

# The doctrine of Iaido

by Matsuoka Yoshitaka, 8-dan kyoshi

## (1) The doctrine

### 1. The principle of Iaido (Kendo)

The Iaido is the way to pursue formation of character by practicing the law of **Ken** (sword).

### 2. The attitude for practicing Iaido (Kendo)

Full spiritual energy should be achieved by learning Iaido (Kendo) properly and seriously, while training the body and spirit. Courtesy should be respected and faithfulness should be valued heavily through the characteristics of Iaido (Kendo). The cultivation of one's own mind has to be always practiced in good faith. Therefore, one should love one's state society and contribute to the peace and prosperity of mankind.

### 3. The purpose of practicing Iaido

The purpose of practicing Iaido is to be a wonderful human being who can contribute to the state society, by practicing Iaido. This includes training the spirit and body, and strengthening the personality. In order to achieve this goal,

1. The disposition of the simple, earnest and strong lifestyle has to be pursued, and the healthy body has to be crafted, by properly learning Iaido and practicing the techniques.

2. The essential qualities of Iaido must be understood well. The spiritual culture must be improved by studying under nice "**Shi**" (sensei) and seniors. The formation of character has to be continuously challenged to become a wonderful, adult member of society. There are two ways to do this. One is metaphysical; such as studying, religion, philosophy and ethics; the other is physical; such as Judo, Kendo, Kyudo and Iaido. These properly form the mind by improving the body posture, attitude and technique. In Iaido's

case, like other **Budo** (martial arts), the spirit can be properly trained while the technique has to be learned properly and the body has to be made strong. Therefore, it is easier and more effective than the metaphysical approach.

### 3. Iaido and good manner

Iaido includes a lot of factors from the traditional Japanese Bushido spirit. As “**Rei**” (manners) is the most important among these factors; it is also the most important factor overall in Iaido. Therefore, it is said, “**Rei-ni-hajimari-Rei-ni-owaru.**” (Beginning with Rei and ending with Rei.) Although Rei was created originally to maintain the class system and each rank in the samurai (warrior family) society, it is still an important and necessary factor to maintain our society system. Even in the present day democratized, egalitarian system, there is value in the practice of Iaido.

### 4. The effectiveness of Iaido

As Iaido includes the traditional Japanese performance, practicing Iaido is not only to master the techniques of Iaido but also to form personal character.

Following are the traditional achievements of Iaido.

- A) The mind of loyalty leads to a spirit of social service.
- B) The mind of courtesy leads to mutual equality.
- C) The mind of faithfulness leads to the intention to improve one's personality.
- D) The mind of courage leads to having the will to improve society.
- E) The mind of frugality leads to a stable life.

Following are the distinctive features of Iaido in terms of sport.

- A) Everybody can practice Iaido regardless of age, physique and sex.
- B) The proper, suitable, and personal exercise can be practiced in a short time.
- C) The training can be done by oneself at any time even in a small place and regardless of the season.
- D) The power of concentration can be improved.
- E) Good manners can be behaved.

- F) Attractive and proper posture can be instilled.
- G) A strong mind to prevail at the critical moment can be crafted.
- H) Leaders can be made.

4. The **Ken-jutsu** (The art of sword) in the Edo period:

Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542 – 1616) opened his “Bakufu” shogunate at Edo in 1603, and realized the peaceful age, so called “Gen-na Enbu” after he won a big victory at “Osaka Natsu no Jin” (Osaka Summer battle against Toyotomi Hideyori) in 1615 (Gen-na Gan-nen in Japanese era). Enbu means putting weapons back in its place to stop the battles. Ieyasu devised some systems such as “Ikkoku Ichijo” (One castle for one country) and “Buke Shohatto” (General Law for warrior family), which relate to disarmament. In the meantime, he adopted Yagyu-Shinkage ryu and Ono-ha Ittoh ryu as shogunate official Budo styles after he wrestled with how to transfer the nature of the Samurai spirit to the next peaceful generations.

Especially, Ieyasu recognized Yagyu Shinkage ryu as effective martial arts for the education of samurai in the coming peaceful era when he had a chance to come in contact with the technique and the spirit of “Muto-Dori” (It means taking the enemy’s sword without wearing a sword. In other words, getting the win against the armed enemy without wearing any sword.), based on the spirit of “**Katsu-nin-Ken**” (This term originated in the Zen expression “**Setu-nin-To Katsu-nin-Ken**” (sword of death; sword of life). Later this term came to be used in Ken-jitsu. “**Setsu-nin-To**” (to win by threatening the opponent) and “**Katsu-nin-Ken**” (to win by causing the opponent to move freely) were used in Heihou Kaden Sho, a treatise on swordsmanship by Yagyu Munenori.) Among Tokugawa Ieyasu’s policies to encourage scholarship and martial arts, Ken-Jitsu was considered as a most important official professional skill for samurai and it became widespread.

