

## INTRODUCTION

There are several martial arts that involve learning the way of life with the sword, such as the Japanese arts of Iaido, Battodo and Kendo or the Korean art of Kumdo. Iaido is the art of drawing and sheathing the sword, Kendo is the art of fighting with the sword after it is already drawn and Battodo is the art of quickly drawing and cutting with the sword. Kumdo is the Korean version of Kendo, which was introduced to Korea during the Japanese occupation of that country. Many sword instructors do not include other sword techniques in their teachings. This may be because they are concerned about diluting their student's techniques by introducing "bad habits". In other words, studying Iaido while studying Kendo may alter the student's execution of the Kendo techniques. There is certainly justification for this concern; however, it is imperative that all aspects of the sword are understood in order to be a true swordsman. Learning other techniques may require students to spend more time practicing in order to understand and perfect the pure Kendo techniques. Although requiring the learning of other sword techniques may delay the student in their quest for a Black Belt, this is a small price to pay relative to the well-rounded training the student will receive.

NOTE: In most cases youth are taught kendo in the Japanese school system, but Iaido is mostly studied by the older population who want to incorporate a bit of history into daily life. Also many adults who studied Kendo in their youth have a tendency to start practicing Iaido later in life, such as after they have become successful in their career.

In this curriculum, Iaido, Tameshigiri Kombat Kenjutsu and Chanbara are included as requirements so that the student will not be deficient in his sword training. In other words, to do Kendo (fighting with the sword once it is drawn from the sheath), you need to know how to draw the sword from the sheath (Iaido) and understand how a real blade cuts (Tameshigiri). Kombat Kenjutsu and youth Chanbara (practice fighting with full contact combative swords) are included because they allow the student the ability to integrate many sword techniques in practice. Kombat Kenjutsu and youth Chanbara emphasizes "to hit without being hit", which more accurately depicts how you would behave in a real sword fight. Integrating these studies boosts the understanding of a way of life through the sword and teaches respect of other martial arts, history, styles, cultures and people.

## What is Kendo?

Until late nineteenth century, all sword techniques were referred to as Kenjutsu. "Ken" translates as "sword" and "jutsu" means "technique" whereas "do" means "art or way". Kenjutsu practice

declined significantly when the Samurai were not included in Japan's attempt to become part of the modern world in the latter 1800s. Kenjutsu resurfaced when it was taught to police officers in Japan around 1877. Sword arts in Japan were again hindered when the United States forbade the practice of martial arts after the events of World War II. In order to allow martial art and sword practice to begin again, the martial arts could not be seen as a means of training to kill. To avoid this, many schools assured that martial arts practice was to preserve traditional culture and to teach philosophical meanings associated with the martial arts. This tradition of mixing technique with philosophical, "way of life" teachings is the Kendo practice we know today.

Kendo is built upon the technical aspects of Kenjutsu, so it is the art of fighting with the sword (technique), but it also teaches the way of life through the sword. The suffix "-do" is used in the place of "-jutsu" because it means "path" or "way". One example of Kendo's "way of life" teaching is the respect shown through bowing or paying undivided attention in class. More technical study is involved with Kendo than with Iaido or Battodo, but all aspects are required to have a complete understanding of working with the sword.

Kendo/kenjutsu was originally practiced with real swords. Leaving virtually no room for error, this practice left many seriously injured or dead. Later the bokutou (wooded sword) was used, but this also resulted in many serious injuries. In the late 1700s, the bamboo sword (yotsuwari or fukuroshiani) or Shi-nai was introduced for practice. Bamboo is more flexible than wood or steel and bends slightly when a person is struck. Although injuries can still result, wearing minimal protective gear will significantly reduce the chance of being hurt.

It takes many years and much practice to learn all the nuances of Kendo in order to properly execute the techniques. Be aware that students may become discouraged by this fact. By incorporating other sword arts into the training curriculum, the students have more techniques to work with, which may help to lessen their discouragement.

There are many books on Kendo, but few are written in English. These non-English books do not lend themselves to easy translation due to the major cultural and language differences between Eastern and Western peoples. This curriculum is designed to "CUT THROUGH THE MYSTERY" surrounding Kendo and to assist instructors in teaching Kendo in Western, English-speaking cultures.

For more information on other Kenjutsu techniques, refer to the volumes on "Iaido", "Battodo" and Kombat Kenjutsu or refer to [www.samuraisports.com](http://www.samuraisports.com).

### What's Included in the Kendo Curriculum?

The curriculum is designed for practicing Kendo with a Shinai. It is divided into three main manuals: Technique Manual, Rank Manual and Class Manual. This **Technique Manual** contains detailed descriptions of each technique and the step-by-step instructions to execute them. The Technique Manual is designed to work with the **Class Curriculum Manual** to describe techniques which are taught in your classes. It also works with the **Training and Ranking Manual**, where the Kyu (rank) in which the technique will begin to be taught is outlined.

Because of the heavy use of chairs for sitting and the lack of exercise, many Westerners have weak knees or bad hips. In general, the Japanese have stronger hips and knees since their culture involves sitting on the floor instead of in chairs. The study of Kendo by Westerners results in many more knee and hip injuries than experienced in Japan. This curriculum keeps this potential weakness in mind and provides instructors with exercises to help students strengthen their leg muscles to protect their hips and knees.

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### BREATH CONTROL

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Breath control affects stamina and body movement. The ability to breath deeply and correctly will enhance your performance in Kendo or any other physical movement.

Breath control is very important for proper, sustained body movement and metabolism. Even though you don't normally think about it, you control your breathing all the time. For example, you take a deep breath in before you try to lift a heavy package. If the package is extremely heavy, you often make a sound with your voice, such as "ehhh!!!" to help you lift it up. The use of the voice is accomplished by letting breath out of the body. Just as you use your breathing and your voice to help you lift a heavy package, you should use them in martial arts practice to increase stamina, improve movements and increase overall demeanor.

Stomach or belly breathing is proven to be much more effective than chest breathing since more air is exchanged through the use of belly breathing. Athletes and musicians who play wind instruments use belly breathing because of the benefits of increased air exchange. Belly breathing is accomplished by pulling air in by using the abdominal muscles instead of the chest. The diaphragm is used to control the flow in and out. When you first begin this type of breathing, you may experience some discomfort across your stomach due to the use of new and different muscles for breathing. When performed correctly, the stomach will expand or distend when you

breathe in; the chest will no longer expand. The muscles of the abdomen are then also used to control the exhale, and your stomach will contract when breathing out.

When you inhale, the body begins to prepare for its next movement by using the oxygen for metabolism. However, when you breathe in, your body is stuck in that position; i.e., it is frozen in place and cannot move easily. Therefore, in Kendo, sometimes the best time to hit your partner is when your partner is inhaling and not easily able to move. In another words, inhaling is a very dangerous time when you are competing because you cannot respond at the same speed as when you exhale. On the other hand, when you breathe out, your body moves easily. This ease of movement is enhanced when you use your voice because the use of your voice requires you to push out even more air. Breathing deeply into the belly, combined with the use of your voice results in the maximum breath out. This means your body's power and speed are optimum when you have good breath control combined with using your voice.

Another advantage of belly breathing is stealth when fighting. When the chest is used to control breathing, your inhalations and exhalations are telegraphed to your opponent because the body moves more with chest breathing. The shoulders move up and down in rhythm with breathing in and out of the chest. Belly breathing employs only the abdominal muscles, which is more difficult for your opponent to detect. Therefore, it is recommended that the abdominal muscles and belly breathing be used when competing in Kendo.

The more advanced Kendo practice techniques of Kirikaeshi and Uchikomi require good breath control ability. For example, students should perform Kirikaeshi in one or two breaths and Uchikomi in one to three breaths. One of the most difficult things for students to learn is breathing correctly. As an instructor, you can see the lack of proper breathing since it manifests itself as fatigue.

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## CHAKUSO

# 着装

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Pronunciation: Cha-ku-so (cha-koo-so)

Cha-ku-so basically means “how to wear” or “how to put on”. The term “Cha-ku-so” is used when talking about how to put on the Kendo attire (the uagi or Keikogi and the Hakama) or when discussing putting on the Kendo armor (Bogu).

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## CHANBARA

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Chanbara was founded in the late 1960s by sword master Tanabe Tetsundo who was the secretary for the All Japan Ju-kendo Federation. The development of Chanbara was one more step in the evolution of sword practice techniques. Initially swordsmen practiced with real swords, but many people were lost in practice rather than in battle. Later the bokutou or wooden sword replaced the steel sword for practice. Although this was more forgiving than the real sword, a blow from the bokutou could also injure or kill a student. Tanabe Tetsundo and other traditionalists knew the world was ready for a safer and more user-friendly way to practice “the spirit of the thing” and, thus, founded the sports of Chanbara and Kombat Kenjutsu. Chanbara uses swords made from modern materials that are softer and much more forgiving than steel blades or wooden swords. These mock weapons provide a way for sword practitioners to compete using their full power to strike each other without the risk of injury experienced with the more traditional practice methods. Moreover, with the modern combative swords one can practice and train with realistic results that follow the same sword patterns used in all kenjutsu and iaido styles. Kendo’s strikes are more vertical or linear which does not represent traditional kenjutsu cutting patterns, which include more non-linear (e.g., diagonal) movements.

The original term for Chanbara was “Goshindo”, which means “the way of self-preservation”. This term seems quite fitting when you compare the soft weaponry of Chanbara to the historical weapons used to practice Kendo, such as the Shi-nai or bokutou. Later, Goshindo, which is also known as Kombat Kenjutsu, gained the nickname “Chanbara”. Chanbara translates loosely as “swashbuckle”.

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## CHUDAN NO KAMAE or SEIGAN NO KAMAE

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中段

## 中段の構え正眼、青眼の構え

Pronunciation: Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e (choo-dan no ka-mah-eye)

Pronunciation: Sei-gan No Ka-ma-e (say-gan no ka-mah-eye)

### Background

Stances are standing positions from which you make or defend an attack. There are many stances for fighting in martial arts. This is true for Kendo, also. Some stances are considered more defensive, some are considered more offensive, and some are considered neutral or equally offensive and defensive. One of the standard stances in Kendo is called Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e or Sei-gan No Ka-ma-e. Kamae translates as “stance”, Chu-dan means “middle position” and Sei-gan can be translated to the various middle positions. Often the term “No Ka-ma-e” is dropped when referring to the different stances, so Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e may be referred to as simply “Chu-dan”.

Chu-dan is a neutral stance; it is not completely offensive or defensive, but somewhere in between. This means that it is very easy to change to defense (protect yourself from an attack) or offense (make an attack). There are many reasons why you would choose to take the Chu-dan stance, such as the ability to move to any direction and the ability to move forward with maximum power and speed. In Chu-dan, as the English translation “middle or center position” indicates, the tip of the sword is pointed at the middle of your opponent’s body. This can be anywhere from his solar plexus up to the top of his head and as far to the left and right as the elbow or directly in the center of his body. The choice of where to point the tip of your sword is dependent on the stance your opponent takes. For example, if your opponent is holding his sword above his head in an offensive manner, you may choose to point the tip of your sword toward his wrist or forearm which are raised up and closest to your circle of influence.

The chudan position is the one position used 95 percent of the time in Kendo. The best Chu-dan position to take is pointing the tip of the blade at your opponent’s throat. It is easy to move up or down from this position to attack or defend. Pointing the tip of the blade at your opponent’s is also the most threatening place to point.

The combination of stances available to you and your opponent are numerous. The discussion of these combinations alone would fill a book. As such, these will not be covered in this volume,

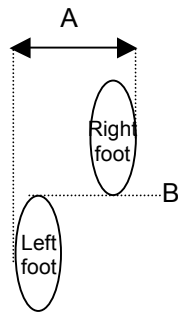
other than to mention examples where appropriate. Knowing where to point the sword takes many years of practice and experimenting with the different positions. Nothing can substitute for the experience of trying different positions and finding out first hand how well they work or don't work for you.

### **Step-by-Step Instructions**

The step-by-step instructions to stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e are broken down into two parts: stance (standing position) and properly holding the Shi-nai.

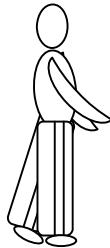
#### **Standing Position for Chu-dan (Stance)**

- 1) Stand the same as you would if you were standing at attention – your feet are next to each other, your back is straight.
- 2) Place your feet about shoulder width apart.
- 3) Point the toes of both feet forward. Keep the heels aligned with the toes.
- 4) Take one normal step forward with the right foot.
  - a) With this stance, the left big toe should be in-line with the right heel. It is acceptable for the left foot to be a few inches back also.



Position of the feet for Chu-dan. **A** is a little less than shoulder width apart. **B** illustrates that the toe of the left foot is approximately even with the heel of the right foot. For reference you can place a shi-nai between the left foot's big toe and the heel of right foot to measure for correct foot position during practice.

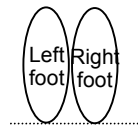
- b) With this stance, the body weight is distributed sixty percent on the left foot (back foot) and forty percent on the right foot (front foot). Additionally, your center of balance should be centered in your lower abdomen.



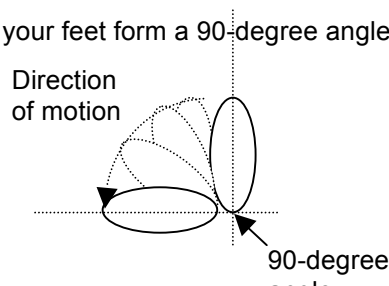
- 5) Without moving the position of either foot, lift your left heel about one inch off the ground. An easy way to check for the correct heel height is to place the end of the Shi-nai under the heel since it is approximately one inch in diameter.

### Alternate Method to Get into the Correct Stance

- 1) Stand the same as you would if you were standing at attention – your feet are next to each other, your back is straight.

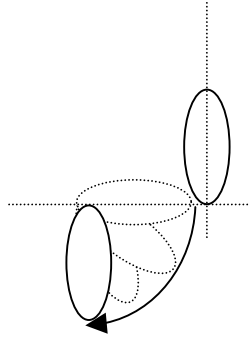


- 2) Keeping your heels together, pivot on your heel and rotate the toes of the left foot to the left (counterclockwise) until your feet form a 90-degree angle.





- 3) Pivot on the ball of your left foot (clockwise) which will rotate your left foot's heel towards the rear. Your left foot should be approximately one-foot length behind and to the left of your right foot creating a strong kendo stance.



### **Practice for Chu-dan Stance**

The Kendo stance will seem awkward to students at first. To help the students get over the odd sensation, try the practice below.

- Have the student jump up and down five times without any particular style.
- On the fifth jump, have the students land in the standing position for Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- Repeat steps one and two several times until you feel the students understand stance and are beginning to feel the proper stance.

<h3><b>Position of the Shi-nai for Chu-dan</b></h3>
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As described in the Background for Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e or Se-igan No Ka-ma-e, there are many choices as to where to aim the tip of your sword when in this stance. The position described below is often chosen, as it was by the authors, because it gives you many easy options for attacking or defending yourself. From the throat position described below, the Shi-nai can move up or down; i.e. your opponent will not know which way you intend to move the Shi-nai for an

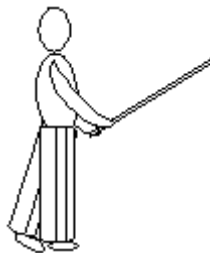
attack. As a defense, the throat position allows you to easily thrust the shi-nai into your partner's throat if he moves forward to attack you.

