like a stream with his attack, ensuring that you flow from the men cut into the final thrust. Movement is in a general direction.*

*So: ‘Grass’ or ‘weeds’. Again blend with your opponent like blades of grass in the wind and move to make him work hard, tiring him by your multitude of movement like a field of grass. A million blades swaying in the wind; controlling but never retaliating. As grasses and weeds are among plants that come above ground in early spring, so your movement should also be before that of your opponent. ‘So’ is also known as ‘kusa’.”*

### *Seme in the Kendo Kata*

*“Not always obviously visible when watching a performance of kata, particularly at the highest level, there exists a series of triggers that are of paramount importance in learning the cause and effect of the kata.*

*Although it is stated that the controlling influence of the kata is made by the uchidachi, shidachi has to get a reaction from uchidachi in order to perform the correct movements.*

*It cannot be stressed enough that these signals in no way alter the timing of the kata, as they are subtle movements that become less and less apparent as the practitioner becomes more fluent. In the final event they become part of the very feeling of the kata; invisible but integral. When first learning the kata movements, they should not be made unless they are made apparent as this establishes at a very early level this true cause and effect.”*

It is essential to note that the concept of shin-gyo-so directly relates to that of shu-ha-ri as indicated in Inoue [8] and that the kodachi kata are, in this viewpoint, directly related to the first three tachi kata. In each, the shidachi’s actions are sequentially altered away from the initial form of an ‘absolute’ killing strike and aggressive zanshin (shin = shu), to an adapted strike still with a strong zanshin but a less absolute ‘finality’ (gyo = ha), and finally to where no overt strike is used to defeat the opponent at all but strong zanshin still remains (so = ri).

Kata	Shidachi Has
Kodachi Ipponme	Feeling of shin
Kodachi Nihonme	Feeling of gyo
Kodachi Sanbonme	Feeling of so

Table 6: Shidachi’s method of victory in the kodachi kata.

Kata	Cause & Effect Through the Application of Seme
Tachi: ipponme	From the right jodan position at the center point, shidachi makes a slight downward movement as if about to cut, hence drawing out the uchidachi’s men strike. Shidachi uses nuki waza and sen sen no sen.
Tachi: nihonme	In the center position, shidachi slightly raises his point or presses the uchidachi’s sword to the left almost as an invitation to uchidachi to cut kote. Shidachi uses nuki waza and sen sen no sen.
Tachi: sanbonme	Shidachi comes up to chudan (from gedan) slightly later than uchidachi, inviting uchidachi’s thrust. Shidachi uses ire-zuki ni nagashi/sen sen no sen.
Tachi: yonhonme	After the aiuchi and return to chudan, shidachi relaxes his kamae slightly inviting uchidachi’s thrust. Shidachi uses maki-kaeshi/go sen no sen.
Tachi: gohonme	From seigan shidachi presses forward at uchidachi’s kote inviting the men strike. Shidachi uses suriage/sen sen no sen.
Tachi: ropponme	Shidachi pressures three times: (1) gedan to chudan causing uchidachi to take jodan, (2) forcing a retreat to chudan, (3) forcing a hasty kote. Shidachi uses suriage/go sen no sen.
Tachi: nanahonme	Shidachi invites a cut by slightly raising his point. Shidachi uses nuki waza/go sen no sen.
Kodachi: ipponme	Shidachi makes uchidachi react by pressure (seme) toward his kote by the feeling of iri-mi. Shidachi uses uke-nagashi and embodies the feeling of shin.
Kodachi: nihonme	Shidachi, by controlling the spirit (will) of uchidachi, forces him to back into wakigamae. Then, through the seme of iri-mi, shidachi forces uchidachi to react with a men cut. Shidachi uses uke-nagashi and embodies the feeling of gyo.
Kodachi: sanbonme	Shidachi by assuming the gedan kamae invites the uchidachi to attack his men. Shidachi uses suriage, suri-otoshi, suri-nagashi, and suri-komi, while embodying the feeling of so (kusa).

Table 7: Cause and effect in kata.

### Conceptual Aspects of the Kata

The **kata** embody a substantial amount of information from the belief system of their creators; Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

*In-yo.* The most accessible idea is **in-yo** which is the Japanese reading of the Chinese words **yin-yang**. **Kata 4-7** embody the five phase theory of **yin-yang** where the five phases, fire, water, earth, wood, and metal, are in direct opposition to one another in a specified manner. This particular variant<sup>38</sup> is known as the *mutual overcoming theory* and is attributed to Chinese philosopher Tsou Yen (305-240 BCE).

This theory is visible directly in the **kamae** used in **kata 4-7** (in effect 8-10 as well), as each has a specific element associated with it. These elements each can defeat, and are defeated by, other elements as depicted in figure 43. The arrow points from one element toward the one which it defeats. That is water defeats fire, fire defeats metal, metal defeats wood, wood defeats earth, and earth defeats water.

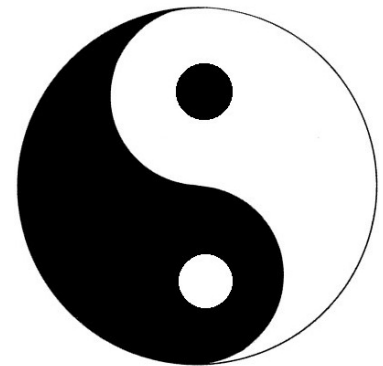


Figure 42: In-yo.

<sup>38</sup> Inoue [8].

In each kata shidachi responds to the uchidachi according to the in-yo concept.

Tachi	Uchidachi	Shidachi	Waza	Elements
Ipponme	Jodan	Jodan	Nuki	Fire/fire
Nihonme	Chudan	Chudan	Nuki	Water/water
Sanbonme	Gedan	Gedan		Earth/earth
–transition <sup>39</sup>	Chudan	Chudan	Nayashi ire-zuki	Water/water
Yonhonme	Hasso	Waki	Ai-uchi	Wood/metal
–transition	Chudan	Chudan	Kaeshi	Water/water
Gohonme	Jodan	Seigan	Suriage	Fire/water
Ropponme	Chudan	Gedan		Water/earth
–transition	Jodan	Seigan		Fire/water
–transition	Chudan	Chudan	Suriage	Water/water
Nanahonme	Chudan	Chudan	Ai-tsuki	Water/water
–transition	Jodan	Chudan	Nuki	Fire/water

Kodachi	Uchidachi	Shidachi	Waza	Elements
Ipponme	Jodan	Chudan hanmi		Fire/water
–transition	Jodan	Iri-mi (S) <sup>40</sup>	Uke-nagashi	Fire/water
Nihonme	Gedan	Chudan hanmi		Earth/water
–transition	Chudan	Iri-mi (S)		Water/water
–transition	Waki	Iri-mi (P)		Metal/water
–transition	Jodan	Chudan hanmi	Uke-nagashi	Fire/water
Sanbonme	Chudan	Gedan hanmi		Water/earth
–transition	Chudan	Iri-mi (P)	Suriage, Suri-otoshi, Suri-nagashi, Suri-komi	Water/water

*Seigan no kamae.* At this point there must be a brief discussion of **seigan no kamae** as it has immense conceptual implications.<sup>41</sup>

The kanji for **seigan** is composed of *sei* (正, “correct, justice, righteous”) and *gan* (眼, “eyeball”). *Gan* can also be pronounced *gen* (same kanji) which relates to the *gyo-gen* (五眼), “five eyes”<sup>42</sup>, or “the five ways of seeing” in Buddhism.

This is why, originally, in *kata* 5-7 all **chudan kamae** were actually termed **seigan kamae** alluding to the practitioners coming to know and understand some of the loftier ideals in **kendo**.

Table 8: Tachi kendo no kata: kamae, waza, and elemental pairings

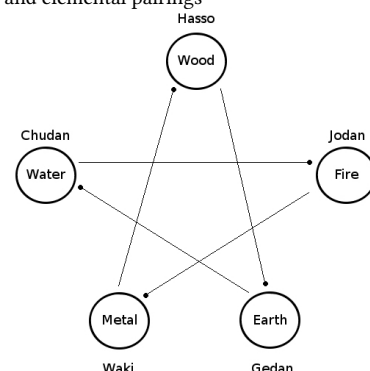


Figure 43: Mutual overcoming theory.

<sup>39</sup> The term “–transition” refers to a *kamae* change from the current *kamae* to another mid-*kata*.

Table 9: Kodachi kendo no kata: kamae, waza, and elemental pairings

During the *kata* *iri-mi* (S) and *iri-mi* (P) are essentially *chudan hanmi no kamae* and hence given the element of water.