The common morals of samurai are to obey bravery, courtesy, honor, honesty, thrift and moderation.

## (2) Lesson of techniques

### 1. **Kamae** (posture)

The postures of an external form are called “**Mi-Gamae**” (A posture where one is conscious of one’s whole body and is ready to respond to the opponent’s

movement.). Internal posture is called “**Kokoro-Gamae**” (The mental preparation for something -- determination.) Kamae is completed through both Mi-Gamae and Kokoro-Gamae. There are five (5) Kamae in Mi-Gamae.

**A) Chudan-no-Kamae:**

Chudan-no-Kamae is suitable for both attacking and defending. It is the core of Kendo postures and is regarded as the most important basic posture.

**B) Jodan-no-Kamae**

Jodan-no-Kamae is the most offensive and strongest posture that overwhelms the opponent. In case the left foot is forward, it is called **Hidari-Morote (Katate)-Jodan**. In case the right foot is forward, it is called **Migi-Morote (Katate)-Jodan**. It is also known as “Hino-Kamae” (fiery posture).

**C) Gedan-no-Kamae**

Gedan-no-Kamae is suitable for defense, which always protects you and can cope freely with opponent movement.

**D) Hassou-no-Kamae**

From the Morote-Hidari-Jodan posture, without changing the grip of either hand the right fist is lower to the right shoulder. The opponent can always be observed so that offense can be engaged in this posture according to the opponent's attitude. It is also known as “**In-no-Kamae**” (implicit posture).

**E) Waki-Gamae**

The right foot is pulled back in the Hidari-Hanmi position and the sword is held below the right armpit, with the tip of the sword pointing backward and the blade facing diagonally down to the right. The level of the tip of the sword is a little lower than in Gedan-no-Kamae. When one takes this posture, one pulls one's right foot back and at the same time places the sword below the right armpit in a large motion. Special care should be taken to ensure that the opponent cannot see the blade of the sword. This posture should be made to cope with the opponent offense. It is also known as “**Yo-no-Kamae**” (explicit posture).

Kokoro-Gamae:

Kamae is defined as the state of proper posture and attitude, which can cope with the opponent's offense.

Kokoro-Gamae is a mental part of Kamae, it is necessary to always keep the mind of “**Sen**” to cope with the opponent's action – filling with energy and concentrating will power.

## 2. **Ashi-sabaki**

Ashi-sabaki in iaido relates to the footwork needed to move the body or to smoothly attack the opponent. It is important for the basic movement of iaido. Also, it is necessary to use it quickly and effectively at any time.

### A) **Ayumi-ashi**

Ayumi-ashi is used in the same way as ordinary walking, that is, for moving forward or backward. It is used for body movement.

### B) **Okuri-ashi**

In Okuri-ashi, the fore foot in the direction you move, always steps first, followed quickly by the rear foot. It is used to move one's body quickly.

### C) **Hiraki-ashi**

Hiraki-ashi is the footwork, which is used for diagonally front (or back) or left (or right) movement. It is used when one's body has to be crossed, guarded or avoided for cutting and stabbing the opponent.

### D) **Tsugi-ashi**

In Tsugi-ashi, when the left foot is pulled up to the right foot position, the right foot has to step forward immediately. It is used when one needs to make a big step or attack to the opponent from a distance (To-o-ma no Teki).

## 3. The overall use of the hands (**Te-no-uchi**)

Te-no-uchi is the overall use of the hands when striking or responding, including the way the sword is gripped, the tightening/loosing of the grip, and adjusting the balance between the two hands. The proper level of Te-no-uchi is

the key issue to achieve good **Nuki-tsuke**, **Kiri-oroshi** (cutting) and sharpness.

1) How to grip the sword:

Both of the little fingers are used to grip the sword like one holds an umbrella. Both of one's wrists have to be squeezed softly like one tenderly squeezes a cloth. The bottom part of "the valley" between the thumb and the forefinger has to be put on **Mune**, the back part of **Tuka** (the hilt of the sword).

1-A) The center of right thumb has to touch the Tuka (the hilt of the sword) so that the right hand should not touch the **Fuchigane** (rim metal fitting on the hilt). In this case, the right hand should hold the Tuka lightly in order to make a triangle with the **Tuba** (a hand guard) while the little finger and third finger of the right hand have to be held a little more tightly.

1-B) Left hand has to be separated about 4cm (two or three fingers) below the right hand and is held Tuke in the same way as the right hand so that the center between the left thumb and forefinger is fitted to the Mune. The power of each finger has to be allotted in a similar way to that of the right hand, but more tightly held.