**Movement**

- 1) Hold the Shi-nai so that the string is pointing up.
  - a) Since the string represents the blunt side or back of the blade, this means that the blade side is pointing down.
- 2) Make sure the right hand is forward on the handle and the left hand is behind it.
  - a) Right hand is just under the tsuba (hilt) which resembles a doughnut.
  - b) Left hand is at the very end of the Shi-nai's handle with little or none of the handle protruding from behind the little finger of the left hand.
- 3) Grasp the Shi-nai from the top of the handle.
  - a) Both thumbs should point toward the ground.
  - b) Wrists are rotated inward.

**HINT:** An easy method to teach students the proper way to hold the Shi-nai is to have the student shake your right hand with a firm grip. Have them remain in the handshake position, loosening the grip just enough for you to remove your hand. Their hand is in the correct position to grasp the sword. Repeat this for the left hand.

- 4) Your left hand grasping the end of the handle should be approximately one to two fists' distance away from your belly. The left hand is considered the "power" hand and remains on the centerline of your body for all strikes.



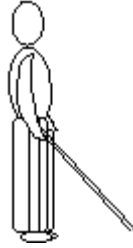
- 5) Make sure the Shi-nai is directly in front of you, down the center, not off to one side.
- 6) Use your right hand to adjust the sword until the tip is at throat height.
  - a) When a practicing partner or an opponent is in front of you, the tip of the Shi-nai should point at his throat. The right hand is the "steering" hand. It directs the sword to the target.
- 7) Make sure your hands are relaxed.
  - a) Do not straighten or stiffen your arms.
  - b) Keep your shoulders down and relaxed.

**Practice**

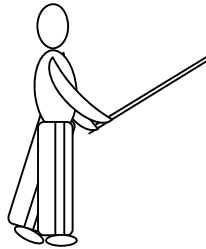
Now that we've added the Shi-nai to the equation, it is good to have the students work on their stance while holding the Shi-nai.

**Practice for Holding the Shi-nai in Chu-dan**

- 1) Hold the Shi-nai in your right hand; relax your right arm so that it hangs loose at your side.



- 2) Upon command, return to the correct position for Chu-dan.



- 3) Repeat steps one and two several times.

**Practice for Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e or Sei-gan No Ka-ma-e**

- 1) Hold the Shi-nai with only one hand.
- 2) Run or jump around the training area.
- 3) Upon command, return to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e or Sei-gan No Ka-ma-e.
- 4) Repeat steps one, two and three several times.

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**DOUCHI**

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# 胴

## 胴打ち

Pronunciation: Do-Uchi (doe oo-chee)

### Background

The word “Do” translates as “body” and “uchi” is “to strike”. Therefore, Do-uchi is a strike to the body. It is one of the three basic strikes in Kendo. The other two basic strikes are Mein-uchi (head strike) and Kote-uchi (wrist strike). Ashi, or a strike to the legs, is not used in Kendo at the present time. There is also a technique called Tsuki (stab or thrust).

Do-uchi is a strike or cut starting from just under the opponent’s right arm and passing through the body or “Do” to the left waist. The strike most often starts on your opponent’s right side because if he were to be wearing a real sword, the scabbards would be on the left side of the body. Thus, if you were to strike the left side of your opponent, you would run the risk of hitting his scabbards and having your attack blocked by them. It would be unlikely that you could cut through them. A strike made to the opponent’s right side (your left) mitigates this risk. However, a strike to the left side of an opponent does exist. It is called “Sa-ka Do-uchi” or “Gyaku Do-uchi”, which means “reverse body hit”. Because of the risk of hitting your opponent’s scabbards, as described above, it is not often used in Kendo. Refer to the description of Sa-ka (Gyaku) Do-uchi for further information.

### Instructor’s Notes

Do-uchi is one of the more difficult strikes for students to learn since it is a close quarter technique using a long-range weapon. The rhythm, timing, correct body positioning and distance required to execute a good Do-uchi takes hours of diligent practice. Consider having your students practice closer to their opponents (about a Shi-nai’s length away) while moving off at a 45-degree angle rather than attacking straight ahead. Have the students bend their knees slightly when making contact for the do-uchi. Practice this until they can perform the Do-uchi technique smoothly. These technique modifications enable the strike to be executed at half or third speed

allowing for correct application to the designated area just under the opponent's right arm. The angle of the Shi-nai when striking should be 0 to 30 degrees relative to the ground. The slight bending of the knees creates enough force and drive to strike the opponent while evading a possible counter attack at the same time.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

Below are the steps to execute Do-uchi.

#### Movement

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Raise the Shi-nai upward with your left hand until it is above your forehead (about one to two fists distance). Remember, the left hand is the power hand and the right hand is used to steer the Shi-nai to the correct attack point on your opponent's body.
- 3) Take one small step forward with your right foot striking straight down with the Shi-nai, as if to make a Kote strike. Use your right hand to tilt the tip of the Shi-nai to your left so that it strikes your opponent just under his right armpit. (The Shi-nai strings will be facing left, away from your opponent's body). Simultaneously shout the Ki-ai 'Do'.
  - a) The correct way to step is:
    - i) For the first step of Do-uchi, bend your knees to lower your body when striking the Do. This is done to focus the power of the sword strike into the opponent's body. Remember to use the strength of your hips to cut.

**HINT:** When first learning this technique, have the students run forward and to the right (at a forty-five degree angle from the target). This will train them to cut with their hips as described above.

- ii) For the long distance hit (or for students more familiar with Do-uchi), run forward just to your opponent's left side; i.e., when running through, bump or brush your opponent's left shoulder to put him off balance as you execute this close quarter technique.
  - b) The right place to stop the Shi-nai is:
    - i) Make first contact under the right arm.

- ii) Students should strike between the tip of the Shi-nai and just under the nakayui (the knot tied around the blade near the top third of the Shi-nai).
  - iii) Basically, the Shi-nai should be at about a thirty-degree angle from the ground. However, it is acceptable if the shi-nai strikes the do when it is parallel with the ground. Striking downward too far would cause the student's wrist to bend down, resulting in a loss of power and control of the Shi-nai.
  - iv) Do not swing from the side like swinging a baseball bat. This telegraphs to your opponent where you intend to hit. Strike straight down from the top of your body not from the side.
  - v) The string is facing to the left, away from your opponent.
- c) When executing a close quarter strike or when running through the opponent, both hands should be close to your body (many times they may be touching your body).
  - d) When the Shi-nai contacts the opponent's body, your left hand should be in front of your navel.
  - e) Once contact is made, your left little finger may loosen on the handle.
- 4) Pull the left foot forward as quickly as possible and run through (brushing against) your opponent's left side.
- a) While executing the technique, let go of the Shi-nai with your left hand or slide it up the Shi-nai's handle to keep it close to the center of your body.
    - i) Your left hand should not move very far away from the center of your body because you want to be able to quickly return to Chu-dan in readiness to execute the next strike or defend against a counterattack.
    - ii) Pull your right hand toward the right to cut through the body while moving forward and to the right.
    - iii) With power, turn and snap your waist clockwise. This will help aid the use of your hip motion to cut through the target pulling the sword forward and to your right. This motion should also help to pull the left foot up to the proper place.
- 5) Turn around counterclockwise and face your opponent in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

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**FUMIKOMI**

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# 踏み込み

Pronunciation: Fu-mi-ko-mi (foo-mee-koh-mee)

**Background**

Fu-mi-ko-mi is the style or way of stepping when striking an opponent. Fu-mi-ko-mi is one of the elements of Ki-ai. Fu-mi-ko-mi is created by the suction that occurs when the bare foot strikes the ground flat, making a loud sound. One way of thinking of Fu-mi-ko-mi is the example my teacher once used. He said, "If students step the proper way, then their step would make some sound even if they were stepping on a mattress!" In basic terms, for strong, properly executed techniques, you must simultaneously strike the opponent with the Shi-nai, step with Fu-mi-ko-mi and voice the Ki-ai.

**HINT:** Check to make sure students step on the ground flat-footed. In other words, make sure that the students do NOT step on the ground heel first. As described in Suriashi, stepping heel first can lead to serious injury (e.g., a broken heel). The toes should not be lifted off the ground when stepping. In other words, the right foot stays parallel to the ground and the left foot slides with the heel raised and without lifting the toes.

**Instructor's Notes**

One method to teach students beginning Fu-mi-ko-mi is to have them essentially fall forward. Have them stand with their feet shoulder width apart on a straight line while facing forward. Then have them lean or fall forward while keeping their feet in the same place and keeping the body straight. Ask them to keep leaning forward past the point where they will feel comfortable that they can balance. The body will naturally react by placing a foot out in front to stop the fall. Have them repeat this several times, encouraging the students to fall more quickly forward and use the right foot to catch themselves. The momentum of the forward fall will cause the right foot to land with some force, resulting in a noise. The feeling and the sound the student's right foot makes is the same as they are trying to achieve in Fu-mi-ko-mi.



**HINT:** This method of getting the students to understand Fu-mi-ko-mi should not be used excessively as it can result in the bad habit of leaning forward when executing a strike.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

#### Movement

- 1) Start with the normal Kendo stance. (See “Chu-dan” for a detailed description.)
- 2) Instead of sliding the right foot forward when taking a step, lift the right foot slightly off the ground.
- 3) Keeping the back straight and keeping your hips level, push off with the left foot (as if pushing against the ground) and move forward. The right foot needs to land flat on the ground to create suction to produce a noise (Fu-mi-ko-mi). Be sure to always have one foot in contact with the ground.

**HINT:** Students may try to jump or hop forward rather than push themselves forward with the left foot. Remind them that this is a step, not a leap. Also watch for toes being lifted and backs remaining straight. There is to be no bending forward at the waist.

### Practice for Fu-mi-ko-mi

- 1) Have the students line up with their Shi-nais and facing the same direction. Have them do as instructed below.
- 2) Stand in Chu-dan stance.
- 3) Start gliding as fast as you can across the floor without lifting your feet (see “Ha-yasuriashi” for a more detailed description of this movement).
- 4) When instructed, do Fu-mi-ko-mi and stop.
- 5) Repeat steps 3 and 4.

**HINT:** When practicing Fu-mi-ko-mi in conjunction with Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi, only have the students move in the forward direction. (That is, Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi is normally practiced going both forward and backward.)

Another practice is to have the students perform Shou-mein-uchi with Fu-mi-ko-mi.

**HINT:** In the beginning, most students will move their left foot first before executing a Shou-mein-uchi. This looks as if they are shuffling their feet. This movement is called “Tsu-gi-ashi”, which means “add step(s).” When a student does this, it reveals there are either too close or too far away from their opponent and not ready to strike or they think they are (i.e., they don’t know or trust their distance from their opponent). When Tsu-gi-ashi is poorly executed it telegraphs their impending thoughts and intentions and can cause the student to do a jumping hit rather than a strike with the correct Fu-mi-ko-mi.

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## HAYASUBURI

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# 早素振り

Pronunciation: Ha-ya-su-bu-ri (high-yah-soo-boo-ree)

### Background

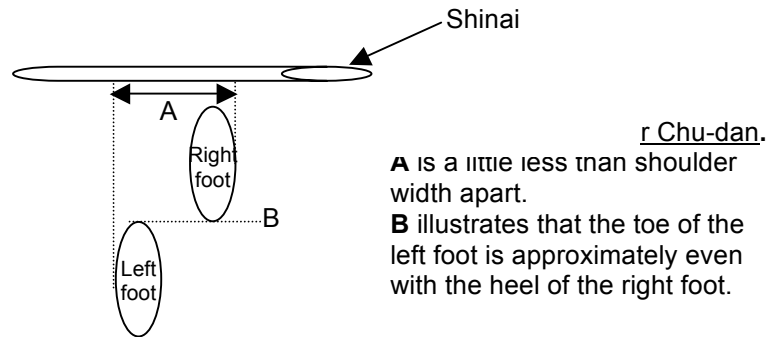
Ha-ya-su-bu-ri is the practice of vertically executing strikes through the air with the Shi-nai very quickly combined with quick steps. This technique is designed for the student to be able to practice alone. Ha-ya-su-bu-ri develops the student’s hand-foot coordination by synchronizing the hand movement for Mein with the movement of the feet. The stamina required for Ha-ya-su-bu-ri also builds up the student’s endurance. Another advantage of learning Ha-ya-su-bu-ri is the improved ability to step forward and back quickly. These motions are required for effectively attacking an opponent or defending against an attack. For example, the foot movements of Ha-ya-su-bu-ri are used in the defensive technique Nu-ki-waza and in offensive strikes when moving backward.

### Instructor’s Notes

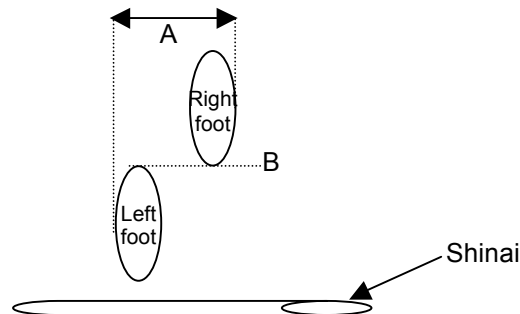
To introduce the students to the proper stepping technique for Ha-ya-su-bu-ri, first have them practice without executing a strike with the Shi-nai. Place their Shi-nai (or broom stick) on the

ground in front of them. Have the student place their feet in Chu-dan stance (refer to the illustration below) facing the Shi-nai. Have the student step over the Shi-nai with the right foot and quickly pull the left foot over the Shi-nai, ending in Chu-dan stance on the other side of the Shi-nai (see "Position after the first step in the illustration below). Next have the student step back over the Shi-nai (moving backwards) with the left foot and quickly pull the right foot over, ending in Chu-dan stance at the starting position (see "Position after the second step" in the drawing below). Let the students step back and forth over the Shi-nai, first slowly then getting faster and faster. Stepping back and forth about once per second will give them the proper speed and appropriate size steps for Ha-ya-su-bu-ri

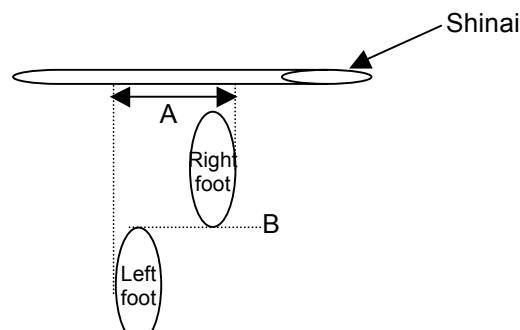
**Beginning position**



**Position after the first step**



**Position after the second step**



**Step-by-Step Instructions**

Once the students understand these simple foot patterns and movements combine these patterns while executing vertical strikes with the Shi-nai to perform Ha-ya-su-bu-ri as described below.

**Movement**

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Raise the Shi-nai straight up. Be sure that your left hand is also raised up over the center of your head, shoulders are down and relaxed, and the chest is open.
- 3) Take one step forward with your right foot as you execute a strike with the Shi-nai downward. Stop the shi-nai it at the point where it would strike an opponent's head (refer to the stopping point described in Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein) and shout the Ki-ai "Mein".
- 4) Slide the left foot up as quickly as possible.
  - a) Leave your right arm outstretched; do not change the Shi-nai's position from step 3.
- 5) Again raise the Shi-nai upward, taking a step backward with your left foot as you execute a strike with the Shi-nai downward. Stop the shi-nai it at the point where it would strike an opponent's head and shout the Ki-ai "Mein".
- 6) Pull and position the right foot back as quickly as possible.
- 7) Repeat 2 through 6 several times.
  - a) On the last strike of the set, the student should hit the head (of an imaginary opponent) and follow through, as described for Shou-mein-uchi.
  - b) Initially, the speed of executing a strike with the Shi-nai (Mein strikes) should be around one strike per second.
  - c) As students become more proficient at Ha-ya-su-bu-ri, the speed of executing a strike with the Shi-nai (Mein strikes) should be around one and one half to two hits per second.