<sup>40</sup> *Iri-mi* (S) and (P) refer to spiritual and physical *iri-mi* respectively.

<sup>41</sup> Inoue [8].

<sup>42</sup> Physical eye, heavenly eye, wisdom eye, dharma eye, and Buddha eye.

Kata	Kamae (Uchi./Shi.)
5 <sup>th</sup>	Hidari jodan/seigan
6 <sup>th</sup>	Seigan/gedan
7 <sup>th</sup>	Seigan/seigan

Table 10: Original indications for *kamae* in the *tachi kata*.



*Hasso no kamae.* The term **hasso** (八相, “eight phases”) has links to Buddhism as well as swordplay.<sup>43</sup> With respect to the sword, **hasso** refers to the eight cutting directions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. With respect to Buddhism, **hasso** refers to the eight events in the life of a Buddha: coming down from heaven, entering his mothers body, being born, leaving home, subjugating demons, attaining enlightenment, rolling the wheel of the law, and entering parinirvana.

<sup>43</sup> Inoue [8].

*Meaning behind the kata.* Finally expanded details<sup>44</sup> on the encoded meanings of the three groups of **kendo no kata: tachi kata 1–3, tachi kata 4–7** and **kodachi kata 1–3**.

<sup>44</sup> John Howell. *Kendo Kata and it’s Relationship with Humanity and Buddhism*. British Kendo Association. <http://kendo.org.uk>. 2010 [7], Inoue [8].

*Ipponme.* This **kata** is said to represent *gi* (義, “righteousness/justice”). Each person is fighting believing their individual reason for combat is a righteous one. Thus both the **uchidachi** and **shidachi** take similar **kamae** and face each other as equals. The winner of the combat is dependent on the technical expertise of the fighters; the more skilled combatant will win (live) and the other will lose (be killed). The **shidachi** wins through superior technique alone and annihilates the **uchidachi**. This corresponds to *shu* in **shu-ha-ri** as the **shidachi** strictly follows and uses the techniques he has been taught without question in order to survive.

This **kata**<sup>45</sup> is “a manifestation of the technical skill and conviction to kill or be killed for what one believes is right.”

<sup>45</sup> Inoue [8].

However, killing is the highest wrong that one can commit in Buddhist belief as all life is considered as sacred. Because of this the **shidachi** ought to feel the need for some type of penance<sup>46</sup>. This need for penance leads to the second **kata**.

<sup>46</sup> Kensei Hiwaki. *A Breakthrough in the Dilemma of War or Peace, The Teachings of Kendo*. B.K.A. News, #24. Issue archived at <http://kendo.org.uk>. 2000 [6] indicates this is a part of shidachi’s zanshin, “...entails repentance as well as mental and physical alertness.”

*Nihonme.* This is said to represent *jin* (仁, “patience, compassion, benevolence”). **Uchidachi** and **shidachi** assume the same **kamae**, essentially putting them in the same position as the first **kata**. This time **shidachi** decides to show compassion, stemming from the need for penance from the first **kata**, and chooses to strike **kote**. **Uchidachi** is defeated but his life is spared. This corresponds to *ha* in **shu-ha-ri** as the **shidachi** modifies his learned combat techniques according to his own ideas and needs. In this case his desire to not kill the **uchidachi**.

This is explained<sup>47</sup> as: “*Nihonme still has the same conviction (as ipponme), but is more advanced in that the goal is accomplished with more restraint, using just enough of your technical skill without overkill.*”

Also explained<sup>48</sup> as: “*The second kata demands the virtue that emanates benevolence to all the surrounding people. According to Inazo Nitobe, the benevolence of a samurai (warrior) is not a blind impulse, for it recognizes due regard of justice, and his benevolence does not remain merely a certain state of mind, but it is backed with power to save or kill (Nitobe, 1998). The lesson*

#### Technical & Personal Shu-Ha-Ri

Shu-ha-ri applies to shidachi’s personal growth as well as technical. Techniques begin as an absolute mimic of the instructor. Then the student learns to apply these techniques, altering them through their own understanding. Finally, the dependency on specific technique is unneeded as the student is able to apply their essence in all actions. The progression in personal growth is indicated by moving through stages of using techniques to annihilate, winning without killing, and ending conflict without harming the opponent.

<sup>47</sup> Inoue [8].

<sup>48</sup> Hiwaki [6].

of the second kata, therefore, refers to a much higher achievement than in the case of the first kata...”

*Sanbonme.* This kata represents *yu* (勇, “courage”). Again, both **uchidachi** and **shidachi** assume the same **kamae** and face each other as equals. However, this kata builds on the ideas in the second kata in that the **shidachi** defeats **uchidachi** without actually striking him. This corresponds to *ri* in **shu-ha-ri** as the **shidachi** is able to use his learned skills without being overtly dependent on them; he is free from their previously absolute structure (killing).

This kata is explained<sup>49</sup> as: “The technique used in *sanbonme* is *tsuki*, but nobody is *tsuki*-ed to death. Neither *uchidachi* nor *shidachi* are touched or injured in any way, and if this were a *kendo shiai*, the referees would have no other choice than to declare a draw.

However, *shidachi* is the one who ends up in control and makes *uchidachi* literally stare death in the face as the *kensen* is placed right between their eyes. One false move would result in instant death. This situation goes beyond a simple win/loss situation. In fact, this is the ultimate truth in *kendo*. An old Confucian saying states ‘nothing is more heartbreaking than a bird’s final song. Nothing is more truthful than a human’s last words.’ In *sanbonme*, the *uchidachi* is faced with death, and this moment is one of supreme reckoning. *Shidachi* has the power to simply dispose of *uchidachi*, but shows unequalled valour by not even touching the flesh. *Shidachi*’s *kensen* gives *uchidachi* the chance to reflect on the meaning of life, a transcendent appreciation of all living things on the verge of perishing, whilst all pretentiousness is struck from this fickle existence, and *uchidachi* is reduced to the most humble and honest of life forms. After the instantaneous and inspirational period of reflection, both resume *chudan* and go back to the start. Both have been enlightened by this experience and as they move back an unspoken oath is made to respect life and live it to the fullest, helping others to do the same. Such valour is revered by all races of people, and has the power to both pacify and encourage. This is the true objective of the *kendo* way.”

*Yonhonme – ropponme.* These kata embody the concepts of **in-yo** (陰陽) through the **kamae** used, see tables 8 and 9, p.62, and corresponds to the interplay of these ideas throughout nature.

Each **kamae**’s associated element, wood, metal, water, fire, and earth, is also associated<sup>50</sup> with the five cardinal virtues of Confucianism (五常, *gojo*). These are<sup>51</sup>: (仁義禮智信) *jin*, *gi*, *rei*, *chi*, *shin* or benevolence, justice, courtesy, wisdom, and integrity respectively.

<sup>49</sup> Inoue [8].

Kamae	Element	Virtue
Hasso	Wood	Jin
Waki	Metal	Gi
Chudan	Water	Rei
Jodan	Fire	Chi
Gedan	Earth	Shin

Table 11: Kendo **kamae**, their associated elements, & associated Confucian virtues.

<sup>50</sup> Howell [7].

<sup>51</sup> There are many similar English translations for these terms.

*Nanahonme.* This **kata**, the last in the set of “**in-yo kata**”, is meant to represent the harmony of **in-yo** but harmony at all levels, i.e., personal and societal.

This is explained<sup>52</sup> as: “*Kendo conducted in accordance with the principles of the sword is meant as a means for character development, on both a personal and societal level. Ultimately the goal is harmony at all levels. This very ideal was first expressed in writing in Japan by Shotoku Taishi (574-622).*”

<sup>52</sup> Inoue [8].

Shotoku instituted the Seventeen Article Constitution in 604, a set of moral commands for government officials, based on Confucianism and Buddhism, urging them to work together in harmony for the good of the central government. The first article states<sup>53</sup> “*Harmony is to be cherished, and opposition for oppositions sake is to be avoided as a matter of principle.*”

<sup>53</sup> Inoue [8].

The notion of harmony, with respect to **in-yo** as in the previous **kata** but also with respect to society and the notion of “*no conflict for conflicts sake*”, is expressed in this **kata**<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> The physical **in-yo** is seen in the actions of **shidachi** v.s. the overt **kamae** pairings of the previous **kata**. The societal harmony, as explained here, is demonstrated by **shidachi**’s choice of **kamae** and in the initial thrust/parry.