1-C) It is prohibited to open both palms to the outside.

2) How to be ready to draw the sword:

There are three ways to be ready to draw the sword.

2-A) **Sotogiri** is the most common way. One puts one's thumb on the Tsuba and pushes it to draw the sword.

2-B) **Uchigiri** is another way. One pushes the Tsuba with one's thumb tip from inside without putting one's thumb on the Tsuba so that one's drawing action is not noticed by one's enemy.

2-C) **Hikaegiri** is the last one. One pushes the Tsuba with one's thumb joint, or by the grip power of one's left hand, without putting one's

thumb on the Tsuba.

Each ryu-ha uses their proper technique.

#### 4. **Nuki-tsuke**

Nuki-tuke is the first action to draw the sword (**Saya-banare**). The sword is pulled from the sheath, against the enemy by **Sen**. This occurs when the enemy sees a **Suki**, weakness, and initiates an attack, winning by striking in turn before the enemy's strike is successful. An alternative first action is **Go-no-sen**. That is when the opponent sees a Suki, weakness, and initiates an attack, winning by first striking down the opponent's sword or parrying, then attacking strongly when the opponent has become discouraged. Nuki-tsuke is the "central soul" of Iai. Therefore, Nuki-tsuke must be engaged with strong, solid spirit and sharpness, being determined to visit certain death.

Sword has to be drawn slowly at the beginning and the speed should be gradually increased to the point of 3 sun (about 9cm) from **Kissaki** (tip). After this point of 3 sun from Kissaki, Nuki-tsuke has to be drawn sharply. The rhythm of Nuki-tsuke is so called "**Jo-Ha-Kyu**" (Jo: preface, Ha: break and Kyu: hurry)

#### 5. **Kiri-tsuke**

Nuki-stuke is **Ittoh** (one cut) to put an end to the life of an enemy who has fallen by Nuki-tsuke. Kiri-tsuke is also the "central soul" of Iai.

After the sword is held high over your head, it should be cut down, in a big circular motion. In **Tachi-waza** (Standing performance) case, the sword should be held horizontally and Tsuba does never move forward than **Hiza-gashira** (kneecap), when Kiri-tsuke finishes.

Also, Kiri-tsuke has to be done properly to avoid **Suemono-kiri**\*(cutting the fixed subject without **Zan-shin**) style. The sword tip should not be lower than horizontal when it is held high over your head.

\*: In Suemono-kiri, no body movement is necessary against the opponent.

#### 6. **Chiburi**

Chiburi is the action to shake off the blood on the sword after one cuts one's

enemy down. Even during this Chiburi action, positioning of the eyes should not be negligent to ensure there is no instant of carelessness. Chiburi has to be done while showing so called Zan-shin.

Chiburi should be performed as if one were shaking off the drops of rain from an umbrella.

#### 7. **Noh-toh** (Sheathing the sword)

Noh-toh is the action of sheathing the sword, and is done after all hostile actions are finished. But during Noh-toh, positioning of the eyes and Zan-shin should not be neglected.

In the case of Zen-Ken-Ren Iai, **Koi-kuchi** must be held by the left hand without moving the waist. Then, Mune (the back edge of the sword) near the Tuba-moto (hand guard-side) has to be put on Koi-kuchi and is pulled to make Noh-toh. Noh-toh style in koryu is different in each ryu-ha. The direction of Ha (a cutting edge) is upper or horizontal, and Kissaki (tip of the sword) side instead of Tuba-moto is put on Koi-kuchi.

#### 8. **Metsuke** (Positioning of the eyes)

Metsuke is the positioning of the eyes when one faces one's opponent. It is also the way one should observe one's opponent. Since a long time ago, it has been said there are two methods of, **Kan-Ken-no-Metsuke**. As the eyes are the window of the mind, and the eyes' movement reflects the mind working; it is important to see the movement of the opponent's entire body by focusing on one's eyes. That is so called **En-zan-no-Metsuke**, which means watching one's opponent as if one is looking at the distant mountains.

In addition, the view of Kan must be learned. **Kan** is the way of seeing by which one see the essence of things. The view of Kan is to see the action of the opponent's mind. Metsuke in iaido is to see the point of 9-shaku (about 3 meters) ahead on the floor with the eyes half opened and without staring at one point.

Regarding Metsuke during waza action, the eyes must always be positioned in advance of one's imaginary enemy's movement, and should be moved as if they followed the sword in case a **Kiri-oroshi** (cutting down) action is made, so that the entire surroundings including the fallen enemy can be seen. In this case, the neck does not hang down or bend, but the eyes are turned downward or sideways. When one finishes one's waza, Zan-shin and Noh-toh, one should



move one's eyes' focus from one's enemy to the surroundings and make Zan-shin to one's surroundings.