**HINT:** When first learning Ha-ya-su-bu-ri, it is more important that the student is able to perform at the correct speed and rhythm rather than to perform with perfect style; i.e., initially you should not worry about looking good, but feeling good about the technique (strike stopping at the right place, feet moving correctly). Over time, as students become more proficient, concern should be given about them performing Ha-ya-su-bu-ri with the correct technique.

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**HAYASURIASHI**

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# 早摺り足

Pronunciation: Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi (high-yah-soo-ee-ah-shee)

**Background**

Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi means quick Su-ri-a-shi or gliding as fast as you can across the floor without lifting your feet. Practicing Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi helps improve speed and diminishes telegraphing your intentions when attacking an opponent or when retreating and gliding backwards after executing a strike. This skill is especially important during competition since it improves your chances of winning.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi is simply Su-ri-a-shi but executed at a faster pace. Refer to Su-ri-a-shi for ideas and further instruction.

**Movement**

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) To move forward, slide your right foot forward along the ground.
- 3) Pull and position the left foot forward as quickly as possible.
  - a) After positioning the left foot forward, your stance should be back to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 4) Repeat steps 2 and 3 as quickly as you can. More practice of this technique will lead to faster movement.
- 5) To move backward, slide your left foot back along the ground.
- 6) Pull and position the right foot back as quickly as possible.

- a) After positioning the right foot back, you should now be in a Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e stance.
- 7) Repeat steps 5 and 6 as quickly as you can. More practice of this technique will lead to faster movement and stronger footwork.
- 8) Switch back to the forward direction and repeat.
  - a) This linear movement only moves in a forward and backward direction.

<b>Practice</b>
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For more excitement during practice, the instructor can make this into a fun game.

- 1) At the instructor's signal (e.g., clapping your hands), students start to move forward using the Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi technique.
- 2) With the next clap of the hands, the students move backward.
- 3) Again with another clap of the hands, the students immediately change directions. You can also have the students stop on the signal. Continue to have the students move forward, backward and stop.

Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi can be practiced without a partner. This is a learning technique the student can master at home. Have the student find an area that is at least ten feet long and is clear of obstructions. It is very important that students practice moving backward and forward multiple times as described in "Movement" section above.

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**JUMPING ROPE**

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# 縄跳び

### Why Do We Jump Rope?

Jumping rope provides us with several physical advantages that are helpful in Kendo:

- Jumping correctly provides coordinated footwork that will be used in offensive and defensive techniques.
- Jumping rope at a fast rate creates strong wrists and smooth body movement that will be used to correctly wield the Shi-nai.
- The timing that is required to jump rope improves coordination of the hands and feet that will be used to execute strikes.
- Jumping rope strengthens the leg muscles and the ankles to help reduce the chance of injury to the legs and ankles.

### What is the Correct Way to Jump?

The correct way to jump is to jump on the toes rather than coming down flat onto your feet. Do not bend the knees too much while in the air. You should only bend your knees slightly when jumping. This method helps to strengthen your legs and ankles and allows you to jump higher, while reducing opportunities for injury. Again, it is very important to not bend the knees very much when in the air because you run the risk of injury.

These extra steps provided below will show the student how to learn to jump more easily:

- Try to jump without holding the jumping rope.
- Try to jump holding the jumping rope but without swinging.
- Put both handles of the jumping rope in one hand and swing the rope at your side. Practice synchronizing the jump with the swing; i.e., jump up when the rope hits the ground.

### What Kinds of Jumps Can We Do?

In Appendix B of this Manual is an example “Jumping Rope Sheet” that can be incorporated into your classes. There are many styles of jumping rope. The Jumping Rope Sheet contains a list of several techniques that students can do with the jumping rope. The instructor awards points (as listed on the Jumping Rope Sheet) to students as they complete techniques. The student or

instructor can add up the points. Students have to finish the techniques that have an asterisk (\*) next to them on the Jumping Rope Sheet before the 'Review for 7 Kyu' (See the **Ranking Manual** for this review) or keep practicing until they pass. Students must attempt to reach the specified number of points, "goal", within each grade as listed on the Jumping Rope Sheet.

Using a Jumping Rope Sheet or similar method is an excellent way to have students work on strengthening their coordination and leg muscles. It provides a structured way to get the students to exercise. You may want to consider some competitions involving jumping rope. For example, use a large jump rope and have your students see who can jump the longest. Get the students to count while another student is jumping to practice Ki-ai with the voice.

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## KEIKO

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# 稽古

Pronunciation: Kei-ko (kay-koh)

### Background

Kei-ko means practice - free sparring practice. In Japan where there are classes of more than two hundred students training at the same time, it is quite a sight to see because of the energy traveling throughout the dojo. During Kei-ko the instructors place themselves in front of the students as they line up to learn new or polish old techniques. This offers the student one on one instruction with the instructor. In the United States kendo classes tend to be smaller and consequently the instructor/student ratio is different. Therefore, kendo instructors spend more time one on one or on personalized training. During Kei-ko instructors will make themselves vulnerable to practice attacks by opening up the four striking areas in kendo; i.e, head (Mein), wrist (Kote) throat (Tsuki) and body (Do).

### Instructor's Notes

When the student is first learning, you should exaggerate the openings for attack. Once the student begins to understand what an open head, wrist and body look like, you should make the openings more subtle. You should defend yourself from the students' attacks because this teaches the students that their strikes need to be quick and accurate to be successful, as well as



teaching them how to block or counterattack. However, it is appropriate to allow the students to strike you some times in order to keep them from becoming too discouraged

HINT: In Kendo there is a instructor's motto, "I am the teacher and you are the student. It is my job to get hit because if you cannot hit me correctly who are you going to hit correctly?"

There are several points that the instructor needs to consider when he is teaching the students:

- It is important for students to practice (Kei-ko) to find their own Ma-ai and the correct timing for them to successfully strike their opponents. These are very important for each individual to discover because everyone has different Ma-ai and timing.
- Students should not stop moving when in Kei-ko because the continuous movement helps to build up stamina:
  - After students hit and run through the instructor, they must turn around as quickly as possible to be ready for the next strike.
  - After students run through and turn to face the instructor, the students have to be prepared to immediately start another attack.
  - When the students are first learning, the instructor is responsible to control or adjust for the correct Ma-ai. The students are encouraged to observe the Ma-ai and learn their own.
- Kei-ko is often the only place the instructor shows the students how to use techniques that involve hitting when backing off or the use of counter attacks.
  - Kei-ko is the best place for learning by watching and copying the instructor ('monkey see, monkey do').

**HINT:** It is possible for students to develop bad habits from free fighting. Since no one likes to be hit and humans have natural defense mechanisms, students will often block or hit with bad Kendo techniques or a total lack of Kendo technique. The instructor should be always on the alert, watching for correction and adjustment of any problem(s) the students may acquire.

### **Step-by-Step Instructions**

The only way to improve at Kei-ko is to do it more.

**HINT:** Students may have some concerns about being struck. Remind them that their opponent will see their fear and may use this to their advantage. Make sure the students invest in decent armor (Bo-gu) to reduce the chance of injury. Make sure the Bo-gu is correctly and securely worn. The gloves should be tight fitting to reduce the effects of strikes to the wrist. NEVER take your eyes off your opponent.

For a while you may want the students to only practice sparring (Kei-ko) with you. Most injuries are a result of poor technique. A proper strike should not cause injury. This may alleviate students fear about being struck.

### **Movement**

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e with your Shi-nai pointed at your student's throat.
- 2) Have the student stand in Chu-dan with his/her Shi-nai pointed at your throat.
  - a) The Shi-nais are crossed between the tip of the Shi-nai and the leather knot. Each is pushing against the other's Shi-nai with equal pressure. This is called "taking your center".
- 3) Have the student attack you with the strikes they know.
  - a) You will need to provide exaggerated openings for the student to attack you.

**HINT:** To open the head (Mein) for attack, you can "lose your center" by lowering your Shi-nai. To open the wrist (Kote), you can "lose your center" by moving the Shi-nai to your left. You can open your body (Do) for attack by raising your arms as if to prepare to strike the head or wrist.

The student is expected to recognize the openings, from observation and practice, and try to immediately hit you where you are open. If the student misjudges and attempts to strike the instructor when the instructor is not open or where you are not open, the instructor should stop the student and explain his error. This immediate correction helps to teach the student to recognize that you were not open for a strike and, thus, avoid the student adopting bad fighting habits.

### **Stances Other Than Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e in Kei-ko**

Before practicing stances other than Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e in Kei-ko, students have to know at least five basic stances from the Kendo Kata. These stances include: Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e, Jo-

dan No Ka-ma-e, Hasso No Ka-ma-e, Ge-dan No Ka-ma-e and Wak-i Ga-ma-e. Remember that each stance can be defensive only, offensive only or neutral (equally defensive and offensive). Knowing which stance is defensive, offensive or neutral can help in determining which stance you take. For example, if your opponent takes an offensive stance such as Jo-dan No Ka-ma-e, you may choose to take the neutral stance of Ge-dan No Ka-ma-e or you might choose Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

Allow students to figure out which stance is best for them. Body size and comfort with a particular stance are just two factors that affect the stance that works best for students. The preference in stance is as unique as the individuals that use them. For example, tall people may like to stand in Jo-dan No Ka-ma-e, whereas shorter individuals would be leaving their wrist open for attack in Jo-dan. Tall people don't have this concern because their wrists would be too high for most people to hit. If the instructor finds that a student is having difficulty determining which stance is best for them, the instructor can review the theory behind each stance as well as how the student's technical strengths might favor a particular stance. Refer to the **Stances and Terms Manual** for more information.

You must monitor the students while they try to figure out their best stance to correct any bad habits they acquire. For instance, look to make sure the left foot does not turn out and that they continue to swing the Shi-nai in a straight line.

When students are first learning the use of the different stances, you might need to demonstrate the five stances including the reason for using each stance. In addition, you might want to practice the Kendo Kata with your students. The Kata helps to review the purpose of the different stances.

You always need to remind the students that finding another stance is not only something they can learn from an instructor's teaching. Students should find the stances themselves from Kei-ko or from competitions.

# 気合

Pronunciation: Ki-ai (kee-eye)

## Background

Ki-ai is the force, energy or chi used to “push” against your opponent. Ki-ai is expressed through the shout or shriek as well as feelings and attitude.

## Instructor’s Notes

Ki-ai is often vocalized as a way to focus your energy when executing a strike, thus making the strike more powerful. Sometimes this vocalization alone is referred to as Ki-ai. The use of vocalized Ki-ai helps to increase the flow of air to your muscles; therefore you will not tire as fast. Since using your voice is accomplished by breathing out, the use of Ki-ai is also a way to help the body move better. To vocalize Ki-ai, breathe into the belly instead of the chest. Use the diaphragm and stomach muscles to push the air out through the vocal chords to produce a sound or tone. Belly breathing allows a larger exchange of oxygen than is normally achieved through chest breathing. To improve your power and speed, you need to acquire breath control by practicing deep abdominal breathing (long breaths with control of the speed for breathing in and out). Refer to “Breath Control” for a more detailed discussion of belly breathing.

Using your voice to focus your power is only one element of Ki-ai. The remaining elements of Ki-ai are attitude and energy. Attitude is simply confidence and believing that you can strike your opponent. The non-verbal energy used to push against your opponent comes from moving your weight and focus to your lower abdomen. This concept may be difficult for students to understand. To assist them in learning to manifest this personal energy, suggest that they imagine pushing against their opponent from the lower abdomen when in Kei-ko. For example, they might imagine arrows coming out of their abdomen and pushing against their opponent.

Kendoists who become good at controlling their Ki-ai will be able to make their opponent feel as if they are moving toward them even if they are standing still. Ki-ai is important to help you achieve the Ma-ai you need to successfully execute strikes against your opponent.

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**KIRIKAESHI**

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# 斬り歸し

# 斬り返し

Pronunciation: Ki-ri-kae-shi (kee-lee-k-eye-shee)

**Background**

Ki-ri-kae-shi is one way to practice striking the head. Basically, it employs the techniques learned for Shou-mein-uchi and Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein, with the addition of striking the head at an angle.

Ki-ri-kae-shi requires that the student is able to perform Shou-mein-uchi and Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein. Otherwise, this practice will result in students acquiring bad habits. The instructor has to make sure that the student is competent and experienced to perform Ki-ri-kae-shi.

**Instructor's Notes**

The specific skills that Ki-ri-kae-shi practices are:

- Striking or cutting through the center top of the head (Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein)
- Striking the side of the head just above the temple (Ki-ri-kae-shi with an acute angle)
- Striking the side of the head at the temple (Ki-ri-kae-shi with an obtuse angle).

Beginners should work to perform Ki-ri-kae-shi with an acute angle. Once this becomes comfortable for the student, have them increase the angle of the head strike to perform Ki-ri-kae-shi with an obtuse angle. In Japan students practice Ki-ri-kae-shi for hours upon hours until they are smooth and proficient at the movements and techniques.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

The “receiver” or the person who is being struck is usually the instructor, as is indicated in the movements below. Once students understand Ki-ri-kae-shi, they should learn to be the receiver. The receiver is responsible for the correct distance between themselves and the person practicing Ki-ri-kae-shi (Ma-ai).

The goal is to perform Ki-ri-kae-shi using only two breaths. Consideration must be given to students who are older. An allowance of three breaths (i.e., taking one more breath for the last Shou-mein-uchi) can be made.

**Movement**

The movements are broken into those for the student (labeled: “Student:”) and those for the instructor (labeled: “Instructor:”). It is extremely important that the student practices using Ki-ai on each strike. Proper Ki-ai will help the student have enough breath and stamina to complete Kirikaeshi in one or two breaths. Be sure students are breathing using the diaphragm (belly breathing), not the chest. With practice, students should be able to perform Ki-ri-kae-shi in one breath. The instructor should take age, length of time practicing Kendo and physical condition into consideration when monitoring breath control.

- 1) Student and Instructor: Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Student: Shou-mein-uchi.
- 3) Instructor: Stop the student’s Shou-mein-uchi without moving from where you are standing
  - a) Stop the student by raising your Shi-nai to contact with the student’s Shi-nai as he begins his downward strike. Be sure that you are standing solid enough that he cannot push you back or knock you over.

**HINT:** Another method to block the student’s strikes is to turn your Shi-nai to be perpendicular with your body (and parallel with the ground) and hold it up at head height to stop the hit. To do this, from Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e, let go of the Shi-nai with your left hand. Raise your right hand upward so that it is above your right shoulder and head. Grasp the blade of your Shi-nai with your left hand so that it is above your left shoulder and head. Your hand placement should spread out to about shoulder-width apart.

- b) In Shou-mein-uchi , the instructor moves out of the way, but in Ki-ri-kae-shi the student runs into the instructor.

**HINT:** Many students are afraid to shove, bump, or push the instructor off balance. Thus, the student stops himself or herself before the instructor stops the student. To prevent this, sometimes you should move straight back after being hit. The student has to chase you until you stop backing up. You can then discuss the correct method with the student.

Many students don't bring their hands down when they run into the instructor so they lose speed and power or run the risk of injury their hands. To circumvent this, you need to demonstrate to the student how to properly upset the target (instructor).

