

THE GUIDANCE OF REFEREE

ALL JAPAN KENDO FEDERATION IAI [ZNKR IAI]

(The checks considering technical principles)

All Japan Kendo Federation *Iai*:

Referee Seminar with especial emphasis on taking technical principles (*Riai*) into consideration.

Introduction:

The history of the All Japan Kendo Federation *Iai* is outlined on the first page of the official handbook. But the text doesn't adequately express the difficulties experienced in creating each new technique. In the words of then Director of the ZNKR, *Mr. Ohoya*, "no matter how much time and money is spent, I wish it to be a splendid *Iai* which will remain unchanged and which has theoretical background". With this hope in mind, the *Seitei* Committee of that time started its difficult discussions, with the result the new *Iai* was shown for the first time at the *Kyoto Taikai* in 1968 and officially established in 1969. In 1980 three more *kata* were added to make up the present All Japan Kendo Federation *Iai*. With its completion the *Iai* population increased enormously and a system for competitions was formulated. The All Japan *Iaido* Tournament was soon established and local tournaments and seminars quickly followed, thus contributing to the rapid spread of ZNKR *Iai*. However, although on the seminars one tried to get a uniform ZNKR *Iai*, differences of opinion were becoming more and more common across the various prefectures and when it came to decisions in competition, differences in judgements were also becoming greater.

In the twice yearly seminars run by the *Buko Dosokai* our aim of teaching correct technique has been highly appreciated, and as a result of hard work put in by the *Hanshi* and other teachers, the number of high *dan* grades has increased enormously. In the same way that we in the *Buko Dosokai* to pass on to our students the good things we learned from our teachers, I feel that it is necessary that we organise seminars to study the correct way of refereeing and judging, a task that is absolutely essential for the further development of the correct ZNKR *Iai*.

Therefore it is my wish that all members of the *Buko Dosokai* use this reference booklet in order to be able to distinguish the fine differences that occur in a competition. If you have read the explanation of the ZNKR *Iai* carefully, you should find the following contents easy to understand, however, in addition, the following text also contains some most important points which I hope that you will use as a basis for your study of refereeing technique.

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General theory

The ZNKR Rules and Regulations for *Iaido* Matches "Article 12" states that the following points are to be considered when making a judgement.

- 1, Depth of practice.
- 2, *Reigi*: correct attitude and etiquette.
- 3, Technique: (a) exact *nukitsuke* and *kiritsuke*
(b) exact *sayabanare*—the instant the sword leaves the *saya*, and the *hasuji*
(c) exact *chiburui* and,
(d) exact *note*.
- 4, *Kokorogamae*: mental posture
(a) calmness
(b) *metsuke*
(c) spirit concentration, distance
and timing.
- 5, *Ki/Ken/Tai-no-Itchi*: the mind, sword and body in harmony
- 6, *Iai* that has effectiveness as a martial art.
- 7, For further reference, the ZNKR *Iai* "Points To Watch For In Refereeing And Judging".

Of these points, numbers 1, 4, and 5 are most likely to prove contentious, so we will discuss them further.

How to interpret "Depth of practice"

(a) *Kurai dori*

The original ZNKR *Iai* was intended to educate *Kendoka*, and in the same way that *Shidachi* in the *Kendo no Kata* should subdue the opponent by displaying a self confident attitude, then it is equally important to show this "*Kurai dori*" against an imaginary opponent.

(b) *Hin-i / Kigurai*

The *laidoka* should show clearly that he is "pushing" the opponent with his spirit, thus overwhelming him.

(c) *Jo/Ha/Kyu.*

This is also called "*Ma*" refers to the timing, or more accurately to the balance between fast and slow movements.

This is a very important element, especially in a match between two high graded players.

(d) *Kaso-teki.*

This refers to the imaginary opponent.

Does the player's *metsuke* show the correct number and position of the opponents?

Is the player cutting or thrusting to the correct targets?

(e) Cutting.

One has to judge whether the cutting action is preceded with "*Some*", attacking attitude, and whether the *monouchi* of the sword is effectively used.

(f) Sword sound.

The sound that the sword makes should be short but sharp. The cutting movements can be divided into two parts; lowering the sword from above the head and the actual cutting.

When the sword is just starting to move, no sound is preferable, but when the actual cut has started then there should be a sound until the sword stops.