9. Breathing in iai:

For a long time ago, it has been said that three breaths should be taken during the transition from the end of one waza to the beginning of other one. When the third breath (inspiration) is about finished, one should start drawing the sword. Once inspired the breath should not be expired until the waza finishes. When the waza finishes and Zan-shin is made, the air is expired softly. Taking one breath during the waza, means taking a rest, this would cause random results. Therefore, one should not breathe during the waza.

In case a single waza takes too much time, breathing may be necessary, depending upon the individual. But it is desirable that one waza should finish without breathing.

10. **Ma-ai** (The distance between you and your opponent.)

Ma-ai is the spatial distance to one's opponent. There are material Ma-ai and immaterial Ma-ai.

(1) Material Ma-ai:

Issoku-Ittoh-no-Ma-ai

This is the basic distance, which enables one to strike the opponent by taking one step forward and evading the opponent's strike by taking one step backward.

There are also "**Toh-ma**" and "**Chika-ma**" depending on the imaginary enemy's position. In the Toh-ma case, a bigger step has to be taken when one cuts down while the small step or no step has to be taken in case of the Chika-ma.

(2) Immaterial Ma-ai:

Immaterial Ma-ai is so called "**Kokoro-no-Ma-ai**" (mental distance). It is said ideal that Ma-ai should be shorter distance from one's side but it should be the longer distance from one's opponent side, which refers to "**Kokoro-no-Ma-ai**". Kokoro-no-Ma-ai can be increased by overwhelming the opponent with one's focused observational power.

#### 11. **Ki-Ken-Tai-no-itchi:**

**Ki** is spirit, vigor and fight and **Ken** is of course the sword. **Tai** is the body operating movement. It is important that these three elements be harmonized and synchronized. These three elements have to be in harmony and function together with correct timing when Nuki-tsuke and Kiri-tsuke are performed against even an imaginary enemy. This cannot be accomplished without spiritual satisfaction. So, Ki-Ken-Tai-no-itchi is an important factor for true iai.

#### 12. **Dai-Kyou-Soku-Kei**

There are the teachings of **Dai** (large), **Kyou** (strong), **Soku** (quick) and **Kei** (light) in budo, which indicate their priority in the study of iai-do. It is difficult to master all of Dai, Kyou, Soku and Kei simultaneously from the beginning. The beginner should try to practice Dai and Kyou while aiming for the daring waza. As the beginner makes progress, Soku and Kei can be naturally acquired.

#### 13. **Saya-no-uchi** (Sword is inside the sheath.)

Japanese sword (Nihon-toh), the spiritual arm is the symbol of **Haja-Ken-Shou** (Smashing the incorrect opinion and announcing the correct one.) and is not for Setsunin-toh but for Katsunin-ken (please refer to section 4 in Chapter (1) at page 3.). It is the essence of budo for one to prevail against one's enemy without drawing the sword. Therefore, by practicing iaido, the well-trained indomitable soul can be developed, and the morality and character of budo can be calmly possessed. This can naturally overwhelm the enemy so that one can prevail without drawing the sword. It is important to win the match while keeping the sword inside the sheath (Saya-no-uchi) before the sword is drawn.

### (3) **The teachings of spirits**

#### 1. **Zan-shin**

Zan-shin means the postures of mind (Kokoro-no-kamae) and body (Mi-kamae) by which one can immediately cope with the enemy's attack without relaxing, even after the enemy is cut down. Zan-shin has to be accomplished without being relaxed or negligent; but it has another meaning.

When one cuts down the enemy, Zan-shin will be achieved naturally if one cuts

down the enemy with one's full body. Therefore, Zan-shin also means that one should do one's best without hesitation when one cuts down the enemy. One should not hesitate to cut down the enemy. Cutting down the enemy without hesitation would lead naturally to the best Zan-shin.

## 2. **Fudoh-shin (Hei-joh-shin)**

If one is in an unusual situation, one's composure will be lost as one's mind is shackled by that fact.

Moreover, if one were in a competition arena, it would be difficult for one to keep one's mind in an ordinary state, as one would be impatient to get the victory. This causes a mental disturbance and change of mind.

Fudoh-shin means that one's mind is perfectly composed in any situation. It says that one should play a match just as one would practice keiko and one should practice keiko just as one would play a match. It is necessary that one should put oneself in this mental state at all times for one's spiritual study when one practices keiko. In doing so, one can keep one's mind perfectly composed regardless of the change in one's surroundings.

## 3. **Shi-kai** (Four commandments)

Shi-kai refers to the four unfavorable mental states in which the ordinary mental situation is lost. Shi-kai includes the following four situations, astonishment, fear, doubt and hesitation, which should be admonished.