- 4) Instructor: Push the student back and take the correct Ma-ai for the student to strike the side of your head.
  - a) It is the instructor's responsibility to make sure the student understands the correct Ma-ai in order to correctly strike the instructor's head. Students will learn correct Ma-ai by continually observing your distance as you move backward and forward in and out of Ma-ai. If Ma-ai is not achieved stop the student, find their correct Ma-ai and continue.
- 5) Student: Raise the Shi-nai straight up.
- 6) Student: Take one small step forward, with the Shi-nai execute a downward diagonal strike to the left side of the instructor's head, simultaneously shouting the Ki-ai 'Mein'.
  - a) Student: The right area for the strike is:
    - i) For an acute angle hit, hit the parietal region (temple) on both sides of the head with an angle of almost thirty degrees from the vertical centerline.
    - ii) For an obtuse angle hit, hit parietal region (temple) on both sides of the head with an angle of almost sixty to ninety degree from the vertical centerline.
  - b) Student: The correct way to execute a Shi-nai strike is to cut through the air half way and stop:
    - i) Execute the strike straight in only an up and down (linear) fashion.
    - ii) Watch which way the string faces. The string should not face straight up; i.e., both wrists should be turned so that the Shi-nai strikes the instructor with the side of the Shi-nai that represents the blade (opposite side from the string).
  - c) Instructor: The instructor will block the strikes (Uke). The correct hand positions for Uke when the hits are made are:

- i) Hands are positioned the same as in Hasso No Kamae. The left hand is over the center of your chest. The right hand is level with your chin and about one fist's distance away from your chin on the right side of your face.
  - ii) The right hand should be placed so that it almost touches each shoulder as the hands are moved from side to side to block the hits.
  - iii) The Shi-nai should be straight up (vertical) from the ground.
  - iv) Instructor: When the instructor does Uke he/she does not have to step with Suriashi; i.e., instructor can step as he/she would when walking naturally:
- 7) Student: Pull and position the left foot up as quickly as possible.
- a) After positioning the left foot underneath you, the stance should not be the same as Chudan No Ka-ma-e because the Shi-nai is at the side of the head of the instructor.
- 8) Student: Repeat 5 to 7 three more times, next striking the right side on the instructor's head, then alternating sides of the head for the remaining strikes.
- a) There are a total of four strikes and four steps forward.
- 9) Student: To go backward, raise the Shi-nai up, take a small step back, and execute a strike downward as described in number 6, striking the head with either an acute or obtuse angle accompanied with the Ki-ai "Mein".
- a) Instructor: The instructor will block (Uke) as described in 6c.
- 10) Student: Pull and position the right foot back as quickly as possible.
- a) Continue to hold the Shi-nai at the position for striking the head; i.e., do not return to Chudan No Ka-ma-e.
- 11) Student: Repeat sections 9 and 10 four more times, striking the right side of the instructor's head then alternating sides for the remaining strikes.
- a) There are a total of five strikes and five steps backward.
- 12) Student and Instructor: Repeat sections 2 through 11 one more time for a total of two times.
- 13) Student: Shou-mein-uchi
- a) This time, the instructor moves out of the way before the student runs into him and allows the student to run through.



- 14) Student: Turn around counterclockwise and Shou-mein-uchi again.
- 15) Turn around counterclockwise, return to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e and use Zan-shin (energetically and through attitude) to “push” against the instructor.

HINT: An easier way to remember Kirikaeshi is from the student’s point of view; i.e., a strike to the instructor’s left temple is a blow to the right from the student’s point of view. Below is a list of the Ki-ri-kae-shi set:

Mein (blocked)  
 Mein-Mein-Mein-Mein (right-left-right-left forward)  
 Mein-Mein-Mein-Mein-Mein (right-left-right-left-right backward)  
 Mein (blocked)  
 Mein-Mein-Mein-Mein (right-left-right-left forward)  
 Mein-Mein-Mein-Mein-Mein (right-left-right-left-right backward)  
 Shou-mein-uchi  
 Shou-mein-uchi

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## KOTE DOUCHI

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# 胴

## 小手、胴打ち

Pronunciation: Kote Do-uchi (koh-tay doe-oo-chee)

### Background

Kote Do-uchi is a combination of two techniques: Kote-uchi and Do-uchi. The instructor needs to make sure the student understands the meaning of these movements and can perform Kote-uchi and Do-uchi correctly before teaching the combined technique.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

When working with students who have not yet learned the short arch strike technique, make sure that the strikes executed are full strikes and the left hand is raised above the forehead. Eventually, the more advanced students will learn short arch strike techniques and combination strikes executed at a faster rate, such as Kote Do-uchi.

### **Movement**

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Raise the Shi-nai straight up.
- 3) Kote-uchi
  - a) The instructor moves one step back to avoid the strike.
- 4) Instantly return to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
  - a) Do not remain in this stance very long because this is only the first step in this combination technique.
  - b) At this time the instructor acts as a student with no training raising his arms up to as if to flinch while trying to block a head strike. Thus, the instructor's body becomes wide open for the student's next strike (Do-uchi).
- 5) Do-uchi.
  - a) Do not move the feet between Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e and Do-uchi. In other words, the starting position for Do-uchi is the position you ended in when you completed Kote-uchi.

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### **KOTEUCHI**

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小手

小手打ち

Pronunciation: Kote-uchi (koh-tay-oo-chee)

## Background

Kote-uchi is the technique to strike the wrist. It is common to refer to the strike as simply “Kote”. Kote-uchi, unlike Shou-mein-uchi, is not a slicing technique. Kote-uchi is a cutting technique whose purpose is to cut off the thumbs. Cutting off one or both thumbs of your opponent makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to grip their sword. In Kendo the correct point to strike is the wrist.

To correctly perform Kote-uchi, you need to execute the Shi-nai strike straight down the centerline of your opponent. A strike straight down aims your sword directly at your opponent’s thumbs. A straight up strike conceals which strike you are preparing to make. Mein-uchi, Kote-uchi and Do-uchi all start with raising the Shi-nai upward above your head.

## Instructor’s Notes

Kote or Kote-uchi should be taught only after the student has a good understanding and ability to execute Mein-uchi. This is because the movement to lift up the Shi-nai and the ability to strike straight downward are common with the Mein strike. If the student cannot execute a straight strike to the Mein, they will have even more difficulty executing the wrist strike. Weak left wrists or too much power applied with the right hand are common problems. Be sure these are corrected before moving students to the Kote or any other strike. It is important to remember that the Mein-uchi strike can take a long time for students to learn, let alone master. If the Mein-uchi training is rushed through it could result in poor, mistimed and weak striking technique.

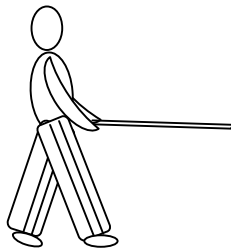
## Step-by-Step Instructions

### Movement

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Raise the Shi-nai straight upwards. The left hand should be just above the forehead such that the tsuba can tap the student on the head. The Shi-nai should not be off to the right or left. It should be in line with the centerline of the body and back at about a ~30 to 45-degree angle.



- 3) Take one small step forward, execute the correctly centered Shi-nai downward. Stop the strike when the Shi-nai becomes parallel to the ground using the Ki-ai 'Kote'. Stopping the Shi-nai is done by using Chibori (see "Chibori" for further instruction).



- a) The correct place to stop the Shi-nai is:
- i) The Shi-nai should be parallel to the ground or slightly pointed down to assure the thumbs are cut off.
  - ii) Right hand: right arm should be straight, as far as possible, and the right hand should be directly in line with the navel (although it will be a few inches away since it is still gripping the handle of the Shi-nai).
  - iii) Left hand: when you stop the Shi-nai with the right hand in the correct position, the left hand should automatically be in front of the navel.
- 4) Pull and position the left foot forward to shore up your stance as quickly as possible.
- a) After returning the left foot to the "ready" position, the feet will be placed the same as they would be for Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e, but the Shi-nai remains parallel with the ground (Kote position is maintained).
- 5) Return to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

### **Backward Movement**

- 1) To perform Kote-uchi when moving backwards, raise the Shi-nai upward, take a small step back, and execute a strike downward using the Ki-ai 'Kote'. This technique uses the same striking pattern as seen in step 3 for Kote-uchi.
- 2) Pull and position the right foot back as quick as possible.
  - a) After positioning the right foot back, the feet will be placed the same as they would be for Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e, but the Shi-nai remains parallel with the ground (Kote position is maintained).
- 3) Return to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

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### **MAAI**

---

間合

Pronunciation: Ma-ai (my-aaa)

#### **Background**

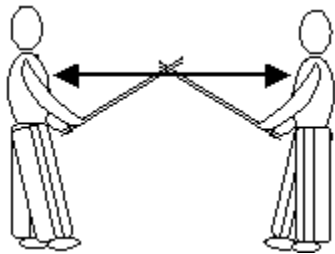
Basically, Ma-ai translates as the distance between people when they face each other. Ma-ai is the correct distance between you and your opponent for you to execute a successful strike. Ma-ai is different for each strike and for each competitor. In other words, you may have to stand closer to successfully strike your opponent in the wrist (Kote) and further away to properly hit him in the head (Mein). Ma-ai is different for each person because of the variations in size, reach (the length of your arms) and physical condition. If you are too close when you strike you will hit your opponent with the wrong part of your sword or with the handle. Either one may injure your opponent. Out of respect for your opponent, you should never strike him when you are too close. If you are too far away when you strike, you can miss your opponent and leave yourself open for attack.

#### **Instructor's Notes**

When students are first learning Kendo, they need to understand the basic (general) Ma-ai. Ma-ai is also known as your forward circle of influence. The basic Ma-ai in Kendo is almost one and half times the length of a Shi-nai. Later, when students learn about Kei-ko (practice fighting), encourage them to find their own Ma-ai; i.e., the Ma-ai that works best for them in order to execute the most successful strikes.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

Have two students face each other. Help them position themselves so that the Shi-nais cross at or before the Foushi (the leather knot near the end of the Shi-nai). This is the distance for the general Ma-ai for Kendo.



The arrow  in the diagram is Ma-ai

### Practice for Ma-ai

Have two students face each other in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e at the general Ma-ai distance.

### Practice Movement

- 1) One student moves one step in the direction that the instructor calls (left, right, forward, or backward).
- 2) The other student follows the first student's movements, being careful to maintain Ma-ai. This should look like choreographed dance steps while keeping the same distance from your opponent executing Ma-ai in all directions.
- 3) Repeat steps 1 and 2 several times.

### Additional Practice

- 1) The instructor gives one student a set of movements (e.g., back, back, left, right, front and front), concealing it from the other student.
- 2) The student who was told the set of movements executes the movements.
- 3) The student who was told the set of movements sets the pace. The student who does not know the movements follows the first, attempting to maintain Ma-ai.
- 4) Switch the students and repeat steps 1 through 3 several times.

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**MAKIKAESHIWAZA**

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# 巻き返し技

Pronunciation: Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza (mah-kee-ka-eee-shee-wa-zah)

**Background**

Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza is a defensive counterattack. The movement of the sword in Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza is a circular movement, which looks like you are winding or coiling up something. In the Japanese language, Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza is formed from three words: “Maki” which means “winding up something”, “Kaeshi” which originates from “Kaesu” which means “reversing or countering”, and “Waza” which means “technique or movement for defeating an opponent”.

**Instructor's Notes**

Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza is used to defend against strikes to the head or wrist and against Tsuki (stab or thrust). For defending against these attacks, you step out of the way and use the sword as a form of insurance to protect your body from being struck by your opponent. It is possible to move to the left, back and to the left, forward and to the left, right, right and back, or right and forward to avoid the attack in Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza. The choice of where you move to avoid your opponent's strike is dependent on many factors such as the type of strike (Mein, Kote or Tsuki), how fast he

is making the strike, your ability to properly execute Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza on either side, etc. Regardless of the direction you choose to move, you must always remain conscious of Ma-ai. The last movement in Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza is your counter attack. You must have the correct distance (Ma-ai) to successfully perform the attack.

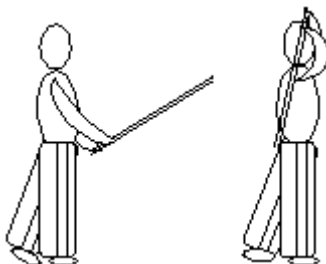
### Step-by-Step Instructions

Since Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza requires the student to control the Shi-nai while executing a large circular motion as well as be able to time the deflection appropriately. This technique is not recommended for beginners or students who can not execute the Shi-nai strike straight down from their head.

### Movement

The movements listed below are broken down for the student (labeled: "Student:") and the instructor (labeled: "Instructor:").

- 1) Student and Instructor: Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Instructor: The instructor attempts to strike the student's Mein or Kote.
- 3) Student: Move left and back or left one step while raising the Shi-nai upward. Raise the left hand up such that it looks like you are carrying a Shi-nai on your right shoulder.
  - a) Left toes should be pointing at the opponent.
  - b) The Shi-nai's tip is facing toward the floor.
  - c) The Shi-nai's string is facing straight front; i.e., the blade of the sword is pointed behind you.
  - d) The right hand is now close to or touching the right shoulder or is next to the right eye.
  - e) The left hand is almost above the right side of the head.
  - f) The Shi-nai is parallel with your right side.





- 4) Student: Move the right foot back behind the left foot.
  - a) The stance is the same as Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e's foot stance except the left foot is in front.
- 5) Student: While moving the right foot, bring the Shi-nai above the head (i.e., move to Jo-Dan) and make a counter attack (Mein, Kote, etc).
  - a) Execute a strike with the Shi-nai straight down from the center of the head.
  - b) Instructor: You should allow the student to strike you when the student is first learning this technique.



**Return to Jo-Dan  
to start the  
counter attack**

**HINT:** The counter attack will be a strike made while moving backwards. The counter attack can be Mein or Kote. Refer to "Backward Movement" under the Kote-uchi section for an example of the Kote counter attack.

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**MEIN**

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面

Pronunciation: Mein (menh)

**Background**

Mein translates as “face or mask”. Shou-mein means “the front of the face (up to the top of the head)”. In Kendo, you will hear both terms used when we talk about striking the head. The term “Mein-uchi” is used when hitting the head from a somewhat stationary position, such as after blocking using Ma-ki-kae-shi-waza. The term “Shou-mein-uchi” is used when meaning to strike the head and run through, past your opponent. There are several types of swords - Japanese swords, western swords, Chinese swords, etc. Some are made for cutting (similar to chopping) and some are made for slicing. Japanese swords are made for slicing. Thus, if you swing a Japanese sword to try to cut (versus slice) through your opponent’s head, the sword could bend, chip or break.

### Instructor’s Notes

To properly do Mein-uchi or Shou-mein-uchi, you have to stop the sword after the first impact (generally, your right arm will be straight out, parallel with the ground). Keep the Shi-nai in this position and run through (Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi), past the person as if to slice their head in two.

Beginners will struggle to stop at the correct place. Remind the students that the strike is a casting motion similar to casting a fishing rod. For now it may be better to have the students stop a little higher than the head. When the students fight, their adrenaline coupled with gravity and sometimes fatigue will result in poorly managed striking technique making them strike beyond the stopping point.

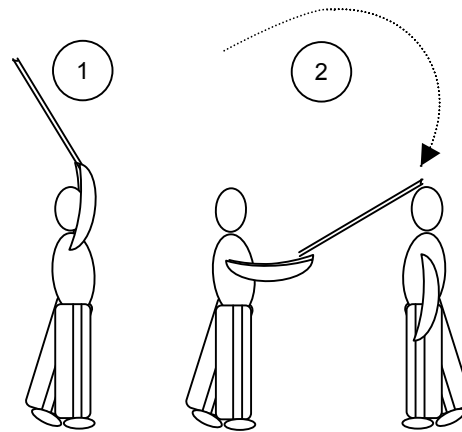
### Step-by-Step Instructions

**HINT:** As students become accustomed to the technique, they will find that using only the muscles of the arms or back to stop the Shi-nai puts undue strain on the elbows, arms and back. To avoid injury and to correctly stop the sword, teach the students to use Shi-bo-ri. Refer to “Shi-bo-ri” for further explanation.