The goal of **kendo** as a means of character building, i.e., a “**do**” are, in modern days, encoded in the “Concept and Purpose of Kendo” by the All Japan Kendo Federation, p.4.

*Kodachi ipponme – nihonme.* These two **kata** have two sets of ideas at their core which give the essence of their meaning. As previously discussed on p.60, the **kodachi kata** are carried out with the feeling of **shin-gyo-so** which corresponds<sup>55</sup> to the notion of **shu-ha-ri**<sup>56</sup>, as already explained in the first three **tachi kata**, so will not be discussed here.

<sup>55</sup> Howell [7], Inoue [8].

The second is the notion of *chotan-ichi-mi* (長短一身), or (lit.) “*strong point/length, weak point/short, one body*”. This essentially says that everything has both advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses. Both of these aspects are part of the same package whether it be in using a long sword or a short sword, and to one who understands this there is no difference between the two.

<sup>56</sup> The notion of **shu-ha-ri** or **shin-gyo-so** also can be applied to the progression of *chotan-ichi-mi* towards **muto no kokoro** in the **kodachi kata**.

This is explained<sup>57</sup> as: “*Average men mistakenly think that a long weapon is advantageous when compared to a short one, but great men understand the concept of chotan-ichi-mi, where long and short are realized as one and the same. In other words, the length of the sword is decided by the strengths and weaknesses of the heart. As we strive to sharpen our spirit under the testing blade of self reflection, we come to realize that within our hearts reside strengths and weaknesses, virtues and shortcomings. These coexist as part of our being. These are the cho and tan of our heart. They are inevitable and coexist in harmony. Thus in this sense it is futile to ponder the merits of the length of ones weapon. [...] do not deliberate over the issues of length, but just throw your whole being selflessly into the attack and you will achieve your purpose. [...] In doing this the length of your sword will be in accord with the strength or the weakness of your heart, and long will become short if need be,*

<sup>57</sup> Inoue [8].

*and short will become long. An enlightened understanding will be attained that long and short, strong and weak are part of the same, and inextricably tied together.”*

*Kodachi sanbonme.* The final **kodachi kata** continues the notion of **shu-ha-ri** as in the previous two **kata**, but also extends upon the idea of *chotan-ichi-mi* to its “definitive aspiration”;<sup>58</sup> *muto no kokoro* (無刀の心) or the *heart of no sword*. *Muto no kokoro* implies that one realizes that the strength of their sword, whether long or short, is controlled by the strength of their heart. The ultimate realization being that one needs no sword at all, it is the spirit that determines victory or defeat.

<sup>58</sup> Inoue [8].

This is explained<sup>59</sup> as: *“The sword is controlled by the heart and the heart is not swayed in any way whether the sword is short or long. The heart controls the short or the long with no distinction. If the enemy holds a long sword and you hold a short sword, the spirit should not dwell on this fact, but assume a mindset that you have no sword at all. When the foe approaches and you are both consumed in the imminent smell of death, without hesitating seize the opportunity to throw your body and soul at your enemy, and without taking so much as a half step in retreat go right up to them, and clutch their very essence and quash it. This is how you defeat a longer sword with ease. [...] In essence, short is the starting point of long, and shortness taken to its ultimate extreme is nothing at all or “mu”. Forgetting that short is the source of long while engaging in combat with a foe using a longer weapon is foolish, but taking advantage of the fact that short is in fact the source, and having the ability to use short to quell long demonstrates supreme wisdom. The heart of no sword is the ultimate aspiration of chotan-ichi-mi.”*

<sup>59</sup> Inoue [8].

# *Kendo no Kata & Their Effects on Kendo*

*The following article was prepared by Sensei Morito Tsumura, Kendo 8<sup>th</sup> Dan, Kyoshi for a nihon kendo no kata & kihon bokuto waza seminar on June 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011 hosted by the Ottawa and Shoshin Kendo Clubs. The format of the article, notes & definitions have been altered from the original style to coincide with that of this text. The use of bold font is copied from the original article.*

ALTHOUGH it is a common tendency to set our goal in winning kendo matches, developing mental control is much more important. The best way, and absolutely essential, to accomplish this is to practice **kendo no kata** which in turn will produce **kihaku**<sup>60</sup>, 気迫. Afterall, however skillful, **kendo no kata** without **kihaku** is nothing more than a dance with a sword.

<sup>60</sup> Kihaku: ones mental/spiritual strength.

Therefore practicing **kendo no kata** with **kihaku** will produce improvement in the following aspects related to kendo:

1. Calmness and good conduct
2. Fine posture
3. Sensing opponents movements and intentions
4. Agility in movements
5. Eliminating bad habits
6. Reading of right **maai**<sup>61</sup>.
7. Increasing **kiai** and **kihaku**
8. Deeper understanding of kendo and its meaning
9. Fine character with dignity and elegance

<sup>61</sup> Maai: distance from the opponent.

*Basic Kendo Practice with Bokuto (木刀による剣道基本稽古法)*

Through the basic kendo practice with **bokuto**<sup>62</sup>, one must always regard the **bokuto** as if it is a real sword<sup>63</sup>. With such understanding of a sword, we learn the basic technique of **shinai** kendo through practice with **bokuto**.

Using **bokuto** will also enable us to understand and learn how the sword is used in such **waza**<sup>64</sup> as **harai**, **nuki**, **suriage**, **kaeshi**, and **kiriotoshi**, which in turn will utilize improvement of **kendo no kata**.

*Points to Observe in Practicing Kendo no Kata*

While we observe certain set form and order when practicing **kendo no kata**, it is important to be always serious and apply **kihaku**.

**Uchidachi**<sup>65</sup>, who makes the move at the most opportune moment of full **kihaku**, always initiates the attack upon which **shidachi** must counterattack in response.

Despite the defensive appearance of his attack, **shidachi** must attack with the vigor and active spirit of an offensive attacker.

While **uchidachi** teaches from the position of a master, **shidachi** must learn the skill for victory.

Excellent form (**kata**) result only when perfect balance between practical skills, masterly techniques, and flexible movements is achieved.

*When Practicing, Observe the Following Basic Rules*

1. Always keep your eyes on the opponents eyes.
2. Use **suriashi**<sup>66</sup> both in moving forward from the front foot and backward from the back foot.
3. Use large movements of the sword when attacking, drawing an arc with the point of the sword.
4. In attack, draw your back foot close to the front foot, relax your shoulders, gather force in your lower abdomen, and step forward from your waist.
5. **Kakegoe**<sup>67</sup> should come from the **tanden**<sup>68</sup> forcibly: “*Yaaah!*” for **uchidachi**, “*Tooh!*” for **shidachi**.
6. Hold your breath when moving forward or backward in order to maximize inner power. Breathe abdominally when entering a **maai** so that the opponent will not detect your move.
7. In **kata** forms with the long sword (no. 1 to no. 7) “**ki wo mite**”<sup>69</sup> while in **kata** forms with the short sword (no. 8 to no. 10) “**irimi ni narouto suru**”<sup>70</sup> are the emphasis.

<sup>62</sup> Bokuto: wooden sword.

<sup>63</sup> Understanding that the Japanese sword has a particular shape each part of which having a distinct function.

<sup>64</sup> Waza: technique.

<sup>65</sup> Uchidachi: initiating attacker.

<sup>66</sup> Suriashi: footwork where feet brush the floor.

<sup>67</sup> Kakegoe: shouting.

<sup>68</sup> Tanden: lower abdomen.

<sup>69</sup> Ki wo mite: seizing the moment.

<sup>70</sup> Irimi ni narouto suru: taking overpowering approach.

# Glossary

## Counting

Counting			Enumerations	
English	Japanese	Korean	English	Japanese
One	Ichi	Hana	First	Ipponme
Two	Ni	Dul	Second	Nihonme
Three	San	Set	Third	Sanbonme
Four	Shi	Net	Fourth	Yonhonme
Five	Go	Dasok	Fifth	Gohonme
Six	Roku	Yu-Set	Sixth	Ropponme
Seven	Shichi	Eel-Gop	Seventh	Nanahonme
Eight	Hachi	Yu-Dul	Eighth	Happonme
Nine	Kyu	A-Hop	Ninth	Kyuhonme
Ten	Ju	Yul	Tenth	Juponme

Table 12: Counting and Enumerations.