### (1) **Kyoh** (Astonishment):

Kyoh means astonishment or surprising by some unexpected matter, which can cause the loss of one's ordinary mental and body state.

### (2) **Ku** (fear)

Ku means fear or anxiety which leads to a feeling of oppression and the ordinary mind and body function cannot be controlled.

### (3) **Gi** (doubt)

Gi means doubt or suspicion, which causes the loss of one's normal judgment for properly ascertaining the opponent, so that prompt movement and accurate judgment cannot be achieved.

(4) **Waku** (hesitation)

Waku means disorder or distress, which causes one's mind to stop working and results in the loss of one's normal judgment.

4. **Shu-Ha-Ri**

Shu-Ha-Ri is a teaching that explains the levels of training in budo. It also teaches the proper attitude during training.

- (1) **Shu** means watch or guard. The principles and techniques that the master teaches, has to be obeyed faithfully and no other ryu-ha (another school) has to be learned until one's training reaches a certain level
- (2) **Ha** means tearing and breaking, which means that one's ability is broadened and deepened by learning so many other ryu-ha while breaking certain conventions.
- (3) **Ri** means diverging and separating. This means that one rises above what one learned in the previous two levels, further developing one's technique, and establishing a new, personal style.

5. **Ichigan-Ni-soku-Santan-Shi-riki:**

Ichigan-Ni-soku-Santan-Shi-riki is a teaching, which presents four elements essential for iaido training. In order of their importance:

\* First of these elements, **Gan**, is the functioning of the eyes.

As mentioned previously, the eyes are window of the mind, so they reflect the change of the mind very well. The eyes are an important factor, which can get rid of Shi-shin (the state where the mind is stuck on something and preoccupied with it). One has to learn how to use the eyes correctly.

\* The second one is footwork.

**Soku** (The legs) support and carry the body. The correct cutting can be achieved through correct footwork, which makes the body stable.

\* The third one is a strong mind not upset by anything.

**Tan** (strong mind) means spiritual strength, by which the spirit should be filled and concentrated inside the body. To increase spiritual strength is the purpose of iaido and no progress of techniques can be made without spiritual strength.

The spiritual concentration can be achieved by putting power on the lower part of the bellybutton.

\* The fourth one is waza and the physical strength.

**Riki** (Power) refers to capability, i.e., techniques. One's ability can be improved by using physical activity most effectively and the correct techniques.

#### 6. **Hoh-shin** and **Shi-shin**

Hoh-shin is to release the mind without holding it in a certain place. Holding the mind generates **Itsuki** (the sticking of the mind) as one is concerned by something, the mind cannot freely move. It is the state of mind where one is liberated from tenacious thoughts and can thus respond to everything without being distracted by anything.

Shi-shin means that the mind is stuck on something and preoccupied so that physical activity cannot be engaged freely. It is a teaching that the mind should be free.

#### 7. **Suki** (an unguarded moment)

One should not give one's own Suki to one's opponent but generate one's opponent's Suki. It is important to attack the opponent's Suki without missing the opportunity. There are three Suki.

##### (1) Kokoro-no-Suki (Suki in mind)

When the mind is unsettled or Shi-kai (hesitation, doubt and etc.) occurs for some reason, the smooth function of the mind action is interrupted. This situation is called Kokoro-no-Suki.

##### (2) Kamae-no-Suki (Suki in posture)

Kamae (posture) is likened to a house or a castle. If these have some weak points, they will fall due to those weaknesses. If the form of Kamae has some bad aspect, that aspect is Suki, which one should attack to get the victory.

##### (3) Dohsa-no-Suki (Suki in action)

When one makes an action, one's arms may move upwards or Ken-sen (tip of the sword) deviate from the center of one's opponent body, which generates Suki. Therefore, when one confronts the opponent, one should oppress the

opponent with one's energy in order to have the opponent activate his action, which is the best way to victory.

#### 8. Kyo-jitsu (Falsehood-Truthfulness)

Kyo is Suki when the spirit is not energetic, action does not flow freely, or the body may shrink. This is the best chance to attack.

Jitsu is the condition of being properly prepared to take action against the opponent at any time. One should not attack the opponent when he is in Jitsu condition. Kyo and Jitsu are two sides of the same coin. When Kyo appears, it includes Jitsu. When one saw Jitsu, it was actually Kyo. When one attacks the opponent who is in Jitsu condition, both power to power and waza to waza, combatants strike each other so that both fall down. Therefore, one should concentrate carefully and without negligence to keep oneself in Jitsu condition and recognize well Kyo and Jitsu of the opponent. One should attack the opponent when he is in Kyo while one should avoid attacking the opponent when he is in Jitsu.