### Movement

- 1) Start in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Raise the Shi-nai up above your head (left hand is above the forehead).
- 3) Execute the Shi-nai downward using a casting out motion, similar to casting a fishing pole.
  - a) The correct place to stop the Shi-nai is:
    - i) Your right arm is parallel with the ground and left hand positioning the tip of the Shi-nai at head height.

Basic casting motion of the Shinai **cuts on the return.**



There are several techniques and practices that involve striking the head. A few are listed here. Refer to each of these in this manual for correct instructions on performing and teaching the techniques.

Ha-ya-su-bu-ri

Ki-ri-kae-shi

Shou-mein-uchi

Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein

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## NUKIWAZA

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# 抜き技

Pronunciation: Nu-ki-waza (new-kee-wa-zah)

### Background

Nu-ki-waza is a defensive counterattack. The first step of this technique is to evade your opponent's attack. The second step is to attack your opponent. To evade or escape your

opponent's attack, the first movement is to step backwards away from the strike. Since this backward evasive movement looks like the person is being pulled away from where they should be, Japanese call this technique Nu-ki-waza. In the Japanese language, "Nu-ki" means "pulling something away from its original position".

### Instructor's Notes

Nu-ki-waza is used to defend against strikes to the head or wrist. For defending against these attacks, you step out of the way by moving backward. When students are first learning this technique, have them practice Nu-ki-waza only when opponents attack their wrist (Kote-uchi). Since the strike to the wrist does not require the opponent to run through the target, the student has enough time to retreat, avoiding the strike and counterattacking in the correct manner.

When students become more comfortable with their own speed, timing and rhythm, they can graduate to defending against Shou-mein-uchi. The student will need to learn how to step back and evade either the right or left strike when being attacked in Shou-mein-uchi. Since striking the head is a technique which requires the opponent to run through the target, side stepping to the left or right is a better idea than stepping backwards to avoid being physically run in to by your opponent. Make sure the students do not adopt bad habits, such as swinging the Shi-nai off center or to the side, by rushing Nu-ki-waza.

As explained above, the choice of where you move to avoid your opponent's strike is dependent on the type of strike (Mein or Kote) and which strike you intend to use in the counterattack. Regardless of the direction you choose to move, you must always remain conscious of Ma-ai because the last movement in Nu-ki-waza is your attack. You must have the correct distance to successfully complete the attack.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

Although Nu-ki-waza can be practiced alone, the best way to practice is with a partner. Practicing with a partner allows the student to work on the correct Ma-ai for the counterattack. Although the movements below are labeled as student and instructor, the instructor position can also be filled by another student.

#### **Movement**

The following movements are broken down for the student (labeled: "Student:") and for the instructor (labeled: "Instructor:").

- 1) Student and Instructor: Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

- 2) Instructor: Attempt to strike the student's Mein or Kote.
- 3) Student: Move back one step while raising the Shi-nai upwards.
  - a) The correct way to step is:
    - i) For beginners: straight back, the as same as Ha-ya-su-bu-ri.
    - ii) As an advanced technique or to evade/escape from Shou-mein-uchi : move backwards to either the right or the left of the strike.
  - b) When swinging up, the student should raise the Shi-nai up above their head (Jo-Dan).



- 4) Student: Strike the instructor where designated (Kote, Mein or Do).

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## RITSUREI (STANDING BOW)

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立礼

Pronunciation: Rit-su-rei (lit-soo-lay)

### Background

In western cultures, shaking hands or hugging is a typical method of greeting another person. In eastern cultures, including the Japanese culture, bowing is used to greet each other. To bow is to show respect to another. Bowing can also be used when making a deep apology.

For our purposes in this Kendo Curriculum, we will only address four types of Standing Bows and one type of Sitting Bow. The Sitting Bow (Za-rei) is described in its own section. The Standing Bows are discussed below.

**Instructor's Notes**

The four standing bows your students should be familiar with (at a minimum) are the common bow (also known as the bow of respect), the more respectful bow (termed "bow" in this text), the most respectful bow (termed "very low bow" herein) and the competition bow.

The Common or General Bow is used as a way to greet other students or friends. The General Bow is also used when entering and leaving the Dojo or getting on and off the actual teaching space or "deck". The Bow is to show a little more respect and is used to acknowledge a Sensei and others of teaching status. The Very Low Bow is used to greet very important people such as a high ranking Kendo master or a government official up to and like the president. It is also the bow used when making a deep apology. The Competition Bow is used to show respect to an opponent before and after competing.

All bows start from the waist and are made with the back straight. Do not dip the head when bowing.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

An illustration of all four bows follows the descriptions.

**Common or General Bow**

The Common or General Bow is used when entering or leaving the Dojo and when getting on or off the teaching/practicing deck. It is also used as a greeting to fellow students.

The bow is from the waist, bending about 15 degrees forward. The eyes focus on a point approximately 6 feet in front of you and your chest is pushed outward. The tempo is three counts: down 1,2; up 3. The completed bow should take approximately three seconds. Have the students count to themselves (one one-thousand, two one-thousand, and three one-thousand) to keep the proper tempo. Keep the back straight when executing the bow.

**Bow**

The bow is from the waist, bending about 30 degrees forward. The eyes are focused on a point approximately 3 feet in front of you. The tempo is five counts: down 1,2,3; up 4,5. Keep your back straight when you bend forward to bow.

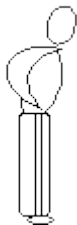
**Very Low Bow**

This bow is used when greeting very important people, such as the head of your school's system or the president. It is also the bow used when making a deep apology. The bow is from the waist, bending at least 45 degrees. Do not bend more than 90 degrees. The eyes are focused on the feet. The tempo is: down 1,2,3,4; hold the bowed position for over one count or until you finish the statement for an apology; up 1,2. Keep your back straight when you bend forward to bow.

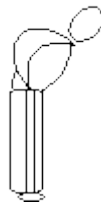
### **Competition Bow**

The Competition Bow is used to acknowledge your opponent at the start and end of a competition. The bow is from the waist, bending almost 15 degrees forward. Look your opponent in the eye when you bow so that he is unable to attack you by surprise. The tempo is: down 1; up 2. Keep your back straight and chest out when you bend forward to bow. For more information on the Competition bow with the Shi-nai, refer to the Shi-nai section.

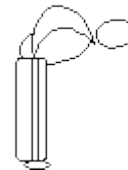
**Common or General  
Bow & Competition  
Bow (greeting)**



**Bow (more  
respectful)**



**Very low bow  
(great respect  
or apology)**




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SAKA (GYAKU) DOUCHI

胴

逆胴打ち

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Pronunciation: Sa-ka Do-uchi (sah-ka doe-oo-chee)

### Background

Sa-ka (Gya-ku) Do-uchi is a technique that strikes center of the opponent's body. It is a strike or cut to the opponent's left side (the opposite the side which you would strike for Do-uchi). If students understand the theory behind striking on the opponent's right side for Do-uchi, they may be slightly confused about using Sa-ka Do-uchi. In Do-uchi, the strike is made to the opponent's right side to avoid striking the scabbards (see "Do-uchi" for further explanation regarding the problem with scabbards). Thus, the instructor needs to explain that Sa-ka Do is designed to strike the opponent's upper area of the Do just below the left arm pit and not strike the lower stomach area on the side itself.

### Instructor's Notes

Sa-ka Do-uchi is seldom used; it is rare to even see it in a tournament. Sa-ka Do-Uchi is only to be performed by high-ranked instructors when students continually open their body wide for attack (as a way to teach them to not open their body for attack), or in the situation where there is something blocking the opponent's right side.

When Sa-ka Do is used, it is often performed in conjunction with a blocking technique. For Example, after blocking the opponent's strike, you should counter by executing a strike with your Shi-nai downward and to the opponent's left upper side with the Sa-ka Do technique.

Do-uchi or Sa-ka Do-uchi is also used to name another method to strike your opponent's Do on his right side. After blocking an opponent's strike, counter attack and strike his right side Do and run through the target on his right side.

The theory of these Do techniques is not difficult, but performing these techniques requires considerable practice to perform them correctly. For this reason, judges will often give points for Sa-ka (Gya-ku) Do-uchi only when the competitor performs the technique perfectly.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

These advanced techniques should only be taught to the higher-ranking students.

#### Movement

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.



- 2) Raise the Shi-nai upwards.
- 3) Take one small step forward with your right foot while executing a strike with the Shi-nai straight down, as if to make a Kote strike. Use your right hand to tilt the Shi-nai slightly to the right to assure contact on the left side at about waist level. Simultaneously shout the Ki-ai 'Do'.

a) The correct way to step is:

- i) For the first step of Do-uchi, bend your knees to lower your body when striking the Do. This is done to focus the power of the sword strike into the opponent's body and protect you from any counter attacks.

**HINT:** When first learning this technique, have the students run forward and to the left (at a forty-five degree angle from your partner). This will help them lower their body as described above.

b) The right place to stop the Shi-nai is:

- i) Make first contact under the left stomach area.
  - ii) Students should strike between the tip of the Shi-nai and just under the nakayui (the knot tied around the blade near the top third of the Shi-nai).
  - iii) Basically, the Shi-nai should be parallel to the ground.
  - iv) Do not swing from the side like swinging a baseball bat. This telegraphs to your opponent where you intend to hit. Strike straight down from the top of your head.
  - v) The string is facing to the right, away from your opponent.
- c) For a close distance strike or when running through the opponent, both hands should be close to your body (many times they may be touching your body).
  - d) When the Shi-nai contacts the opponent's body, your left hand should be in front of your navel.
- 4) Pull the left foot forward as quickly as possible and run through to your opponent's right side.
  - 5) Turn around clockwise and face your opponent in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

### **Alternate Movement**

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

- 2) Raise the Shi-nai straight up.
- 3) Take one small step forward with your right foot while executing the strike with the Shi-nai straight down, twist your right wrist to the left to aim the Shi-nai at the right side of your opponent's body. Simultaneously shout the Ki-ai 'Do'.
  - a) You do not lower your body for this Sa-ka Do technique. It is most used after blocking, not as an attack.
  - b) The right place to stop the Shi-nai is:
    - i) Make first contact on the right side.
    - ii) Students should strike between the tip of the Shi-nai and just under the nakayui (the knot tied around the blade near the top third of the Shi-nai).
    - iii) Basically, the Shi-nai should be parallel to the ground.
    - iv) Do not swing from the side like swinging a baseball bat. This telegraphs to your opponent where you intend to hit. Swing straight down from the top of your head.
    - v) The string is facing to the left, away from your opponent.
  - c) Pull the left foot forward as quickly as possible and run through to your opponent's right side (to your left).
  - d) Turn around clockwise and face your opponent in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

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**SEIZA**

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正座

Pronunciation: Sei-za (say-zah)

<b>Background</b>
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Sei-za translates loosely as “the right way to sit”. Japanese culture was developed as a floor-desk culture. This means that the Japanese do not use chairs for sitting. Instead they use the floor. Because Kendo has its roots in Japan, Kendoists sit in the same manner as the Japanese. The way of sitting, Sei-za, is used whenever students are waiting for class to begin, at the end of class or when watching the instructor or other students.

**HINT:** If the student has knee trouble, the instructor should consider alternative ways of helping the student to strengthen his leg muscles (especially the thigh muscles) to take the load off the student’s knees. For example, suggest that the student use the practices for Son-kyo in the “Son-kyo ” section. In cases where the knee is extremely bad or until the student has sufficiently stretched the ligaments around the knee area, have the student practice a sei-za position on a pillow, soft padding or even sit on a small stool so that the knees are not stretched so dramatically. **If you ignore a bad knee, the situation will most likely become worse.**

#### Instructor’s Notes

As with most martial arts, students sit with the highest Kyu (rank) on the right. Students with the same Kyu arrange themselves by age – the oldest sits first. In traditional Japanese culture, men would sit ahead of women. Once the students are lined up, they must wait to sit down until the person on their right starts to sit down. This is one way to teach respect for older and higher ranked students.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

Instructions for both sitting and standing up from Sei-za are include below.

**Movement**

- 1) Stand straight (as if you are standing at attention).
- 2) Pull and position your left foot one step back.
- 3) Kneel on your left knee.
  - a) The left knee is on the same line as the right heel.
  - b) The left heel is still up; do not put the foot flat. Your left foot is perpendicular to the ground and your toes are bent such that they are almost 90 degrees forward in relationship to your foot. The toes are supporting your weight.
- 4) Bring the right knee down even with the left knee.
  - a) Both heels are up; do not lay the feet flat yet.
- 5) Sit on the heels.
  - a) Both heels are still up; do not lay the feet flat yet.
- 6) Stretch out the feet flat so that the toes are pointing toward the back and the tops (instep) of the feet are in contact with the ground.
  - a) For males: the knees are spread apart such that you could fit about two to three fists or gloves in the space between your knees.
  - b) For females: the knees are touching.
  - c) The knees should line up with the knees of the person to your right.
- 7) Place your hands on the upper thigh. Fingers are pointed toward the inside of your thighs.

**HINT:** It is a good habit to always place your left hand on your thigh, then your right hand. This is because when your are sitting with a sword, this order of hand placement would leave your hand close to the sword for as long as possible. (Remember, the sword is placed on the ground to your right).

### How to Stand Up

- 1) Bend your toes so that the tops of your feet (instep) are no longer on the ground and your heels are up. Simultaneously lift your body up and sit on your heels.
- 2) Bring up your right knee; kneel on the left knee.
  - a) The right heel is in line with the left knee.
  - b) The left heel is still up. Your left foot is perpendicular to the ground and your toes are bent such that they are almost 90 degrees forward in relationship to your foot. The toes are supporting your weight.
- 3) Stand up by pushing off with your right foot.
- 4) Pull and position the left foot forward to be in line with the right foot. Stand straight at attention.

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### SHIBORI

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絞 り

Pronunciation: Shi-bo-ri (shee-boo-lee)

<b>Background</b>
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Shi-bo-ri is the term for the wringing of the handle of the Shi-nai in order to stop lateral motion. Shi-bo-ri is used to offer more snap when striking and allows the shinai stop to faster when finishing a strike. Using only the muscles of the arms or back to stop the Shi-nai puts undue strain on the elbows, arms and back. To avoid injury and to correctly stop the sword, the inside of the hands are used to squeeze the handle of the sword.

<b>Instructor's Notes</b>
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The easiest way to describe Shi-bo-ri to your students is to ask them to pretend they are wringing out a wet washcloth or towel. The wrists of both hands move toward each other as the inside of the hands squeeze to tighten on the handle. This technique is called Shi-bo-ri.

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**SHINAI (BAMBOO SWORD)**

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# 竹刀

Pronunciation: Shi-nai (shee-neigh)

**Background**

Kendo is built upon the technical aspects of Kenjutsu, the art of fighting with the sword. Initially swordsmen practiced with real swords, but many people were lost in practice rather than in battle. Later the Bokutou or wooden sword replaced the steel sword for practice. Although this was more forgiving than the real sword, a blow from the Bokutou could also injure or kill a student. The Shi-nai or bamboo sword also known as a yotsuwari emerged as a safer way to train.

The Shi-nai is fashioned from four pieces of bamboo held together with a leather handle, a leather knot wrapped around it near the top, and a small piece of leather around the tip. A string connects these leather pieces and is used to put tension on the bamboo to give the Shi-nai form.