## Courtesies

- **Arigato Gozaimashita :** (有賀とご座いました) “Thank you” (for practicing with me).
- **Domo Arigato Gozaimashita :** (どうも有賀とご座いました) “Thank you” (very polite context).
- **Onegaishimasu :** (御願います) “If you please” (practice with/teach me).
- **Otagai ni Rei :** (お互いに礼) “Bow to your peers”.
- **Sensei ni Rei :** (先生に礼) “Bow to the Sensei”.
- **Shomen ni Rei :** (正面に礼) “Bow to the Shomen”.
- **Kamae-To :** (構え刀) “Assume your stance”.
- **Men (wo) Tore :** (面を取れ) “Take off your Men”.
- **Men (wo) Tsuke :** (面を付け) “Put on your Men”.
- **Mokuso :** (黙想) “Meditation”.
- **Osame-To :** (納め刀) “Put away your weapon”.
- **Seiza :** (正座) Assume Seiza, the formal sitting position.
- **Seiretsu :** (整列) “Line up”.
- **Sonkyo :** (蹲踞) Assume Sonkyo, the formal crouching position.
- **Tai-To :** (帯刀) Bring your Shinai to the ready position at your hip.
- **Yame :** (止め) “Stop”.
- **Yasume :** (休め) “Break/rest period”.

## Dojo Commands

- **Hajime :** (始め) “Begin/start”.

## Shiai Terms & Commands

- **Chuken** : (中堅) Third player on a team match.
- **Encho** : (延長) Overtime period. **Encho** is “sudden death”, i.e. the first point wins. There is usually no time limit during **Encho**.
- **Fukusho** : (副将) Fourth player on a team match.
- **Fukushin** : (副審) Sub-referee during **Shiai**
- **Fusen-Gachi** : (不戦勝ち) Win through default/disqualification.
- **Gogi** : (合議) Judges conference. Players **Osame-To**, step back to the outer edge of the court and assume **Sonkyo** until the **Gogi** is over.
- **Hajime** : (始め) Begin a match.
- **Hansoku** : (反則) Penalty. Match stops, and players return to their starting positions. Judges will announce the offense.
- **Hansoku Ikkai** : (反則一回) 1st penalty.
- **Hansoku Nikai** : (反則二回) 2nd penalty. A second penalty results in one point being awarded to the opponent.
- **Hantei** : (判定) Judges decision.
- **Hikiwake** : (引き分け) Match is a tie. (applicable to team matches)
- **Jiho** : (次鋒) Second player on a team match.
- **Jikan Desu** : (時間です) Time keepers call to indicate “Time-up”. Players return to starting positions.
- **Mejirushi** : (目印) Coloured flag worn on backs of the players. Also termed a “**Tasuki**”.
- **Nihonme** : (二本目) Begin round two.
- **Senpo** : (先鋒) First player on a team match.
- **Shinpan** : (審判) Judge.
- **Shinpan-Cho** : (審判長) The referee director (head referee)
- **Shinpan-Shunin** : (審判主任) The court specific referee director.
- **Shobu** : (勝負) Begin final round (of a match).
- **Shobu-Ari** : (勝負あり) Match point. Players assume **Sonkyo**, **Osame-To**, and exit the court area.
- **Shushin** : (主審) The head judge during **Shiai**.

- **Taisho** : (大将) Fifth player on a team match.
- **Tasuki** : Another name for the **Mejirushi**.
- **Wakare** : (分かれ) Command to separate players back to **Issoku Itto no Maai**, but maintaining relative positions in the court.
- **Yame** : (止め) Stop the match. Players return to starting positions.

## Common Terms

- **Age-To** : (上げ刀) A **Katate** variant of **Jodan no Kamae**.
- **Ai** : (1) (prefix) (相) “*Mutual, balanced*”. (2) (suffix) (合) “*Union, integration*”.
- **Aite** : (相手) “*Opponent*”.
- **Ai-Kakari Geiko** : (相掛稽古) “*Mutual attack practice*”. Two **Kendoka** do **Kakari Geiko** together.
- **Ai-Uchi** : (相打ち) “*Mutual strike*”. Commonly interpreted as a “simultaneous strike(s)”.
- **Ashi** : (足) “*Foot*” or “*leg*”.
- **Ashi-Kamae** : (足構え) “*Foot Position*”. This term is used to refer to the position of ones feet.
- **Ashi-Sabaki** : (足捌き) (lit.) “*Foot/leg handle/deal with*”. A term used to refer to “footwork” of any type.
- **Ayumi-Ashi** : (歩み足) “*Walking foot*”. This style of footwork refers to the normal walking motion where the right and left feet pass each other in an obvious “right-left-right” succession.
- **Bogu** : (防具) Kendo Armor. See also **Men**, **Kote**, **Do**, and **Tare**.
- **Bokuto** : (木刀) “*Wooden sword*”. In **Kendo** the **Bokuto** is used exclusively to practice **Kata**. Also sometimes referred to as a **bokken** (木剣).
- **Bokuto Waza** : (木刀技) A series of forms created to practice **Kendo** fundamentals with the **Bokuto**. They are also a means through which the **Kendoka** can understand the link between **Shinai Kendo** and a **Katana**.



- **Bushi** : (武士) “War/military gentleman”. A samurai or, more commonly translated as, warrior.
- **Bushido** : (武士道) “The way of the samurai”. A code of ethics, morals, and conduct designed for the samurai.
- **Chi no Kamae** : (地の構え) The “kamae of earth”. See **Gedan no Kamae**.
- **Chika-ma** : (近間) A distance (from your opponent) that is shorter than **Issoku Itto no Maai**.
- **Chisai** : (小さい) “Small”.
- **Chisai Waza** : (小さい技) “Small techniques”. A term used to refer to small strikes.
- **Chudan no Kamae** : (中段の構え) “Mid level” **Kamae**. **Chudan** is known as the “kamae of water” due to its adaptability for offensive and defensive **Waza**. **Chudan** is the fundamental **Kamae** in **Kendo**.
- **Chudan Hanmi no Kamae** : (中段半身の構え) A variant of **Chudan no Kamae** while using the **Kodachi** in the **Nihon Kendo no Kata**. See also **Hanmi no Kamae**.
- **Connection** : A mental and physical connection with the opponent. The mental connection implies one must have a perception as to how the opponent will act to a given situation, their intents, as well as perception of their level of focus, **Ki Ken Tai no Ichi**, and **Zanshin**. The physical connection allows one to react to physical movements, maintain distance, adjust **Kamae**, etc... A **Connection** allows you to mirror the opponent mentally and physically, keeping a balance until a **Suki** is found or created by oneself or ones opponent.
- **Daito** : (大刀) The long **Shinai** used in **Nito no Kamae**.
- **Dan** : (段) “Step” or “level”. Often used to refer to ones rank in **Kendo**.
- **Dan-I** : (段位) This refers specifically to the set of **Dan** ranks in **Kendo**, commonly interpreted as “black belt”. **Dan** ranks range from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>.
- **Datotsu** : (打突) A “strike” or “thrust”.
- **Datotsu Bu** : (打突部) The portion of the **Shinai** strikes are made with; the **Monouchi**.
- **Datotsu Bui** : (打突部位) Portion of the **Bogu** where one may strike.
- **De** : (出) “Coming out”, i.e., something is being initiated or started.
- **Dead** : A term used to describe ones weapon when its ability for offensive and defensive techniques has been eliminated. Usually the result of improper grip or striking technique, or if one has had their strike effectively parried via some type of defensive **Waza**. Ones weapon also becomes **Dead** if they do not have proper **Zanshin**.
- **Dead Hands** : Similar to your weapon becoming **Dead**, however in this case it is caused by your hands/forearms being too close together during or after striking. Specifically the spacing required between your forearm and the **Tsuka** for proper **Kamae** is lost and the wrists are fully arced forward. When one has **Dead Hands** the left hand will be level with, or above, the right wrist during a strike.
- **Debana Waza** : (出ばな技) Techniques used to strike as an attack is being initiated or “just coming out”.
- **Do** : (1) (道) “Do”, as in **Kendo**: “the way”, i.e. a “way” of enlightenment, or of bettering oneself. (2) (胴) “Do”, as in **Bogu**: the abdomen target/protector.
- **Do-Chikawa** : (胴乳皮) Leather loops on the **Do-Kawa** used to attach the **Do-Himo**.
- **Do-Himo** : (胴紐) The cords used to tie the **Do**.