#### 9. Ki-gurai

Ki-gurai is strength or a commanding presence, which is naturally possessed and derived from confidence acquired through repeated training. This results from mature techniques and a well-trained spirit. In case one loses energy and becomes delusional, one feels as if one were lost when one confronts the opponent. It is called "Kurai-make", as one loses against one's opponent's Ki-gurai.

Ki-gurai can be naturally acquired as one makes progress in technique and spirit. If one imitates Ki-gurai intentionally, one would generate Suki as a result. Therefore, one should not intentionally imitate Ki-gurai.

#### 10. Ken-I-ittai

Iaido and Kendo are two sides of the same coin. The relationship between Iaido and Kendo is closely connected. At the end of Edo-era, one **Ryu-ha** (school) had both iaido and kendo, and its **Ri-ai** (The condition in which the waza and movements between combatants are rational and purposeful, and the techniques make sense technically.) and their purpose was the same.

Iaido is **Toh-hoh** (sword techniques), by which one can cope with the action of an imaginary enemy from any direction at any place, and uses Nihon-toh

(Japanese sword) for cutting.

Kendo is the battle for one's front enemy and the strike points are fixed while in Iaido one copes with imaginary enemies, who are coming from various directions at various place.

After one draws the sword, he uses Kendo's Ri-ai. When the sword is inside the sheath, one uses Iaido's Ri-ai. Although Toh-ho of Iaido is "cutting", which is different from kendo's "striking", Ken-no-Ri-hoh (Ri-hoh\* of sword) is the same.

**Ma** (the space or distance between two objects, events, or times) and **Ma-ai** (the spatial distance between one's self and the opponent.) cannot be learned without practicing Kendo, in which one has the actual opponent. In Kendo, Toh-hoh (sword techniques) after drawing the sword is the main subject while Iaido has to be trained to understand how to use the sheath and the sword curve. Nippon-Kendo-Kata and Zen-Nippon-Kendo-Renmei Iai have the close relationship with each other and are well made for easy practice.

**Ri-hoh\*:** The principle, logic, or reason of something: Kenjitsu (Japanese fencing) originated as fight for one's life, and it developed as a skill to defeat an opponent. Depending on the way one uses one's heart and mind, however, it can also become the skill to enhance one's own life and that of the opponent (Katsunin-ken). A swing of the sword gives one the chance to become aware of life and death, both one's own and others'. This is a central tenet of modern kendo/iaido. One lives one's life only once so that life depends on each swing of the sword against the opponent. Therefore, one should put all of one's self, body and soul, into every swing. Consequently, in order to perfect such a no-going-back swing, ken-no-ri-hoh (the principles of the Katana) provides the way. That is to strive to perform the proper striking techniques smoothly and with the proper mental attitude, proper posture, and full spirit. Applying these principles disciplines the human character.

11. The founder of iaido and its era, the shrine name and place:

The founder: Hayashizaki Kansuke Shigenobu

Era: Eiroku (end of Muromachi-era, middle of 16<sup>th</sup> century)

Shrine: Hayashizaki-Iai-Jinja

Place: Tateoka-cho, Murayama-City, Yamagata Pref.

#### **(4) Coaching and enforcement:**

1. The exhaustive practice of etiquette

In budo, it says “beginning with Rei (proprieties) and ending with Rei”. The proprieties and manners have to be performed according to the textbook of Zen-Nippon-Kendo-Renmei Iai.

2. The prevention of the danger:

Checking Mekugi and the condition of Saya (Sheath) before training has to be done. When one is in the position of Taitoh, Tsuba (a hand guard) or Tsuka (a hilt) must always be held so that the sword does not slip onto the floor. The sword is never drawn from the sheath at any place unless it is so designated. One has to be careful about the surroundings when one practices keiko.

3. The basic information about Nihon-toh (Japanese sword) and the correct grip technique have to be coached well.

4. The correct body position and movement have to be coached. Each waza has to be coached with understanding of its meaning.

5. As the opponent is the imaginary enemy in iai, the embu has to be coached as budo, which does not have an unguarded moment, while always being aware of the enemy.

6. The understanding of Metsuke has to be coached well.

7. The basic waza in iai such as Nuki-tsuke, Kiri-tsuke, Chiburi and Noh-toh has to be thoroughly coached.

8. Breathing method has to be understood and coached.

9. Others:

Special terminologies for iai have to be taught for understanding.



In not only budo but also the way of all arts and crafts, progress can be made by repeatedly and thoroughly practicing the basic waza. As the beginners are apt to hurry up getting new waza, obeying thoroughly the teachings by his master has to be coached.