There are differences between Japanese, Chinese and European swords. Japanese swords are designed to cut, not chop. Japanese swords are designed to cut on the return unlike Western fencing methods where many cut on the strike only.

**Instructor's Notes**

Since the Shi-nai is made from bamboo, it will dry out and crack if not properly cared for. It is important and respectful to keep your Shi-nai in proper condition. Small pieces or splinters of bamboo can break off a Shi-nai that has become too dry and lodge in your or your classmates' eyes when fighting. The Shi-nai requires oiling periodically to keep it from drying out. The frequency to oil your Shi-nai will vary depending on the humidity conditions in your area. It is suggested that the Shi-nai be examined about once per month to check for dryness, cracks and

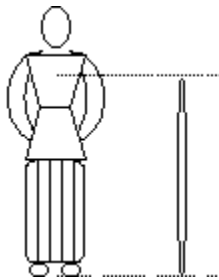
splinters. It is also recommended that the Shi-nai be checked when it is taken between areas of different humidity and weather conditions. To check the Shi-nai, you will need to disassemble it. Pay attention to how it is held together and where the strings and parts go when you reassemble. Disassemble the Shi-nai into its four bamboo components.

Examine the bamboo for cracks. The Shi-nai will need to be replaced if there are major cracks. This usually does not occur until after significant use of the Shi-nai for fighting. Check the Shi-nai for splinters. Be careful about running your finger along the edges to check for splinters. You may get a splinter in you! The bamboo splinters are small and hard to see when they get in your skin. If there are splinters on the Shi-nai, use a broken piece of glass (caution, please) and slide it gently over the splinter area. Slide the glass up and down over the splinter until it comes off. A piece of glass is preferred over a knife because of the tendency to remove too much material from the Shi-nai with a knife blade. If you do use a knife, use the back or blunt side or better yet, use the blade part of a pair of scissors. Next use a nickel (the coin) to smooth over the area. Again, just rub it gently up and down over the affected area until it becomes smooth.

Next prepare to oil the Shi-nai. There are special oils that are marketed specifically for the Shi-nai. You can use these if you like, but a good canola oil will do the trick. Too much oil is as bad as too little. Pour a small amount of oil onto a cloth or paper towel. Run the cloth or towel up and down the inside and outside of the four pieces of bamboo that make up the Shi-nai. Don't forget the edges. Use another cloth or paper towel to wipe off excess oil.

### Picking the Proper Shi-nai

The Shi-nai should, when stood on end and measured against the student, be about chest high. However, in competition, adults will use size 38 for females and size 39 for males.



**HINT:** The string on the Shi-nai represents the back, or blunt, side of the sword. Always be conscious of which way the blade is facing.

Between the end of the Shi-nai and Nakayui (Middle knot) is the correct place for first contact on the opponent's body. The last two inches is the best place for first contact when striking an opponent.

The middle knot should be slid in place approximately one third (1/3) of the way down the blade from the tip of the Shi-nai.

### **Step-by-Step Instructions**

#### **How to Carry the Shi-nai**

These instructions are for holding the Shi-nai before class instruction starts or when walking around the deck or practice area.

- 1) The Shi-nai is held in the left hand. The "blade" (the side opposite the string) faces up.
- 2) The hand should be just in front of the Tsuba (hilt).
- 3) The string should face down to the ground; i.e., the "blade" faces up.

4) **HINT:** If you were carrying a sword with a live or sharp blade, this method of carrying the sword is used so that even if you hit your left leg with your sword, you would not cut yourself.

- 5) The arm should be straight, at rest naturally by your side. Thus, the sword's tip should face down toward the ground at about a forty-five degree angle.

#### **How to Sit Down with the Shi-nai**

- 1) Before starting "How to sit down with the Shi-nai", review how to sit down in "Sei-za".
- 2) The Shi-nai is held in the left hand, as described above.
- 3) Sit down as described in Sei-za.
- 4) Bring the Shi-nai up and straight in front of you, keeping the string facing you.
- 5) Bring the right hand up and grip the Shi-nai just behind the Tsuba, letting go with the left hand.
- 6) Bring the Shi-nai down toward your right side and place it down on the ground so that it is parallel with your right leg.



- a) The string should be facing away from you; i.e., the blade is facing toward you so it cannot injure the person to your right. This is a show of respect.
- 7) The Tsuba is even with your knees.
- 8) The left hand is placed on the left leg up near the top of the thigh.
- 9) The right hand is placed (keeping it close to your weapon and ready to defend yourself) on the right thigh.

### **Competition Bow with the Shi-nai**

- 1) The Competition Bow is identical to the general greeting bow except you keep your eyes on your opponent.
- 2) Stand as if in attention.
  - a) The Shi-nai is held in your left hand. The left hand is placed just in front of the Tsuba.
- 3) Bend forward at the waist about 20 degrees. Keep your back straight.
  - a) Count to one to bend forward.
  - b) Keep your eyes on your opponent.

HINT: Keeping your eyes on your opponent is the only thing that makes this bow different from the general or greeting bow.

- 4) Stand back straight.
  - a) Count to two to stand back up.
  - b) Keep your eyes on your opponent.

### **Movements at the Beginning of a Promotion or Keiko Competition**

You will hear these words or commands used in Kendo in conjunction with promotions or competitions (refer to the **Ranking Manual**):

### **Taito: Wear the Sword** 帯刀

- 1) Lift left hand up to the waistline.
- 2) Place thumb on the Tsuba (doughnut). This tells your opponent that you are ready to fight.
- 3) Walk three steps forward, starting with right foot.

### **Nukito: Draw the Sword** 抜き刀

- 1) Grasp the Shi-nai with the right hand from the underside of the handle.
- 2) Simulate drawing the sword by sliding the Shi-nai forward, rotating your wrist which in turn flips the shi-nai over and points forward.
  - a) You should end in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

### **Osameto: Sheath the Sword** 納め刀

- 1) Sheath the sword at the waistline. Sheathing the shi-nai is done the same basic way as drawing it, only in reversal. Still grasping the shi-nai rotate your wrist which in turn flips the shi-nai over and points backwards.
- 2) The left thumb should be back on the Tsuba (doughnut).
- 3) Stand up.
  - a) Right hand should be placed on the top of your right hip bone.
  - b) Thumb should remain on the Tsuba and the right hand at your waist.
- 4) At the end of a competition or promotion, you need to move back to where you started by taking five steps back, starting with your left foot.
- 5) Put your hands down naturally. Remove the thumb from the Tsuba.

<b>How to Take Care of the Shi-nai</b>
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Since the Shi-nai is made of bamboo it cracks easily. When this happens splinters may come off. These splinters may fly away and strike or stick into your or your partner's eyes. It is your responsibility to take care of the Shi-nai and keep it in good condition. To check for cracks and splinters, follow these easy steps.

- 1) Remove the leather and separate the Shi-nai in to its four pieces.
- 2) First check to make sure that there are no cracks or small pieces of bamboo loose on the Shi-nai.
- 3) If there is a crack, separate the split off piece from the Shi-nai. Use the back side (blunt side) of a knife or the edge of an open pair of scissors or piece of glass to scrape the area smooth.

- 4) To prevent more cracks put oil on each of the four sections of bamboo.
  - a) Too much or too little oil can cause the bamboo to crack more easily. Although there is oil made specifically for the Shi-nai, you can use Canola oil. It is best to apply the oil with an old cloth. Put a small amount of oil on the cloth. Rub the oiled cloth over the four sections. Use another cloth, without oil, to wipe off any excess oil.

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## SHOUMEINUCHI

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# 正面打ち

Pronunciation: Shoumeinuchi (show-menh-oo-chee)

### Background

Shou-mein means “the front of the face (up to the top of the head)” or the forehead. So, since “uchi” means “to strike”, Shou-mein-uchi means to hit the forehead. To slice through your opponent’s head, you have to stop the sword after the first impact. If you don’t stop the sword then, the blade would get stuck in your opponent’s skull, possibly resulting in the loss of your weapon. After the first blow to cut down through your opponent’s head, you move forward through the target.

### Instructor’s Notes

To teach Shou-mein-uchi , have the students strike with the Shi-nai the same as they would for executing a strike of Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein, but have the students run through after the strike instead of standing still. When first learning this technique, the students should not run to the side of the instructor. The student needs to run straight through. Otherwise, the student will lose speed and power.

Running through the target with speed is one of the most important things in Shou-mein-uchi. The ability to move quickly is enhanced through the practice of Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi. Be sure to watch the student’s left foot movement to be sure that the toes do not point out.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

Shou-mein-uchi can be practiced alone as well as with the instructor or a partner. Once students have bogu (armor), it is a good idea to let them be the receiver of strikes. They will quickly learn that a strike that is poorly executed (done too close or not in the right place) is slightly painful. They will also learn to recognize a properly executed strike by the way it feels (it does not hurt) and the way it sounds (clean, quick snap). Whether solo practice or practice with a partner is used, watch for potential strikes that don't go back too far (a 45-degree angle with the ground is enough – anything more is wasted energy), listen for Ki-ai, listen for the strike to be simultaneous with the right foot step, and listen for Fu-mi-ko-mi in more advanced students.

### Movement

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Raise the Shi-nai straight up.
- 3) Take one step forward with the right foot, execute a strike with the Shi-nai straight down and run through the target using quick Su-ri-a-shi and the Ki-ai 'Mein'.
  - a) The right place for stopping the Shi-nai is with your right arm parallel with the ground and left hand positioning the tip of the Shi-nai at head height (same as in Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein).
  - b) The student has to run straight through using Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi.
  - c) The instructor moves to the right side after being hit in the head, but only just before the student bumps, shoves and pushes him off balance.
- 4) Turn around counterclockwise to face the instructor.
  - a) Until this point, stay in the position for hitting the head (i.e., right arm is parallel to the ground, the tip of the Shi-nai is at head height).
- 5) Return to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

**HINT:** After being hit, move to a position where you can check to see if the student kept their right arm parallel with the ground and left the tip of the Shi-nai at head height.

Push the back of the student's waist to make them move through faster.

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**SONKYO**

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# 蹲踞

Pronunciation: Son-kyo (son-kee-yo)

**Background**

Basically, Son-kyo is a squatting position. Son-kyo is used in promotions and at the start of competitions when drawing the sword. It is necessary to build up the leg muscles to be able to squat down in and stand back up from Son-kyo smoothly. Son-kyo also determines when one is ready to go forward in competition, which is indicated by the opponent rising from a squatting position.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

**HINT:** If the student has a bad knee or knees, the instructor should consider alternative ways of helping the student to strengthen his leg muscles to take the load off the student's knees. For example, suggest that the student practices the movements listed under "Practice for Son-kyo " below. If the student has a difficult time keeping their balance, take the shi-nai and adjust it by moving it slightly to your left or right thus creating a position that is balanced.

**Movement**

- 1) Place your feet as described in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Bend your knees outward.
  - a) Try to keep your feet in the same place, just pointing the toes slightly outward.
  - b) Keep your back straight.

**Practice for Son-kyo**

- 1) Clasp your fingers behind your head.
- 2) Keep your heels together, but spread your feet apart such that your feet form the letter “V”.
- 3) Stand or rise up on your toes keeping your heels together.
- 4) Bend your knees a little and spread your knees apart, then sit down.
  - a) While sitting down, do not separate your heels.
  - b) Hold this position and count to 10.
- 5) Stand up.
- 6) Repeat steps 4 and 5 three times.
- 7) Hit your leg muscles with your fists to make them relax.

### **More Practice (“Rabbit Jump”)**

- 1) Clasp fingers behind the waist and sit down in Son-kyo.
- 2) Remain in the Son-kyo position and hop across the practice area.

**HINT:** Also have the students hop backwards while in this stance (Son-kyo). Be mindful of students with weak knees as the “rabbit jump” is strenuous. If you have students that you are concerned about, stick with the first practice as it will strengthen their thigh muscles without risk of injury.

### **Another Practice**

Here’s something Japanese students have been doing for generations. You can practice this at home (with the added benefit of cleaning the floor and pleasing the parents!).

- 1) Find a place with a wood floor or a smooth floor.
- 2) Sit down in Son-kyo with a damp cloth in your hands.
- 3) Remaining in the Son-kyo position, move across the floor wiping the floor with the damp cloth without touching your knees to the ground.

# 素振り

Pronunciation: Su-bu-ri (soo-boo-lee)

## Background

Su-bu-ri means “to swing”. Swinging the Shi-nai is required to execute attacks or strikes on your opponent. Beginning students will need to build up the muscles of their wrists (especially the left wrist) to be able to properly swing the Shi-nai. Although the muscles of the arms and upper back are also involved, the majority of the effort in swinging the Shi-nai is with the wrists. There are simple exercises to work on these muscles and help students learn to properly swing the Shi-nai. More involved exercises are introduced as the student becomes ready to improve and refine their swing.

NOTE: Though the Japanese word Su-bu-ri means “swing” we have replaced that word throughout this manual with the English word “strike” for easier reading.

## Instructor's Notes

The more simple exercises to introduce students to swinging the Shi-nai are included below. Once students begin to understand this technique and proper foot movement, they can incorporate these movements into their daily practice routines by doing exercises such as Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein. Later, when students are showing an even better understanding of swinging the Shi-nai, the quick paced swinging and foot movement exercise of Ha-ya-su-bur-ri is recommended.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

The final goal is to be able to swing the Shi-nai in long fluid strokes as well as short strikes. without excess effort. Basically, swinging the Shi-nai requires a lot of wrist and forearm movement. However, most beginners try to use only their arm and shoulder strength when swinging the Shi-nai.

**HINT:** If the student's head and neck bends forward when they swing the Shi-nai, it is an indication that the student is using too much of their arm and upper back strength or is too tense and using too much force to execute the Shi-nai. Have them relax.

A beginner has to raise his left hand up over his head. In other words, beginning students have to practice bringing the Shi-nai up far enough to be able to see the point that they want to hit under their left hand.

**HINT:** Students will have a tendency to fall short of raising the Shi-nai over the head. It is sometimes easier for students to see if the left hand is being lifted over the head by watching the student from the side.

Since the left hand grips the Shi-nai at the bottom of the handle (tsuka), the left hand is the power hand. The right hand steers, controlling where the sword is going to strike.

**HINT:** It is a common error for students to use their right hand as the power hand when executing a strike with the Shi-nai. If there is any space between the Shi-nai and left pinkie finger when the student rises up over his head, this shows that the student is not swinging with his left hand. It is very difficult for the beginner to execute a straight strike. Basically the Shi-nai, its path of movement and the body's centerline should be one line.

When executing a strike with the Shi-nai, many beginners strike without opening their elbows (elbows should be pulled back when raising up the shi-nai).

**HINT:** If the student does not open his/her elbows when he/she raises up the Shi-nai, often his/her left hand will be in FRONT of his/her head instead of ABOVE the head. In a competition, if student's left hand is in front of his/her head, it becomes a target. It is easy for the opponent to hit the wrist (especially the left wrist) while the student's hands are up.

When executing a strike with the Shi-nai, many beginners raise and tighten their shoulders. Not only do tight shoulders require more power than relaxed ones, but tight shoulders also slow down the speed of the swing.

**Practice for Su-bu-ri**



The more simple exercises to introduce students to mastering the shi-nai are included below. These several exercises can help to amend the problems listed above.

**HINT:** The instructor must always carefully watch the students to make sure they hold the Shi-nai with the last three fingers of the left hand. It is very easy to loosen the small “pinky” finger when students are practicing Kendo techniques.

### **Practice without Style**

This exercise will teach students how to execute a strike with the Shi-nai “without any style”. Use this to introduce students to what it feels like to execute a strike with the Shi-nai. You can also use this practice as a way to remind students to open their elbows when they strike or as a way to warm up before beginning a practice. Refer to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e for instructions on holding the Shi-nai properly.