- **Do-Mune** : (胴胸) The upper chest portion of the Do.
- **Do-Kawa** : (胴皮) The lower portion of the Do; the striking area.
- **Dojo** : (道場) “Practice hall”. The place where one practices **Kendo**.
- **Enzan no Metsuke** : (遠山の目付け) “Fixing your eyes on a distant mountain”. See **Metsuke**.
- **Four Sicknesses** : The four sicknesses (**Shikai**), or admonitions, in **Kendo** are ku (恐怖) *fear*, gi (疑) *doubt*, kyu (驚) *surprise*, and waku (惑) *confusion*.
- **Fumi Komi** : (踏み込み) The shortened, and almost exclusively used, term for *Fumi Komi Ashi* meaning “lunging footwork”. With **Fumi Komi** one uses a large, lunging **Okuri-Ashi** style footwork. This type of footwork is one of the exceptions where a **Kendoka** will partially forgo using **Suri-Ashi** as the leading foot will momentarily leave the ground near the end of the **Fumi Komi** step. This type of footwork is well known in **Kendo** as the the one that makes “the stomping noise”.
- **Gedan no Kamae** : (下段の構え) The “low level” **Kamae**. **Gedan** is known as the “*kamae of earth*”. **Gedan** is considered a physically defensive **Kamae** however a strong and aggressive spirit is required for it to be successful.
- **Gedan Hanmi no Kamae** : (下段半身の構え) A variation of **Gedan no Kamae** when using the **Kodachi** in the **Kendo no Kata**. See also **Hanmi no Kamae**.
- **Geiko** : (稽古) See **Keiko**.
- **Gi** : (着) The traditional practice top worn in **Kendo**. Also known as a *kendo-gi* or *do-gi*.
- **Gyaku** : (逆) “Reversed” or “opposite”.
- **Ha** : (刃) The edged portion (blade) of a Japanese sword.
- **Hakama** : (袴) The traditional practice pants in **Kendo**.
- **Hanmi** : (半身) “Half body”.
- **Hanmi Kamae** : (半身構え) “Half body stance”. Referring to ones torso when assuming a **Hanmi Kamae** as it is turned or twisted such that only half of it is exposed to the opponent. A **Hanmi Kamae** is a defensive position used to minimize exposure, i.e., targets, to the opponent.
- **Hara** : (腹) The “intestines” or “gut”. Located three fingers width below the navel.
- **Harai** : (払) From the verb *Harau*: to “sweep away” or “brush off”.
- **Harai Waza** : (払技) “Sweeping aside” **Waza**. A **Waza** where one strikes the opponents **Shinai**, breaking their **Kamae**, to create a **Suki**.
- **Hasaki** : (刃先) A swords “cutting edge”.
- **Hasso no Kamae** : (八相の構え) **Hasso** is known as “the *kamae of wood*” or the “*eight position stance*” and is a variant of **Jodan no Kamae**.
- **Haya Suburi** : (速素振り) “Quick” or “swift” **Suburi**. Commonly referred to as jumping **Suburi**, this exercise is a standard warm up and endurance drill in all **Dojos**.
- **Heijoshin** : (平常心) “Common/ everyday mind”. In **Kendo** a basic definition of this is keeping one’s mind in a normal state, unaffected by things around you; your mindset during regular or common situations.
- **Hi no Kamae** : (火の構え) The “*kamae of fire*”. See **Jodan no Kamae**.
- **Hidari** : (左) “Left” (direction).
- **Hidari-Te** : (左手) “Left-handed”.
- **Hiki-Waza** : (ひき技) Techniques where one strikes while moving backward. Also termed “*Hikibana Waza*”.
- **Hikibana Waza** : (ひきばな技) See **Hiki-Waza**.
- **Himo** : (紐) “String” or “cord”.

- **Hiraki** : (開き) From the verb hiraku meaning “to open” or “unfold”.
- **Hiraki-Ashi** : (開き足) “Opening Foot”. This type of footwork is a circular side step to the left or right.
- **Hirauchi** : (平打ち) To strike with the flat of the **Shinai**.
- **Hodoku** : (解く) A Japanese verb meaning “to loosen”. This term is used throughout the text to refer to the breaking of **Kamae** at the end of each **Kata**.
- **Ichidan Suburi** : (一段素振り) “One step” **Suburi**.
- **In-Yo** : (陰陽) The Japanese reading of the Chinese concept of Yin-Yang.
- **Ire-Zuki** : *Nayashi ire-zuki* (萎し入れ突き) is the full name for **Shidachi**'s parry and counter attack in the third **Tachi Kata**. Specifically, **Nayashi**, “wither, droop; to be lame”, ire, “to let in”, and **Tsuki** (zuki) “thrust”, is when one draws back the opponents thrust, deflecting it, and then immediately counter thrusts.
- **Iri-Mi** : (入り身) (lit.) “Entering body/person/blade”, usually translated as “Entering directly”. In **Kendo** this is the fundamental intent, mindset, and motion of one using the **Kodachi**. The action of spiritually threatening and physically moving into your opponents **Maai** (to attack).
- **Issoku Itto no Maai** : (一足一刀の間合) “The one-step-one-sword distance”. The distance at which one can launch an attack (or evade one) by taking just one step. This is the fundamental **Maai** of **Kendo**. While there are approximations to what this **Maai** is, usually described as the distance where you and your opponents sword tips cross, each individual person will have their own unique **Issoku Itto no Maai** simply due to the fact that each person will have a different “one-step” distance. This distance is found through regular practice and continuously focusing on attacking ones opponent from as far away from them as possible. The maximum distance you can be away from the opponent, while still being able to take one step in and hit effectively, is your **Issoku Itto no Maai**.
- **Ji-Geiko** : (自稽古) Free sparring practice. See also **Keiko**.
- **Jin-Bu** : (刃部) The “blade edge” of the **Shinai**.
- **Jishu-Geiko** : (自主稽古) “Self-study”. Perhaps more appropriately “self motivated study”. To actively learn by watching, reading, contemplating what was taught, etc.
- **Jodan no Kamae** : (上段の構え) The “high level” **Kamae**, **Jodan** is known as the “*kamae of fire*”. As **Jodan** is very spiritually aggressive, the terms **Ten no Kamae** and **Hi no Kamae** are its other names specifically used to describe the spirit required. It is said the spiritual component of this **Kamae** determines its success much more so than ones physical prowess.
- **Joge Buri** : (上下振り) “Up-down swing”. A very basic form of swing practice used to teach the beginner how to swing in large motions along their centerline. Often used as a warm up to a **Kendo** practice.
- **Kaeshi Waza** : (返し技) “Return” **Waza**. These are techniques such that one receives the **Aites Shinai** with their own with a temporary block and then *immediately* counter attack.
- **Kakari Geiko** : (掛稽古) “Attack practice”, i.e., an “all out” sparring practice. This drill is very common in **Kendo Dojos** as it builds endurance and spirit. **Kendoka** attempt to attack as quickly and as continuously as possible while still maintaining proper form and **Zanshin**. With **Kakari Geiko** the **Zanshin** is to be more spiritual than physical.
- **Kakari-te** : (掛手) “Attacking hand”. In **Kendo**, the **Kakari-te** is the one