#### **(5) About the size and weight of iai-toh**

It is the innermost secret that the long sword should be used shortly, the short sword should be used long, the heavy sword should be used lightly and the light sword should be used heavily. However, there is some limit to each size and weight. Therefore, the best way to make progress is to use the sword having proper size and weight.

From old times, it is said that the tip of the sword of proper length can slightly touch the floor when it is hung by the right hand. The proper weight of the sword depends on the individual's physical strength, but it would be around 825g if Koshirae (the exterior decoration of the sword) were normal. If the sword is too long, waza is influenced by the vice. If the sword is too short, waza becomes small.

#### **(6) The teachings of the judgment:**

##### **1. The meaning of the judgment:**

Originally, competition takes place where the players make their best performance gained by their keiko. All players try to show their techniques and spiritual power that they have practiced in the past, to gain victory. On the other hand, the umpires have great responsibilities to make their judgment in detail on the performance that players show. Although Iaido transcends the results of the game, the accuracy of the judgment that makes the final decision, would influence the future directions of each person's iaido. The judgment has to be made appropriately and fairly by watching whether each player performs his or her waza, in conformance with Ken-no-Ri-hoh (Ri-hoh of the sword). Therefore, the judgment includes the deep meaning that the individual's iaido can be led in the right and desirable direction by it.

##### **2. The purpose of the judgment:**

The purpose of the judgment regulations:

Article 1. The purpose of the regulations is to judge the game appropriately and fairly, which should be done fairly and honestly, and in conformance with Ken-no-Ri-hoh at the match, sponsored by Zen-Nippon-Kendo-Renmei (Zen-Ken-Ren).

On the assumption of this purpose of the judgment, the following items have to be carefully noticed.

The great responsibility of each umpire is to judge accurately at the match. Especially, the key points of each waza, which are written in the textbook of Zen-Ken-Ren Iai, have to be well understood as the result of the match is the important key to choose one's future course in Iaido. In addition, umpires have to encourage the players and to let them understand whether their techniques are right or wrong so that Iaido can be correctly coached. Therefore, umpires have to come to their judgment fairly and appropriately. Needless to say, umpires have to make the accurate judgment, and also have to be strict about their posture, attitude and clothes for their spirited judgment.

3. Basic conditions of the umpire

- (1) Being confident, fair, and disinterested.
- (2) Being deeply versed in the rules (match, rules, subsidiary rules, operating points, judgment, key points in each waza).
- (3) Being well acquainted with Ken-ri (Ken-no-Ri-ai)
- (4) Being skillful in judgment technique.
- (5) Being healthy.

4. The duty of the umpires:

The umpires have to apply correctly to the iaido match, judgment rules, subsidiary rules and main points of operation, based on the Ri-nen of kendo (iaido). They have to judge accurately and with a fair and disinterested mind the performance of each player.

- (1) Managing the match well.
- (2) The consensus of each umpire on the judgment
  - 1) Indication, sentence and judgment have to be made clearly. The flag indication of each umpire has to be done clearly.
  - 2) The act of foul, the prevention of danger, injury, accident, objection and consultation have to be made precisely.
  - 3) Consent from the players.

- 4) Consent from the audience.
  - 5) The posture and attitude have to be strict while wearing appropriate clothes.
  - 6) The decision has to be made resolutely.
- (3) The criteria of the judgment:
- 1) The depth of study.
  - 2) Decorum (the correct attitude and etiquette).
  - 3) **Waza-mae** (techniques)
    - a) Accurate Nuki-tsuke (drawing the sword) and Kiri-tsuke (cutting)
    - b) Accurate Saya-banara (final departure from sheath) and **Hasuji** (blade line)
    - c) Accurate Chi-buri and Noh-toh
    - d) Accurate posture and direction (angle)
  - 4) Kokoro-Gamae (Mental attitude)
    - a) The composure of the mind
    - b) Metsuke (eyes position)
    - c) Spirit, Zan-shin and Ma-ai (timing)
  - 5) Ki-Ken-Tai-no-Icchi
  - 6) Iai has to be rational as budo.
- (4) Understanding as an umpire:
- 1) Judgment: being accurate
  - 2) Indication: noting contestant identifier
  - 3) Words: being clear
  - 4) Attitude: being strict
  - 5) Behavior: being well-mannered
- (5) Improvement of the umpire
- 1) Having a thorough knowledge of rules
  - 2) Studying the theory
  - 3) Improving the judgment techniques
    - A. Getting more experience
    - B. Watching the match
    - C. Improving judgment techniques by attending seminars

- (6) Checkpoints in the judgment of Zen-Nippon-Kendo-Renmei-Iai and other points on which the umpire should focus.

Rei-hoh (decorum): Checking whether behavior is in accordance with the guidelines in the textbook.