(g) *Te-no-uchi.*

Of course there are both heavy and light swords. However it seems that recently strong swinging is seen as preferable to dynamic movement. A dynamic movement is always accompanied by a good *te-no-uchi* (the force concentrated to the *monouchi* by the hands) and simply swinging the sword forcefully should not be encouraged.

How to judge "Kokoro-gamae"

(a) Calmness.

A calm heart can be clearly seen in the eyes and attitudes of the player.

(b) *Metsuke*.

Metsuke shouldn't only be taken to "*enzan no metsuke*" but a distinction should also be made between "*kan*" looking with the heart, and "*ken*" looking with the eyes.

(c) Spirit.

The spirit if the *laidoka* should be so strong that the opponent is unable to draw his sword. If one has to draw, however reluctantly in order to preserve ones own life, then the cut must be fierce, determined and final.

(d) *Zanshin*.

Correct *zanshin* should not be directed solely at one's opponent but should be directed at all opponents in the vicinity.

(e) Distance and timing.

To meet an opponent's attack there will always be the consideration of timing and distance. Choosing whether striking before the opponent moves or reacting after one has invited the opponent to attack, will result in different timing and distance. It is therefore extremely important that the player shows that he is fully conscious of an opponent.

ATTENTION:

In the case of the ZNKR *lai*, only in *Ukenagashi* and *kesagiri* is the opponent invited to attack first. In all other forms one must strike the "*degasira*" of the opponent, that is, the very instant that he wants to start his movement.

What is "Ki/Ken/Tai-no-Ichi"

The basic thinking of the ZNKR *lai* is that the opponent can be restrained if one first takes the initiative. Therefore one has to move in a way which is dictated by the attack of the opponent. Consequently one should not cut after the feet have stopped moving but should rather let the body and sword move together in harmony.

Reiho

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR *lai*

Further checks considering technical principles

How to understand correctly "REIHO" (the proprieties)

- (1) It is the rule that practice of *lai* should be done with manners of *Sashimote*: with regarding the direction of the right 90° against *Gyokuza* (Imperial throne) as the front.
Alteration of the rule is exceptionally admitted only in special circumstances of the tourney-hall or the practice hall of *lai*.
- (2) The proprieties for a sword as described in ZNKR *lai*, is the new one that is impossible to be found in *Koryu*.
The proprieties in *Koryu* differ with its own thinking of each school, and the progress of historic background which brought forth the proprieties.
When ZNKR intended to secure unity of the proprieties, the matter became a subject of discussion.
- (3) When doing practice of *lai* by the rule of *Sashimote*, if one lay down a sword by turning a pommel to the right, the point of a sword will point to the direction of throne.
As a school of *Koryu* is opposed to the matter, that means treason to the emperor, and then it is decided as a compromise that one lay down a sword, while drawing the point of a sword just a little near.
At the beginning of practice of *lai*, you should perform the proprieties for sword with an earnest mind of greenhorn, and also with thanks for your safe performance of *lai* at the end of the practice.

Before the performance of "ENBU",
attention to:

① Is the correct etiquette shown?

- (1) Is the clothing in order?
- (2) Is the player entering and leaving the *shiai-jo* with a positive attitude?

Ipponme = Mae

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR Iai

Further checks considering technical principles

- (1) Is the player imagining a front opponent as he sits down ?
- (2) Is the *nukitsuke* executed at the same time the sword leaves the *saya* ?

- (3) Are the positions of the *kissaki*, right hand, elbow and shoulder correct ?



- (4) Does the left knee pass the right heel as it is slid forward ?

- (5) When initiating the *chiburui* action, is the right palm turned upwards and is the cutting edge of the sword pointing to the left ?

- ① Is sufficient *sayabiki* shown during *nukitsuke* ?
- ② Is the *furikaburi* made with a backwards thrusting movement past the left ear ?
- ③ Does the *kissaki* drop below the horizontal when the sword is above the head ?
- ④ Is the cut executed without pause ?
- ⑤ Does the cut finish a little lower than horizontal ?
- ⑥ Is the posture correct during *chiburui* ?
- ⑦ Is the *note* executed correctly ?

Nihonme = Ushiro

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR Iai

① Is the player drawing the sword as he is turning and is the left foot being placed a little to the left on the *nukitsuke* ?

② Is the player cutting correctly to the temple of the opponent ?

Further checks considering technical principles

(1) Is the player imagining a back opponent as he sits down ?

(2) Is the head turning with the body ?