- who attacks or who is striking during drill practice.
- **Kamae** : (構え) “*Stance*” or “*position*”. In the context of **Kendo**, when one assumes a **Kamae** the term has an obvious physical meaning, but it also has mental or spiritual implications. Meaning, assuming a **Kamae** doesn’t mean to just hold your **Shinai** in a certain position but that you must also assume a certain spiritual attitude. Proper physical and spiritual “*position*” is what makes effective **Kamae**.
  - **Kane** : (金) “*Metal*”.
  - **Kekegoe** : (掛け声) “*Yell*” (used to encourage activity). Although having very different meanings, in **Kendo** this is often interchanged with **Kiai**.
  - **Kane no Kamae** : (金の構え) The “*kamae of metal*”. See **Wakigamae**.
  - **Kata** : (形) See **Nihon Kendo no Kata**.
  - **Katana** : (刀) “*Sword*”. Also pronounced as **To**, as in **Bokuto**.
  - **Katate** : (片手) “*One-handed*”.
  - **Katate Waza** : (片手技) “*One hand*” techniques.
  - **Katsugi Waza** : (担ぎ技) “*Shouldering the sword*” technique. The purpose of the shouldering motion is to create a **Suki** in your opponent while still being in an effective position to attack.
  - **Katsu** : (喝) The equivalent of a **Kiai** shout used to awaken oneself spiritually (in a zen sense). Also often referred to as a “*kwatz*”.
  - **Keiko** : (稽古) “*Practice*”, “*training*”, or “*study*”. Replaced with **Geiko** depending on (grammatical) context, this term is most often used by **Kendoka** to imply sparring practice in **Bogu**.
  - **Kendo** : (剣道) “*The way of the sword*”.
  - **Kendoka** : (剣道家) A **Kendo** student.
  - **Kensen** : (剣先) The tip of the **Shinai**.
  - **Kera** : (けら) The padded area on the back of the palm of the **Kote**.
  - **Ki** : (気) “*Mind*”, “*spirit*”, or “*energy*”.
  - **Ki Ken Tai no Ichi** : (気剣体の一致) “*Energy/spirit*”, “*sword*”, “*body*” “*(done) as one*”. Simultaneous action of the spirit, sword, and body of a **Kendoka**. A fundamental principle in **Kendo** related to striking properly and effectively.
  - **Kiai** : (気合い) “*Energy integration*”. Expression of ones spirit and intent through the voice.
  - **Kiarasoi** : (気争い) “*Spirit of mutual combat*”. Overcoming an opponent through a vigorous spirit, pushing forward (physically) to break his guard.
  - **Kigurai** : (気位) “*Noble presence, bearing, pride, dignity*”.
  - **Kihaku** : (気迫) “*Spiritual force*”.
  - **Kihon** : (基本) “*Basic*”, “*fundamental*”.
  - **Kihon Bokuto Waza** : (基本木刀技) See **Bokuto Waza**.
  - **Kikai** : (気海) “*The sea of energy*”.
  - **Kiri Kaeshi** : (切り返し) “*Returning cuts*”. A coordinated practice of **Men**, **Taiatari**, and **Sayu-Men** with an opponent. This is one of the most important drills in **Kendo**. Often done as both the initial and final drill of a **Kendoka**’s **Bogu** practice.
  - **Kiri-Otoshi** : (切り落とし) “*Cut*” “*dropping*” or “*losing*”. A **Waza** for when two strikes occur in a potential **Ai-Uchi**, one strike pushes the other aside, by the act of cutting alone, and lands on the opponent.
  - **Ko-Dare** : (小垂) The small inner flaps on the **Tare**.
  - **Kobushi** : (拳) “*Fist*”.
  - **Kodachi** : (小太刀) The short sword used in the **Nihon Kendo no Kata**.
  - **Kohai** : (後輩) A “*junior*”. This is a relative term relating to experience in **Kendo** and not necessarily ones age.
  - **Kokoro** : (心) “*Spirit*” or “*mind*”.

- **Kokoro no Kamae** : (心の構え) A “spiritual” or “mental stance”. This refers to a mindset, or attitude.
- **Koshiita** : (腰板) “Back/waist plate”. The firm, trapezoid shaped plate on the back of the **Hakama**.
- **Kote** : (小手) The “forearm” target. Also the protective glove worn in practice.
- **Kote-Gashira** : (小手頭) The finger portion of the **Kote**.
- **Kuraizume** : (位詰め) To seize with superior poise and spirit. In the **Kata** this refers to the act of invading your opponents **Maai** with the feeling of walking forward in an unstoppable thrust.
- **Kyu** : (級) “rank”, “class”. In **Kendo** this is used as a second ranking system for beginners, i.e., those who are below the **Dan** ranks. **Kyu** ranks usually begin at 6<sup>th</sup> and range to 1<sup>st</sup>, however younger **Kendoka** may begin at 10<sup>th</sup>.
- **Ma** : (間) “Space”. Used in terms referring to distance or spacing.
- **Maai** : (間合) “Spacial integration”. Usually interpreted as “distance” in **Kendo**, proper **Maai** takes into account a number of different factors than simply physical distancing. Speed (your own), opponent speed, reaction time, power, distance to opponent, and **Kamae** are all factors of **Maai**.
- **Mae** : (前) “Front” or “forward” (direction).
- **Men** : (面) Helmet, head target.
- **Men-Buton** : (面ぶとん) The cloth portion of the **Men** covering the head.
- **Men-Chikawa** : (面乳皮) The small leather pieces the **Men-Himo** are (usually) attached to when fixing them onto the **Men**. There are two different types of **Men-Chikawa** used depending on the method used for wearing the **Men**, i.e., kanto or kansai style.
- **Men-Dare** : (面垂) The large flaps of the **Men-Buton** which come out over the shoulders.
- **Men-Gane** : (面金) The metal grill that covers the face in the **Men**.
- **Men-Himo** : (面紐) The strings used to tie the **Men**.
- **Men-Tate-Gane** : (面縦金) The large vertical bar of the **Men-Gane**.
- **Men-Yoko-Gane** : (面横金) The horizontal bars of the **Men-Gane**.
- **Metsuke** : (目付け) “Point of observation”. The full term is “*enzan no metsuke*” or “fixing your eyes on a distant mountain”. This term, in **Kendo**, refers to “where you should look” while engaging an opponent. In essence you liken looking at your opponent to looking at a mountain with the opponents eyes being the peak. If you simply focus on just the peak, you’ll not be able to see an entire mountain. Instead, if you look toward the peak the rest of the mountain easily comes into view.
- **Migi** : (右) “Right” (direction).
- **Migi-Te** : (右手) “Right-handed”.
- **Mitsu no Sen** : (三つの先) “The three sens.” This refers to the three initiatives in which to react to your opponent. The first, *sen sen no sen*, refers to having prior knowledge of your opponents intentions and, using this knowledge, draw out their attack capitalizing on it. The second, *sen no sen*, refers to attacking at the very moment your opponent is about to attack. Third is *go sen no sen*. This refers to counter-striking your opponent after they have made their attack. The opponent is countered as in *sen sen no sen*, but knowledge of the opponents intentions are not known beforehand.
- **Mizu no Kamae** : (水の構え) The “*kamae of water*”. See **Chudan no Kamae**.

- **Moku no Kamae** : (木の構え) The “*kamae of wood*”. See **Hasso no Kamae**.
- **Monouchi** : “*Hitting part*”. The upper ¼ length of a **Shinai** measured from the **Kensen** down. See also **Datotsu Bu**. From All Japan Kendo Federation [2], “*the part of the blade of a sword which cuts the best, said to be about 10cm from the tip*”.
- **Morote** : (諸手) “*Two handed*”.
- **Motodachi** : (元立ち) Moto, “*origin/cause*”, tachi, “*standing*”. The **Motodachi** is the one who creates or offers an opening for the **Kakari-te** to practice some type of **Waza**.
- **Motodachi Geiko** : (元立ち稽古) Also termed **Uchi Komi Geiko**, this is when a **Kendoka** strikes targets offered by an opponent.
- **Mu** : (無) A prefix indicating a negation in the Japanese Language.
- **Mudra** : The **Mudra** (Sanskrit: , “*gesture*”) are hand positions used to symbolize various Buddhist concepts and meanings. There are a number of such hand positions, however in **Kendo** we use but one: the **Zenjo-In**, the mudra of meditation during the brief period of **Mokuso** before and after practice.
- **Mugamae** : (無構え) “*No kamae*” or the “*void kamae*”. This stance expresses a sense of spiritual superiority where an overtly physical **Kamae** is unnecessary; one is able to stand ready with their spirit or presence alone.
- **Mune** : (1) (棟) The top (blunt) side of a Japanese sword, also referred to as “*mine*”. (2) (胸) “*Chest*”. The upper chest portion of the “**Do**”; **Do-Mune**.
- **Mune-Chikawa** : (胸乳皮) Leather loops on the **Do-Mune** used to attach the **Himo**.
- **Mushin** : (無心) “*No mind*”. In very basic terms, **Mushin** is acting on natural reflex alone, i.e., not thinking about what to do or the effects of an action.
- **Nakayui** : (中結) The leather tie on the **Shinai** ¼ the length of the **Shinai** from the top.
- **Naname Buri** : (斜め振り) “*Diagonal swing*”. Similar to **Joge Buri** but with the strikes angled at about 30° to 45°. Also used as a warm up to a practice.
- **Nayashi** : (萎し) From the verb *na(eru)*: *wither, droop; to be lame*..
- **Nidan Suburi** : (二段素振り) “*Two step*” **Suburi**.
- **Nidan Waza** : (二段技) “*Two step*” **Waza**.
- **Nihon Kendo no Kata** : (日本剣道の形) “*The Japanese kendo forms*”. A set of formal movements and techniques which form the basis of modern **Kendo**. Usually referred to as simply **Kata**.
- **Nito** : (二刀) The common abbreviation when referring to **Nito Kamae**.
- **Nito Kamae** : (二刀構え) “*Two sword*” **Kamae**. In **Kendo** one uses two **Shinai**; the **Daito** (long sword), and the **Shoto** (short sword).
- **Nuki** : (抜き) From the verb *nukeru*: to “*escape*”.
- **Nuki Waza** : (抜き技) **Waza** where you simultaneously dodge a strike and execute a counter-attack.
- **O-Dare** : (大垂) The large outer flaps on the **Tare**.
- **Obi** : (帯) “*Belt*”. The **Obi** is a belt that is worn (optionally) with the **Hakama** and **Gi**. Traditionally the **Obi** is the belt that held the samurais sword at their waist.
- **Oji Waza** : (応じ技) Counter-attacking **Waza**, i.e., techniques used in response to your opponents actions.
- **Okuri-Ashi** : (送り足) From the verb *okuru* meaning “*to send out*” or “*see off*”. The standard footwork in **Kendo** where one steps “right-left” in succession using **Suri-Ashi**.