#### **1. IPPONME-MAE (Front)**

- 1) Does the performer do enough Sayabiki when the player cuts the opponent's face?
- 2) Is the sword taken into Furikaburi, thrusting to a point behind the left ear?
- 3) Is the tip of the sword above horizontal when in Furikaburi?
- 4) Is the sword brought down without hesitation during Kirioroshi?
- 5) Is the tip of the sword slightly below horizontal at the end of Kirioroshi?
- 6) Is the shape and form of Chiburi correct?
- 7) Is Notoh performed correctly?

#### **2. NIHONME-USHIRO (Rear)**

- 1) When the turn is made, is the left foot moved sufficiently to the left?
- 2) Is the horizontal cut made to the opponent's temple?

#### **3. SANBONME – UKENAGASHI (Receive, Parry & Cut)**

- 1) When the parry is made, does it protect the upper body well?
- 2) Is the left foot brought back behind the right foot? And is the cut made along the Kesa line?
- 3) After the cut has been made, is the left hand in front of the navel and the sword tip a little below horizontal?

#### **4. YONHONME – TSUKA ATE (Striking with the hilt)**

- 1) Is the Tsuka Gashira definitely pointed at the opponent's solar plexus?
- 2) When the rear opponent is thrust, is this done with the right elbow extended fully and the left hand bringing the Koiguchi to the navel?
- 3) When the cut is made, is it on the vertical centerline and from the correct position above the head?

#### **5. GOHONME - KESAGIRI (Diagonal Cut)**

- 1) When the initial upper cut is made, is the right hand above the right shoulder when the sword is rotated?
- 2) When Chiburi is performed, is it at the correct angle while the person steps with the left hand taking hold of the Koiguchi.

#### **6. ROPPONME – MOROTEZUKI (Two-Hand Thrust)**

- 1) Is the initial cut correctly made from the opponent's temple down to their chin when doing Nuki-Uchi?
- 2) Does the performer bring their left foot up behind their right? Is Chudan-No-Kamae correctly executed and the sword thrusts into the right area of the body? Is the thrust made with certainty?
- 3) Does the performer bring their sword above their head in a parrying action after pulling it out from the first opponent?

#### **7. NANAHONME – SAMPOGIRI (Three Direction Cut)**

- 1) Is the initial cut to the first opponent made through the head down to the chin?
- 2) Is the cut to the opponent on the left performed without hesitation?
- 3) Is the sword brought up to Furikaburi with a parrying action? Does the last cut finish at the horizontal?

#### **8. HAPPONME – GANMEN-ATE (Hit To The Face)**

- 1) Is the initial strike with the Tsuka Gashira made between the eyes?
- 2) When turning to face the opposite direction, is the right hand placed on the hip?
- 3) When facing the rear opponent, is the body faced completely to the rear with the rear heel slightly raised?
- 4) Is the thrust performed without too much bend in the knees?

#### **9. KYUHONME – SOETE ZUKI (Jointed Hand Trust)**

- 1) When the initial diagonal cut is made from the opponent's right shoulder down through to the waist, is the right hand at the height of the navel and the sword tip slightly above the horizontal level?
- 2) Is the sword held properly between the left thumb and forefinger and the right hand on the hip?
- 3) Does the right hand finish in front of the navel after making the thrust?

- 4) When showing Zanshin, are the right elbow naturally straight and the right hand no higher than chest level?

#### **10. JU PPONME – SHIHOGIRI (Four Direction Cutting)**

- 1) Is the strike to the first opponent's hand done powerfully and firmly with the flat of the Tsuka?
- 2) In making Sayabiki, is the Mune near the Monouchi of the sword on the chest and the right hand not touching the body?
- 3) When the thrust is made, is the left hand brought to the center of the navel and both arms aiding the technique with the correct pressure?
- 4) Is the final cut made by going through Waki Gamae without hesitation or pause?

#### **11. JU IPPONME – SOGIRI (Complete Cuts)**

- 1) When the sword is drawn, is it in a correct position to parry?
- 2) When moving forward, does the performer execute Okuri Ashi footwork?
- 3) When making the horizontal cut, is it performed horizontally with the correct angle of the blade?

#### **12 JU NIHONME – NUKI UCHI (Sudden Draw)**

- 1) When the sword is drawn, is the left foot drawn back adequately?
- 2) When the right hand is taken upward, is it in the correct line with their body?

Others:

ZEN-NIPPON-KENDO-RENMEI-IAI manual has to be read well and the information in this manual has to be adopted without argument to study “the fundamentals of Iaido”.

Copyright ©2005.

All Japan Kendo Federation (Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei)

All Rights reserved.

This book, or parts thereof, should not be reproduced in any form without permission of the

copyright holder.