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Raise the Shi-nai up over your head.
  - a) Do not open the pinkie finger of the left hand.
  - b) The Shi-nai, its path of movement and the body’s centerline should all be on one imaginary line. In other words the left hand should trace a path from in front of your abdomen and up in front of your nose as you lift the Shi-nai over your head.
- 3) Swing the Shi-nai downwards using a large arc until the tip barely touches the ground.
  - a) Do not hit the ground with the Shi-nai hard, just tap it.
  - b) The Shi-nai, its path of movement and the body’s centerline should be one line. In other words, the left hand should trace a path down from the top of your head, in front of your nose and back down to be in front of your abdomen as you swing down the Shi-nai.
- 4) Repeat steps 2 and 3 several (anywhere from 10 to 50) times.

### **Practice to Understand How Much Power is Required**

To understand that swinging does not require much force, try this practice technique.

- 1) Swing the Shi-nai ten times as described above in “Practice without style”.
- 2) Change from the Shi-nai to something heavier:
  - a) For adults, use a wood staff or oar.

- b) For kids, use a lighter-weight bo or a heavier Shi-nai, such as a number 38 or larger, or a Chanbara spear.
- 3) Swing the heavier object more than ten times.
- 4) Quickly switch back to the Shi-nai, and swing.

**HINT:** Try this...wrap a towel around the shi-nai and then tie it with string, rubber bands or tape. This can make for a great weight when you do not have a staff or other heavy weapon on hand.

**HINT:** At this time, the student should feel that the Shi-nai is much lighter. The instructor can tell them that swinging the Shi-nai slowly does not require as much force as they thought.

### **Practice Guide for Straight Strikes**

To understand if students execute straight strikes and open their elbows try this practice technique. Watch to make sure students do not tighten up or lift up their shoulders. This is an indication that they are not opening up their elbows and, therefore, are too tense.

- 1) When executing a strike with the Shi-nai, make the student hit his back or hip.
  - a) Students will not be able to hit their back or hip without opening their elbows.
  - b) Check to make sure that the elbows open enough that the shoulders do not rise up or tighten.
- 2) Have the students watch themselves in a mirror and make their own self corrections.

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## **SURIAGEWAZA**

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# すり上げ技

Pronunciation: Su-ri-a-ge-waza (soo-lee-ah-geh-wa-zah)

### **Background**

Su-ri-a-ge-waza is a counter attack technique that involves deflecting your opponent's Shi-nai and then striking your opponent. Because these are deflecting techniques, the first movement for the counter attack is to raise up the Shi-nai to deflect your opponent's strike. Su-ri-a-ge-waza are used to defend against Mein-uchi and Kote-uchi. The movement to deflect these strikes looks like you are grinding your Shi-nai against your opponent's Shi-nai. These techniques are named Su-ri-a-ge-waza because "su-ri" means "to grind or rub something" and "age" means "to bring up" in the Japanese language. The technique is sometimes referred to simply as "Su-ri-a-ge".

### Instructor's Notes

It is recommended that you teach Mein Su-ri-a-ge Mein before teaching other Su-ri-a-ge-waza. Starting with Mein Su-ri-a-ge Mein is recommended because this technique can be performed with a full arc swing upward, to hit Shou-mein-uchi. Later, when students learn how to hit using a small arc swing, they can start leaning more Su-ri-a-ge-waza, such as Kote Su-ri-a-ge Kote, using the smaller motion.

Students will tend to acquire bad habits after they start Su-ri-a-ge-waza. For example, when many instructors teach students this technique, they tell the student to strike the side of their opponent's Shi-nai's using a small circular movement. If the student misunderstands, he/she may do Haraiwaza, not Su-ri-a-ge-waza. Haraiwaza means to knock aside or swipe. Haraiwaza is considered a bad habit because the side-swiping motion causes your Shi-nai to move to the side enough that it leaves you wide open for an attack on your wrist or head.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

Su-ri-a-ge techniques are named by the strike that is being defended against. For example, if you are defending against Mein and will counter attack with Mein, the technique is called Mein (what you're defending against) Su-ri-a-ge Mein (the intended counter attack).

#### **Mein Su-ri-a-ge Mein**

The following movements are broken down into student (labeled: "Student:") and instructor (labeled: "Instructor:").

- 1) Student and Instructor: Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Instructor: Attempt Shou-mein-uchi.

**HINT:** When first teaching the students to Su-ri-a-ge, swing slowly so they can learn the correct timing to deflect your Shi-nai. Speed up as students become more proficient.

- 3) Student: When the Instructor begins executing his strike downward for Mein-uchi, raise up your Shi-nai to deflect the instructor's Mein-uchi.
  - a) The tip of Shi-nai will move in an arc that traces from pointing at the throat, up through the opponent's right eye and finishes pointing just above the top of the left side of the opponent's head.
    - i) This description is where the small circular movement some instructor's use to describe Su-ri-a-ge-waza is derived.
  - b) The correct place to contact and deflect your instructor's Shi-nai is almost at his/her head height or one fist higher.
    - i) The place to contact the instructor's Shi-nai is in the middle.
    - ii) Contact is with the side of student's Shi-nai; i.e., the idea is to contact with the Shinogi.
  - c) If necessary, students might need to move straight back, back to the right or left, or straight forward, while raising the Shi-nai upwards.
    - i) Students must learn their Ma-ai for this technique through practice. The Ma-ai must be correct to successfully prepare for the counter attack.
- 4) Student: Shou-mein-uchi.

### **Kote Su-ri-a-ge Kote or Mein**

The following movements are broken into those for the student (labeled: "Student:") and those for the instructor (labeled: "Instructor:").

- 1) Student and Instructor: Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Instructor: Attempt Kote-uchi using a small arc strike (i.e., only strike the kote without raising the shi-nai very high.
- 3) Student: When the Instructor begins his Kote-uchi strike downward, raise your Shi-nai upwards to deflect the instructor's Kote-uchi.

- a) Raise the Shi-nai upward with a circular movement.
  - i) Sometimes students need to lower the Shi-nai downward to block the Kote strike if the strike is coming from underneath (to hit the underside of the wrist). However, lowering the shi-nai downward can be considered a bad habit because lowering the Shi-nai causes a delay in retaliation after the block.
  - ii) To avoid downward “over strike”, students might want to practice the exercise with the Shi-nai pointing towards the opponent’s knee or upper leg, such as in Ge-dan No Ka-ma-e.
  - iii) NOTE: “Overstrike” has the same connotation as the term “overkill”.

**HINT:** The instructor should watch the students to make sure they do not do Haraiwaza (see “Instructor’s Notes” for Su-ri-a-ge-waza for more detail).

- b) The correct place to make contact and deflect your instructor’s Shi-nai is the middle/upper area of the Shi-nai.
  - i) Contact is with the side of student’s Shi-nai; i.e., the idea is to make contact with the Shinogi.
- c) If necessary, students might need to move straight back, back to the right or left, or straight forward, while raising the Shi-nai upwards.
  - i) Students must learn their Ma-ai for this technique from practice. The Ma-ai must be correct to successfully prepare for the counter attack.
- 4) Student: Strike where the Instructor is most open (Kote or Mein).

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## SURIASHI

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摺り足

Pronunciation: Su-ri-a-shi (soo-lee-ah-shee)

## Background

Su-ri-a-shi means walking with gliding steps; i.e., without lifting your feet off the floor. Su-ri-a-shi and Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi (quicker Su-ri-a-shi movement) are the ways you move around in Kendo, thus it is imperative to master these techniques. For example, Su-ri-a-shi is the foot movement technique used to attack and run through or past your target/opponent after attacking or retreating by moving backward after executing a counter attack. Being able to move quickly allows you to return to a ready stance in preparation to make or defend against the next attack. The inability to move quickly in Kendo can be the difference between winning and losing.

### Instructor's Notes

Su-ri-a-shi is one of the first techniques the students need to learn. The most common problems you will find yourself correcting in the students are:

- The left foot must remain pointing forward (there is a tendency for the foot to turn outward)
- The toes of the right foot should not be lifted up at all
- The feet need to glide across the ground. This is especially important to avoid serious damage to the right heel when students start to practice Fu-mi-ko-mi (foot stomp).

### Step-by-Step Instructions

Su-ri-a-shi practice should start with slow movements to assure the techniques are properly learned. Once the technique is mastered, the students can then add speed to the motion and advance to Ha-ya-su-ri-a-shi (refer to the section on "Ha-yasuriashi" for more information).

### Movement

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) To move forward, slide your right foot forward along the ground.
- 3) Pull the left foot forward and shore it up underneath you as quickly as possible.
  - a) After positioning the left foot forward, your stance should be back to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 4) To move backward, slide your left foot back along the ground.
- 5) Pull and position the right foot back as quickly as possible.

- a) After positioning the right foot back, the stance should be back to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 6) To move right, slide your right foot forward at an angle.
  - a) The angle should be around forty-five degrees. You will be moving sideways as well as forward.
- 7) Pull and position the left foot up as quickly as possible.
  - a) After positioning the left foot forward, the stance should be back to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 8) To move left, slide your left foot backward at an angle.
  - a) The angle should be around forty-five degrees. You will be moving sideways as well as backward.
- 9) Pull and position the right foot back as quickly as possible.
  - a) After positioning the right foot back, the stance should be back to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

<b>Practice for Su-ri-a-shi</b>
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These practice sets can be used for and by your students.

- 1) Step front, back, right, and left as the instructor calls out the direction.

Or:

- 1) Step front, front, right, left, and back as one set of movements.
- 2) Repeat this set of movements (described in 1) several times. Step back as many times as the number of sets you have done.
  - a) You should be back in the same place as where you started.
- 3) Repeat several times to become comfortable with the movements.

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**TAIGATAME SANKYODO**

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# 体固め三拳動

Pronunciation: Tai-ga-ta-me San-kyo-do (tie-gah-tah-may san-kee-yo-doe)

## Background

Tai-ga-ta-me San-kyo-do is an old practice movement/exercise to help students improve their abilities in Su-ri-a-shi and Ki-ai. It consists of three basic steps forward and three basic steps backward while employing Ki-ai.

Su-ri-a-shi is the method for moving in Kendo. Skills in Su-ri-a-shi are required in order to properly attack an opponent. See the section called “Su-ri-a-shi” for more detail.

Ki-ai is the term used to describe the energy you focus against your opponent. Ki-ai is important to help you achieve the Ma-ai you need to successfully execute strikes against your opponent. People who become good at controlling their Ki-ai will be able to make their opponent feel as if they are moving toward them even if they are standing still. Ki-ai is often vocalized as a way to focus your energy when executing a strike, thus making it more powerful. When students begin to learn the Nihon Kendo Kata, they will begin to better appreciate the need for Ki-ai. See the section on “Ki-ai” to learn more.

## Instructor's Notes

Students should incorporate Tai-ga-ta-me San-kyo-do into their daily practice. Having the students do this practice in class allows you the opportunity to correct and perfect many of the students' techniques, such as holding the Shi-nai, proper feet position, proper suriashi, and good Ki-ai. If you have a mirror, you can have the students watch themselves and make corrections to their technique.

Position your back foot underneath you as quickly as possible to avoid having your back foot lag behind when practicing Tai-ga-ta-me San-kyo-do. Quickly returning the lagging foot will help to improve Su-ri-a-shi ability. Using Ki-ai, both energetically and vocally, when practicing Taigatame Son-kyo do will help to improve the Ki-ai.

The three vocalized Ki-ais are:



EEH which is pronounced “aaaa” – like the long vowel “a”, deep and guttural.

YAH which is pronounced “yaa” – a “y” combined with the short vowel “a”. The sound should be deep and guttural. It will sound similar to a cowboy urging a horse forward.

TOH which is pronounced “toe”. Again it should be deep and guttural.

### **Step-by-Step Instructions**

Tai-ga-ta-me San-kyo-do may be done alone or it may also be practiced by pairing up two students. When two students are practicing Tai-ga-ta-me San-kyo-do, one will be the lead. Practicing with others gives students the opportunity to work on their Ki-ai and Ma-ai simultaneously.

### **Movement**

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
  - a) Throughout this practice, use your energetic Ki-ai to “push” against your opponent. Your weight and energy should be focused in your lower abdomen and imagined to push against your opponent to make him feel as if you are continually inch-by-inch moving toward, pushing or bearing down on him.
- 2) Take one small step forward with the right foot accompanied by the vocalized Ki-ai ‘Eeh’.
- 3) Pull the left foot forward and shore it up underneath you as quickly as possible.
  - a) After positioning the left foot, the stance should be back to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 4) Repeat steps 2 and 3, two more times, but use the vocalized Ki-ai ‘Yaa’ for the second step and ‘Toh’ for the third step.
- 5) Take one small step back leading with the left foot accompanied by the vocalized Ki-ai ‘Eeh’.
- 6) Pull and position the right foot back as quick as possible.
  - a) After positioning the right back, the stance should be back to Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 7) Repeat steps 5 and 6, two more times, but use the vocalized Ki-ai ‘Yah’ for second step and ‘Toh’ for third step.
- 8) Repeat steps 2 through 7 several times.

- a) Have students start with 10 repetitions (where completing steps 2 through 7 constitute one repetition) and build up to 25. Have the students include this practice in their daily routine.

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## TAMESHIGIRI

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# 試し斬り

Pronunciation: Ta-me-shi-gi-ri (tah-may-shee-gee-ree)

### Background

Ta-me-shi-gi-ri is the art of test cutting. “Tameshi” means “to test” and “giri” is “to cut”. Practicing Ta-me-shi-gi-ri helps prepare the student for the possibility that he may have to use his techniques in a real sword fight, and so he should experience what it is like to cut through mass with a real sword.

Typically Ta-me-shi-gi-ri is introduced to the student after they have reached around the 1 Kyu level. Most students who stay in the sword arts long enough to achieve this level are considered serious students in the art of the sword and, therefore, need to understand more than how to work with the Shi-nai or Bokuto.

Usually students will simulate the parts of the human body with rolled rice mats called Tatami. The thickness of the roll will be dependent on whether you wish to simulate cutting a neck, arm, leg, wrist or the body. Many students place bamboo or wood dowelling inside the rolled tatami to represent bone.

Ta-me-shi-gi-ri is a martial art in and of itself. There are designated vertical, diagonal and horizontal cuts dating back centuries that are done individually or in succession. Ta-me-shi-gi-ri has its own belt system. This manual will not go into the details of Ta-me-shi-gi-ri. Students who

are ready for Ta-me-shi-gi-ri will need personal, one-on-one instruction due to the dangerous nature of handling and cutting with a real sword.

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**TOYAMA RYU IAI-BATTO-DO**

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# 戸山流居合拔刀道

Pronunciation: To-ya-ma I-ai Bat-to Do (toe-yah-mah ee-eye bah-toe doe)

## Background

Japanese Military Toyama Iai-Batto-Do is a sword system that was developed and used by the Japanese military through the Second World War. We can further break down the phrase “Iai-Batto-Do” into its elements. “Iaido” is the art of drawing the sword. “Batto-Do” is the art of drawing and quickly cutting something with the sword.

Japanese Military Toyama Iai-Batto-Do consists of relatively few techniques. Specifically, there are eight stances, eight cutting techniques and eight sheathing techniques used in eight fighting forms. With these few techniques, the Japanese could quickly teach all their personnel Japanese Military Toyama Iai-Batto-Do, making it an efficient system for training the military.

For step-by-step instructions to perform Toyama-Ryu, please refer to the book “Cutting Through the Mystery” or the Tachi-Iai Manual for long sword.