- **Omote** : (表) “Front” or “visible side”. In **Kendo** this refers to the holders left side of the **Shinai**.
- **Orishiki Do** : (折り敷き胴) “Kneeling Do”. This is a **Do** strike executed by kneeling v.s. the usual **Fumi Komi** step. It is (seemingly) an unused **Waza** in modern **Kendo** save for the **Nihon Kendo no Kata**.
- **Rei** : (礼) (1) “Bow”, or the act of bowing. (2) A term referring to etiquette in general, i.e., **Reigi** and **Reiho**.
- **Reigi** : (礼儀) “Bow/thanks rule/ceremony”. **Reigi** refers to the reasons behind **Rei**, i.e., “why”, “who”, and “when” we are to perform the actions of **Reiho**.
- **Reiho** : (礼法) “Bow/thanks law/principle”. The systemization of etiquette and formality.
- **Renzoku** : (連続) “Continuous, repeating”.
- **Riai** : (理合い) “Principles of/behind”. The condition under which an action or actions are rational, purposeful.
- **Ritsu Rei** : (立礼) “Standing” **Rei**.
- **Sage-To** : (下げ刀) “Hanging sword”. The relaxed standing position with the **Shinai** held at ones side.
- **Sakigawa** : (先革) Leather cup on the end of the **Shinai**.
- **Sakigomu** : (先ゴム) Rubber insert inside the tip of the **Shinai**.
- **Samurai** : (侍) See **Bushi**.
- **Sandan Suburi** : (三段素振り) “Three step” **Suburi**.
- **San Satsu Ho** : (三冊法) Three laws for defeating an opponent; kill their sword, kill their spirit, and kill their techniques.
- **Sayu-Men** : (左右面) An angled strike to the upper left or right **Men**.
- **Seigan no Kamae** : (正眼の構え) (lit.) “Correct eye” **Kamae**, often translated as “aiming at the eyes”. A variant of **Chudan no Kamae**, **Seigan** is normally used in response to **Jodan no Kamae** as it offers better **Kote** protection and facilitates the use of certain **Oji Waza** against strikes made from **Jodan**.
- **Seiza** : (正座) “Correct sitting” (position). The Japanese formal seated position.
- **Seme** : (攻め) (n) An “attack” or “offense”. From the verb *semeru* meaning “to attack”, “to assault”. **Seme** is often interpreted as “pressure”. This refers to a spiritual or mental pressure, not an actual physical force. If a **Kendoka** can pressure their opponent spiritually, they will be able produce **Suki** in their opponent creating an opportunity to strike. Effective **Seme** stems from ones spirit, form, posture, **Kamae**, and is the product of many years of diligent practice.
- **Seme-Komu** : (攻め込む) “Pressuring step”. The forward step taken by **Shidachi** during the second **kodachi kata** which forces **Uchidachi** to step back into **Wakigamae**.
- **Senpai** : (先輩) “Senior/older graduate”. This is a relative term relating to experience in **Kendo** and not necessarily to ones age.
- **Sen** : (先) An abbreviation of the term “sente”, “first move, forestalling, initiative”.
- **Sensei** : (先生) “Teacher”.
- **Shiai** : (試合) A **Kendo** match where points are scored.
- **Shidachi** : (仕太刀) “The doing sword” or “the serving sword”. The **Shidachi** assumes the role of the “student” in the **Kata**.
- **Shi Kai** : (四戒) “Four admonitions”. See **Four Sicknesses**.
- **Shikake Waza** : (しかけ技) Techniques to initiate a strike.
- **Shikai** : (四戒) See **Four Sicknesses**.
- **Shin** : (心) “Mind”, “heart”, or “spirit”.
- **Shin-Gyo-So** : (真行草) The three feelings which the **Shidachi** embodies in the **Kodachi Kata**. ‘Shin’, lit. “truth”, ‘Gyo’, lit. “stream”, and

‘So’, lit. “grass”. These also correspond to the ideas of three phases or transitions, for example *formal*, *semi-formal*, *informal*. Another example, according to Inoue [8], is referring to shapes or forms where ‘Shin’ is the true shape, ‘So’ is the essence of the shape, and ‘Gyo’ is the transition between the two. These feelings also correspond to **Shu-Ha-Ri**.

- **Shinai** : (竹刀) Bamboo practice sword.
- **Shinogi** : (鑷) The ridge on the side of a blade and running along its length, usually closer to the **Mune** than the blades edge.
- **Shinogi o Kezuru** : (鑷を削る) “*Shaving the shinogi*”. This is done in the fourth **Tachi Kata** after the **Uchidachi** and **Shidachi** launch a strike and end up in **Ai-Uchi**. While maintaining a sense of combative tension, each one must fight for center in order to prevent a **Suki** on which their opponent can capitalize. This is the essence of **Tsubazeriai**.
- **Shisei** : (姿勢) “*Position*” or “*stance*”. This term, while having a similar translation with **Kamae**, has a completely different connotation. **Shisei** refers to a physical position only whereas **Kamae** has an associated *spiritual* element. For example, *tai-to shisei* or *sage-to shisei* are common *position* terms which are shortened to simply **Tai-To** and **Sage-To** in **Kendo**.
- **Shishin** : (止心) “*Stopped mind*”. This refers to your mind becoming focused or stopped on something making you unable to act freely. Focusing on the opponent’s weapon, on making plans to find an opening, the need to protect yourself, not wanting to get hit or counter attacked, etc... are just a small number of common examples. **Shishin** is often linked to the **Shikai**.
- **Shizentai** : (自然体) The “*Natural body*”. This posture is one where the **Kendoka** stands with natural (proper) posture, i.e., standing straight and extending the spine, shoulders back, arms hanging naturally at ones side, feet shoulder width, and the abs engaged via a pelvic tilt. **Migi** and **Hidari Shizentai** is when the right or left foot is forward respectively and the opposite shoulder is pulled backward somewhat.
- **Shomen** : (正面) (1) The center or front of the **Men**. (2) The symbolic head of the **Dojo**.
- **Shoshin** : (初心) “*Beginners Mind*”. In **Kendo** one is often reminded to “keep your beginners mind”. This refers to the idea that, like a beginner, one should always be open and ready to learn, be ready to find faults in their own technique, and most importantly to practice with all of their energy in everything they do. It is a common fault after practicing for some time to believe that one is able to do something without the potential for improvement or correction. It is also common for one to lose the initial vigor that is present for something that is new. Always maintain your **Shoshin** and practice accordingly.
- **Shoto** : (小刀) The short **Shinai** used in **Nito Kamae**.
- **Shu-Ha-Ri** : (守破離) ‘Shu’, lit. “*protect*”, “*obey*”, ‘Ha’, lit. “*detach*”, “*digress*”, and ‘Ri’, lit. “*leave*”, “*separate*”. In brief, **Shu-Ha-Ri** is a term used to describe the various stages of learning or progress in many arts. The first stage, ‘Shu’, has the practitioner obeying the teachers method and ideals in every detail. The second, ‘Ha’, is when the student has learned enough that they are able to incorporate their own ideas. The third, ‘Ri’, is when the student is able to leave their teachings behind them as the “specific machinery” is no longer overtly needed; all is natural. The **Nihon Kendo no Kata** embody **Shu-Ha-Ri** in **Tachi Kata** 1, 2, 3, and in **Kodachi Kata** 1, 2, 3. See Jeffrey



Lewis Dann. “Kendo in Japanese Martial Culture: Swordsmanship as Self-Cultivation”. PhD thesis. University of Washington, 1978 [ 4] and Inoue [8] for more.

- **Suburi** : (素振り) “Elementary swing”. This is the fundamental drill of a **Kendo** practice. Over the years **Kendoka** will *easily* perform tens or even hundreds of thousands practice strikes in their training, perfecting technique through repetition.
- **Suki** : (隙) “Interval”, “gap”, “opportunity”. This term is used to refer to an opening in ones defense, either in your own or in your opponents. It also refers to an opening or gap in ones thoughts or actions, e.g., due to hesitancy or distraction.
- **Suriage Waza** : (すり上げ技) A “Rising slide” **Waza**. These techniques are used to deflect an opponents attack by sliding your own weapon along the opponents making a small, “half-circle” motion as you lift your weapon into the path of the coming strike. This “rising-slide” motion is not to be confused with hitting or knocking your opponents weapon out-of-the-way, as with **Uchiotoshi Waza**, as it is a controlled deflection.
- **Suri-Ashi** : (摺り足) (lit.) “Sliding foot/leg”. **Kendoka**, regardless of the type of footwork being used, will most often be sliding their feet as they step. There are exceptions but the fundamentals of **Kendo** always use sliding footwork. This term is often used to refer to **Okuri-Ashi** itself, however this text maintains the distinction.
- **Suri-Komi** : (すり込み) (lit.) “Sliding step”. This **Waza** is used during the third **Kodachi Kata**. The **Shidachi** slides his blade along the **Uchidachi**’s, controlling it, as he steps into the **Uchidachi**’s **Maai**.
- **Suri-Nagashi** : (すり流し) (lit.) “Slide and sluice/pour off/set adrift”. The **nagashi** motion is often explained as pouring water. This **Waza** is used during the third **Kodachi Kata**. The **Shidachi** receives the **Uchidachi**’s incoming **Do** strike using the left **Shinogi** and redirects/controls it by sliding the **Kodachi** down their **Tachi** at the same time.
- **Suri-Otoshi** : (すり落とし) (lit.) “Dropping slide”. This **Waza** is used during the third **Kodachi Kata**. **Shidachi** slides his blade down and left along **Uchidachi**’s, sweeping it away.
- **Sutemi** : (捨て身) (lit.) “Sacrifice/abandon person/body/self”, often translated as “body abandoning”. Usually interpreted as “all or nothing”, this term is referring to the samurais “final strike”. Meaning they will be attacking their opponent with the feeling of “all or nothing”; they will either kill the opponent with this strike, or be killed in the attempt.
- **Tachi** : (太刀) The long sword used in the **Nihon Kendo no Kata**.
- **Tai** : (体) “Body”.
- **Taiatari** : (体当り) “Body blow”, “ramming attack”, or “suicide attack”. A technique used by **Kendoka** to create a **Suki** in their opponent by closing in on them and upsetting their balance via a push. It is crucial to understand the difference between **Taiatari** and simple pushing or shoving. Definition from Andrew N. Nelson. *The Nelson Compact Japanese-English Character Dictionary*. Abridged by John H. Haig. Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1999 [ 10] and Jim Breen’s Online Japanese Dictionary [9].
- **Tai-To** : (帯刀) “Sword at belt”, i.e., the position where one would wear the sword. In **Kendo**, **Tai-To** is the position where the **Shinai** is held at a 45° angle at the hip in preparation to “draw” it.
- **Taiso** : (体操) “Gymnastics” or “calisthenics”, i.e., a warm up.
- **Tare** : (垂) Waist protector.
- **Tare-Himo** : (垂紐) The small belts of the **Tare**.

- **Tare-Obi** : (垂帯) The waist portion of the Tare.
- **Te-no-Uchikawa** : (手の内皮) The palms of the Kote.
- **Ten** : (天) “Sky”, “heaven” or “point”.
- **Ten no Kamae** : (天の構え) The “*kamae of heaven*”. See **Jodan no Kamae**.
- **Tenugui** : (手拭い) “Hand towel”. The cloth towel worn by **Kendoka** underneath their **Men**.
- **Te-no-uchi** : (手の内) “Palm, skill”. **Te-no-uchi**, often explained as “wringing out a wet towel”, is how a **Kendoka** holds their **Shinai** at the moment of impact. Proper **Te-no-uchi** allows a **Kendoka** to execute strong and balanced strikes while maintaining control over the **Shinai** during the moment it impacts the target. **Te-no-uchi** allows one to, properly and with control, *stop* their **Shinai**. Without **Te-no-uchi**, the force of the strikers **Shinai** will (1) upon impact cause the striker to lose control of the **Shinai** ending in a poor and ineffective strike, or (2) the **Shinai** will fully connect with the target but the force of the **Shinai** will be improperly directed to the opponent on impact. Aside from being ineffective, this strike will most likely hurt your opponent and must be avoided.
- **To** : (刀) “Sword”. A Japanese sword, **Katana**.
- **Tobi Komi Waza** : (飛び込み技) “Burst into” or “jump into” **Waza**. These **Waza** are where one launches an attack at the opponent with strong spirit the moment the opponents spirit falters.
- **To-ma** : (遠間) A distance (from your opponent) that is longer than **Issoku Itto no Maai**.
- **Tsuba** : (鐔) **Shinai** thumb guard.
- **Tsuba-Dome** : (鐔止め) Rubber stopper that holds **Tsuba** in place.
- **Tsubazeriai** : (鐔迫り合い) “Locked swords” (from Nelson [10]). The position when two **Kendoka** are in proximity, **Tsuba** against **Tsuba**.
- **Tsugi-Ashi** : (突ぎ足) “Thrusting foot”. This style of footwork is a variation of **Okuri-Ashi**, where the **Kendoka** brings both feet side-by-side before taking the **Okuri-Ashi** step. This motion helps to build momentum and is often used to cover very large distances.
- **Tsuka** : (柄) The **Shinai** handle.
- **Tsuka-Gashira** : (柄頭) **Tsuka**’s end.
- **Tsuka-Gawa** : (柄革) Leather covering the **Tsuka** of the **Shinai**.
- **Tsuka-Himo** : (柄紐) A leather string or set of loops at the top end of the **Tsuka** used to anchor the **Tsuru**.
- **Tsuki** : (突き) “Thrust”.
- **Tsuki-Dare** : (突き垂) Throat protector.
- **Tsuru** : (弦) The string on the top side of the **Shinai**.
- **Tsutsu-Bu** : (筒部) The forearm area of the **Kote**; the striking area.
- **Uchidachi** : (打太刀) “The striking sword” or “the presenting sword”. **Uchidachi** assumes the role of the “teacher” in the **Kata**.
- **Uchi Komi** : (打ち込み) Striking practice using **Fumi Komi**.
- **Uchi-Otoshi Waza** : (打ち落とし技) (lit.) “Dropping” or “losing strike”. Techniques for striking the opponents **Shinai** down and to the left or right, mid-way through their attack.
- **Uke-Nagashi** : (受け流し) (lit.) “Receive and sluice/pour off/set adrift”. The **nagashi** motion is often explained as pouring water. This **Waza** is used during the first and second **Kodachi Kata**. The **Uchidachi**’s attack is received using the **Kodachi** while at the same time redirecting it by making it slide off the **Kodachi** via the **Shinogi** and **Hiraki-Ashi**.

- **Ura** : (裏) “Back” or “non-visible side”. In **Kendo** this refers to the holders right side of the **Shinai**.
- **Ushiro** : (後) “Backward” (direction).
- **Wakigamae** : (脇構え) “Side stance”. This is known as the “*kamae of metal*” and is a variant of **Gedan no Kamae**.
- **Waza** : (技) “Technique(s)”.
- **Yin-Yang** : An idea from Chinese Taoism dealing with opposites and/or duality; duality where one can’t exist without the other. See **In-Yo**.
- **Yoko-Men** : (横面) “Sideways/horizontal” **Men**. Sideways **Katate** strike to the right or left side of the **Men**.
- **Yokote** : (横手) The area on a Japanese sword where the curved tip ends and the blade proper begins.
- **Yokote-Kosa** : (横手交差) “Intersection of the **yokote**”. This is the “distance” at which two **Kendoka** are to be separated when doing formality based motions in the **Kendo no Kata**.
- **Yuko Datotsu** : (有効打突) “Effective strike”.
- **Za Rei** : (座礼) “Seated” **Rei** from the **Seiza** position.
- **Zanshin** : (残心) “Remaining mind”. In the context of **Kendo** this is, simply put, interpreted as sustaining both mental and physical alertness with every action.
- **Zazen** : (座禅) “Sitting zen”. The practice of seated zen meditation.
- **Zekken** : (ゼッケン) Name tag worn on the **Tare**. Also termed a “nafuda”.
- **Zenjo-In** : (禅定印) “Zen meditation hand position”. See **Mudra**.

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