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**TSUKI**

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# 突き

Pronunciation: Tsuki (skee)

### Background

Tsuki is a thrust attack. The basic technique for Tsuki is a thrust to your opponent's throat, chest or just under the rib cage (about where the diaphragm is) in the center of the body. Even though Kendo practitioners wear armor (Bogu), the throat is more vulnerable to attack.

Tsuki can be done using both hands, such as when aiming at the throat, or one hand (right or left) when aiming at the body or upper chest. Even though most thrusts in Kendo are expected to be at the throat, be aware that in tournaments judges may count a thrust that was obviously designated for the center of the body or upper chest as a point.

### Instructor's Notes

Since this technique is most often a thrust to the throat with a Shi-nai, it is considered a dangerous technique, even when students are wearing Bogu. Thus, many instructors prohibit using Tsuki until students hit at least a 2nd degree black belt. The All Japan Kendo Federation restricts the use of using the technique, Tsuki, in the Japanese School systems. Students are discouraged to use the Tsuki techniques until they are 18 years old.

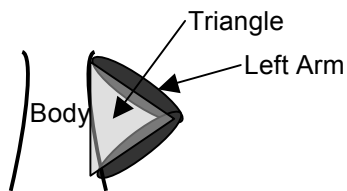
You must determine if students are ready, both physically and mentally (attitude), to start practicing this technique. Physically, the student needs to understand the dynamics of the Tsuki and how to properly execute Shi-bo-ri. Shi-bo-ri is needed to properly execute the thrust. You must also consider the student's attitude before starting to teach Tsuki. If you think the student might abuse the use of this technique, you might skip teaching this technique until the student is ready.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

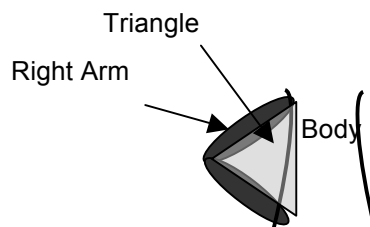
Tsuki is a thrust to the center of the body or throat. It is a very direct and intense technique, often humiliating opponents because they left themselves open to attack. Because of this, it is not recommended to use Tsuki when fighting with people ranked lower than you since they become discouraged before their defenses are properly strengthened. The instructor must make sure that the student completely understands before starting to learn the technique.

### Movement

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Thrust the Shi-nai into your opponent's throat.
  - a) **For Tsuki using both hands:**
    - i) Thrust the left hand straightforward with one strong right step (using Fu-mi-ko-mi).
    - ii) The left hand height should not change.
    - iii) Students have to use strong Shi-bo-ri.
  - b) **For Tsuki using the right hand only:**
    - i) Thrust the right hand straightforward with one strong right step (using Fu-mi-ko-mi).
    - ii) The left hand may be placed on the left waistline. Fingers will be straight and kept together. There should be no bend in the wrist. When done correctly, it looks as though the arm and hand are making a triangle with the body. (See illustration).



- c) **For Tsuki using the left hand only:**
  - i) Thrust left hand straight forward with one strong left step.
  - ii) The right hand might be placed on the right waistline. Fingers will be straight and kept together. There should be no bend in the wrist. When done correctly, it looks as though the arm and hand are making a triangle with the body.



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**UCHIKOMI**

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# 打ち込み

Pronunciation: U-chi-ko-mi (oo-chee-koh-mee)

**Background**

U-chi-ko-mi is a practice/exercise for striking techniques and for breath control. U-chi-ko-mi includes most of the basic Kendo movements (Shou-mein-uchi, Kote-uchi, Do-uchi, etc) in various combinations. U-chi-ko-mi is introduced into the students practice only after they have individually studied each of the basic techniques. The goal is to perform all the movements of U-chi-ko-mi using only two or three breaths. Refer to “Breath Control” for further information on proper breathing to assist in achieving this goal.

U-chi-ko-mi is designed to practice with a partner. If the student understands and properly executes U-chi-ko-mi, the basic movements will seem almost easy to perform.

**Instructor's Notes**

Because U-chi-ko-mi is a combination of several techniques the student should already have accomplished but, if not, it might best to teach U-chi-ko-mi in stages. The suggested steps to teaching U-chi-ko-mi are to first work on the techniques that show up in U-chi-ko-mi as combinations (two executions of Shou-mein-uchi, two Kote Mein-uchi and Kote Do-uchi). Next, work on the techniques executed when moving backward. Once these are understood, all the strikes can be done in proper succession. Also, breaking U-chi-ko-mi down into steps helps students work on their breath control.

To teach the strikes that are executed when moving backward, have the student attempt Mein-uchi, which will be blocked by you. Then have them deflect or push your Shi-nai downward. From here you can teach them to push on the Tsuba, being careful that their Shi-nai rests against the side of your head and they apply a force that is equal to yours, while keeping their hips facing forward. Their hands should be down by their abdomen and at the centerline of their body. Remind them not to lean too far forward, which could allow their opponent to make them fall forward.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

Remember this is an advanced technique. Including the Tsuki into your arsenal of techniques offers opportunities to meld methods together in one multifaceted technique. Be sure to remember to use proper Ki-ai and Breath Control.

### Movement

Since U-chi-ko-mi is designed for two people to practice together, the movements are labeled as “Student” for the person who is practicing/executing the techniques and “Receiver” for each person who is being struck.

- 1) Student and Receiver: Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Student: Shou-mein-uchi two times.
- 3) Student: Kote Mein-uchi two times.
  - a) Kote Mein-uchi is a combination technique (Kote-uchi and Shou-mein-uchi).
- 4) Student: Kote Do-uchi two times.
- 5) Student: Shou-mein-uchi.
  - a) Receiver: Stop the student's Shou-mein-uchi without moving from where you are standing. In other words, prevent the student from running through by holding your ground.
  - b) Receiver: Refer to the section “Ki-ri-kae-shi” for how to stop the student.
- 6) Student: Using the Tsuba or handle of your Shi-nai, push **down** on the Receiver's Tsuba.
  - a) Receiver: Push back against the Student using the same force he is using to push against you.
- 7) Student: Quickly raise the Shi-nai over your head, releasing the Receiver.

- a) The Receiver's arms automatically rise up over his head because of the force with which Receiver pushed back against the student.
- 8) Student: Do-uchi while quickly moving backward.
- 9) Student: Shou-mein-uchi.
  - a) Receiver: Stop the student's Shou-mein-uchi without moving from where you are standing. In other words, prevent the student from running through by holding your ground.
  - b) Receiver: Refer to the section "Ki-ri-kae-shi" for how to stop the student.
- 10) Student: Using the Tsuba or handle of your Shi-nai, push **up** on the Receiver's Tsuba.
- 11) Student: Quickly raise the Shi-nai over your head, releasing the Receiver.
  - a) The Receiver's arms automatically come down because of the force with which the Receiver pushed back against the students.
- 12) Student: Shou-mein-uchi while quickly moving backward.
- 13) Student: Shou-mein-uchi two times.

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## ZAREI (SITTING BOW)

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# 座礼

Pronunciation: Za-rei (zah-lay)

### Background

In western cultures, shaking hands or hugging is a typical method of greeting another person. In eastern cultures, including the Japanese culture, bowing is used to greet each other. To bow is to show respect to another. Bowing can also be used when making a deep apology.

For our purposes in this Kendo Curriculum, we will only address four types of Standing Bows and



one type of Sitting Bow. The Standing Bows are described in their own section. The Sitting Bow is discussed below.

### Instructor's Notes

Za-rei, the Sitting Bow, is used to show respect or thank someone when you are already in the sitting position. In other words, you would not sit down for the sole purpose of making the Sitting bow described here. Since the sitting bow requires that you are sitting, it is imperative that you first understand how to sit or Sei-za. Please refer to the section on "Sei-za".

In Kendo, the sitting bow is most often used the end of class to thank the instructor or teacher (Sensei), thank fellow students for sharing in the class (i.e., students always have opportunities to learn from the good and bad things other students do), and/or to show respect to the Sensei's teacher(s). When bowing to thank an instructor at the end of a class, students sit facing you, the instructor. You usually let the students know that you are about to bow to them and expect the same in return. For example, you may always tell the students to sit up with their backs straight just before you bow to them. If you do this consistently, the students learn to associate this command with your desire to have them do a Sitting Bow.

To thank other members of the class, students would first turn to face a classmate seated on one side, bow, and then turn to face the student seated on the other side and bow.

Showing respect to your (the student's Sensei) teachers or people in your lineage is usually done by bowing to pictures or other representative items hung on the walls of the Dojo. In other words, these people are usually not present during a class. If the instructor chooses to have his student's do this, the instructor will turn to face the pictures, have the students turn so they are sitting and facing the pictures, and join him in the Sitting Bow.

In Japanese dojos it is a common occurrence for a student to approach the instructor during class, drop to their knees executing a Zai-rei while saying, "O-ne-gai Shi-ma-su" (I request your teachings – pronounced oh-nee-gah-eee shee-mah-soo). The instructor acknowledges the Za-rei and begins to instruct the student in one-on-one training. Therefore you can witness students executing Za-rei many times during class especially if there are many high ranking instructors.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

Whether or not students are asked to bow to the other students in the class or to your lineage is completely up to you. At a minimum, it is suggested that the instructor have the students bow to him (and he to them) at the end of each class. Respect is an important element in life, and Kendo is the way of life taught through the sword. Bowing is one avenue to instruct students on the show of respect. This can be difficult for western students both mentally and physically to perform, but with time and practice this will also become second nature.

### **Movement**

Before reading the sitting bow movements below, be sure the students understand how to sit down. Refer to “Sei-za” for step-by-step instructions.

- 1) While you are sitting down, place your left hand on the ground in front of you.
- 2) Place your right hand next to it. Touch the index fingers and thumbs together to form a triangle with your forefingers and thumbs.
- 3) Place your nose in the center of the triangle.
  - a) Keep your back straight when you bend forward to bow. Your nose does not need to touch the floor for your bow to be proper. You need to bend forward until your upper body is at least approximately parallel with the ground.
  - b) At the end of the class, the students may be taught to say, “Thank you” in Japanese (Arigatou Gozai Mashita – pronounced ah-ree-gah-toe go-z-eye mah-shee-tah). This would be said while the student is bowing.
- 4) Stay in the sitting bow until you are instructed to sit up.
  - a) If you are in a situation where you will not be told to sit up, stay in the bow and count to two before sitting back up.
- 5) Return to the normal sitting position.
  - a) Your back is straight and you are in the normal sitting position as described in Sei-za.
- 6) Pick up your right hand and return it to the top of your leg, then return your left hand.

**HINT:** When you are in the sitting position, your sword or swords are placed on the ground to your right. The order in which you place your hands on the ground when entering into the bow and picking your hands up when completing a bow is for the specific purpose of keeping your

right hand as close as possible for as long as possible to your sword. This proximity is desired so that you can grab it quickly and defend yourself if you were attacked when in the sitting position.

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## ZENSHIN KOTAI MEIN

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# 前進後退面

Pronunciation: Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein (zen-sheen koh-tie-menh)

### Background

Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein is the practice of a proper strike to the first Mein contact combined with Suriashi. “Zenshin” translates as “moving forward”, “Kotai” is “moving backward” and “Mein” is basically the middle of face and head. Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein helps students with forward-moving strikes to the head as well as backward-moving strikes to the head, such as that used in U-chi-ko-mi or Ki-ri-kae-shi. (See the sections with those titles for more information.)

### Instructor's Notes

The most difficult thing for students to learn with Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein is the timing of the feet with the strike. The two should be synchronized when moving forward and backward as if choreographed.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

Zen-shin Ko-tai Mein is a terrific practice technique to work on timing, Ki-ai, Mein-uchi and Suriashi. It should be added to the students' everyday practice.

### Movement

- 1) Stand in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 2) Raise the Shi-nai upwards.

- 3) Take a small step forward, execute a strike with the Shi-nai downward and stop it with the Ki-ai 'Mein'.
  - a) The right place to stop the Shi-nai is:
    - i) Right hand: right arm has to be straight and parallel to the ground; i.e., the arm is at a ninety-degree angle with the body.
    - ii) Left hand: after stopping the right hand/arm as described above, use the left hand to position the end of the sword at head height.
- 4) Pull the left foot and shore it up underneath you as quickly as possible.
  - a) After positioning the left foot up, the stance should not be in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.
- 5) To go to backward, raise the Shi-nai up, take a small step back and execute a downward strike as described in step 3, with the Ki-ai 'Mein'.
- 6) Pull the right foot and shore it up underneath you as quickly as possible.
  - a) After positioning the right foot back, the stance should not be in Chu-dan No Ka-ma-e.

## **Appendix A**

Pronunciation Tips

**Pronunciation Tips**

_____	is pronounced like _____	in _____
aaa	“a”	take
ah	“o”	odd
bah	“b”	“bat” and “ah” as pronounced in awesome
boo	“boo”	boom
cha	“cha”	chalk
chee	“chee”	cheese
choo	“choo”	choose
dan	“don”	Don
doe	“doe”	doe
eee	“ee”	cheese
eye	“eye”	eye
foo	“foo”	fool
gah	“go”	god
gan	“gon”	gone
geh	“ge”	get
high	“high”	high
ka	“ca”	call
kay	“ca”	cake
kee	“kee”	keep
koh	“co”	cold
koo	“coo”	cool
lay	“rai”	rain, but with a rolling “r” like you would hear in Spanish
lee	“ree”	reel, but with a rolling “r” like you would here in Spanish
lit	“lit”	little, but with a rolling “r” like you would hear in Spanish
mah	“ma”	ma
may	“may”	maybe
mee	“me”	me
menh	“men”	men
my	“my”	my
nee	“nee”	need
neigh	“ni”	nine
new	“new”	new
no	“no”	no
oh	“o”	oh
oo	“oo”	choose
sah	“sa”	sake
san	“s”	“so” and “on” as pronounced in “on”
say	“say”	say
shee	“she”	sheep
sheen	“sheen”	sheen
show	“show”	shown
so	“so”	so
son	“s”	so and “awn” as pronounced in “awning”
soo	“sue”	sue
tah	“tal”	talk
tay	“ta”	tame
tie	“ti”	time

wa	“wa”	water
yah	“y”	yell and the “a” in amish
yo	“yo”	yoyo
zah	“cza”	czar
zen	“zen”	Zen

## Appendix B

Jumping Rope Sheet

## Jumping Rope Sheet

Type of Jump	Styles	Points		
		Front Swing	Back Swing	Total
1 swing / 2 jump	0.5 ordinary	* 5	* 7	
1 swing / 1 jump	1 ordinary	* 10	* 12	
	1 front cross	* 13	16	
	1 ordinary, 1 front cross	* 15	18	
	1 side swing, 1 front cross	17	20	
	1 side cross	19	--	
1 swing / 1 jump with one foot	1 ordinary	11	13	
	1 front cross	14	17	
2 swing / 1 jump	2 ordinary	30	35	
	2 front cross	35	38	
	1 ordinary 1 front cross	40	45	
	1 side swing, 1 front cross	45	48	
<b>Total Points</b>				

### Note:

- 1: Student has to complete techniques marked with an asterisk (\*); i.e. the asterisked \* techniques are required to finish the jumping rope class.
- 2: Side cross techniques are optional.
- 3: To pass the review, you have to perform least four jumps of the same technique without stopping and while the instructor is observing.
- 4: Points are awarded only one time for each technique. In other words, you can not get additional credit for a technique you have already passed.
- 5: Only one review per class is allowed.

Goals: As the goal, try to get these total points within each grade:

10 Kyu	9 Kyu	8 Kyu	7 Kyu
60	100	150	200

Name:

First

Last