(3) Are the positions of the *kissaki*, right hand, elbow and shoulder correct ?

(4) Does the right knee pass the left heel as it is slid forward ?

(5) When initiating the *chiburui* action, is the right palm turned upwards and is the cutting edge of the sword pointing to the left ?



Sanbonme = Ukenagashi

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR lai

- ① Is the upper half of body covered by the sword in the *ukenagashi* position ?
- ② Is the left foot drawn back behind the right and is the cut diagonal ?
- ③ Is the left fist in front of the navel and is the *kissaki* slightly down on completion of the cut ?

Further checks considering technical principles

- (1) Is the player imagining a left opponent as he sits down ?
- (2) Is the *ukenagashi* movement expressed clearly ?
- (3) Are the *ukenagashi* action and the cut executed as one continuous movement ?
- (4) Is the right hand above the shoulder as the cut begins ?
- (5) Is the *kissaki* upright over the shoulder as the cut begins ?



Yonhonme = Tsukaate

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR Iai

- ① Is the player aiming the *tsuka* correctly at the solar plexus of the opponent ?
- ② On the thrust to the rear, is the left hand holding the *saya* turned inwards in front of the navel and is the right elbow extended on making the thrust ?
- ③ As the body is again turned to the front, is there a pulling movement as the sword is raised above the head, and is the cut itself vertical ?

Further checks considering technical principles

- (1) Is the player imagining the opponents as he sits down ?
- (2) Is the first opponent still being pressured by the *tsukagashira* as the *sayabiki* is performed ?
- (3) Is the ridge of the sword near the *monouchi* touching the left chest and is the edge turned outwards ?
- (4) When turning again to the front, is the head turning before the body ?
- (5) When sitting, is *zanshin* shown as the left knee is placed on the floor to the *sonkyo* position ?



Gohonme = Kesagiri

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR Iai

- ① Is the right hand above the shoulder as the sword is turned on the initial cut ?

Further checks considering technical principles

- (1) Is the *kissaki* pointing upwards and is the blade vertical as the initial cut is completed ?

ATTENTION:

The angle of the upwards cut and the angle of the downwards cut are not the same.

☞ (March 1997) But the same now

- (2) Does the *monouchi* reach out of the body side as the downward's cut is completed ?

- ② Is the left hand gripping the *saya* as the left foot is moved back on the *chiburui* action ?



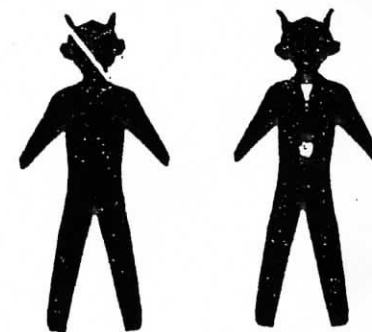
Ropponme = Morote tsuki

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR Iai

- ① On the initial diagonal cut, does the cut stop at chin height ?
- ② Is the rear foot *tsugias* as the *chudan kamae* is adopted and is the thrust made accurately to the opponent solar plexus ?
- ③ As the sword is drawn out, is there a feeling of *ukenagashi* as the sword is raised above the head ?

Further checks considering technical principles

- (1) Does the height of the *kissaki* in *chudan* correctly express the intent to thrust at the solar plexus ?
- (2) Is the thrust executed with the correct body movement ?



- (3) Is the foot on which the body turns pointing forwards, and is the heel foot being lifted a little off the floor ?

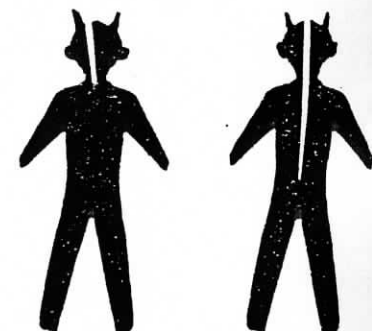
Nanahonme = Sanpagiri

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR Iai

- ① When making the first cut to the right, does the cut stop at chin height ?
- ② After turning to the opponent on the left, is the vertical cut made without pausing ?
- ③ Is the sword raised above the head with the feeling of *ukenagashi* before the final cut ?

Further checks considering technical principles

- (1) Is the opponent to the front intimidated with the spirit ?
- (2) Is the right foot placed a little forward with the left pivoting foot on the initial cut ?
- (3) Is the player conscious of the opponent in front as he turns to the left ?
- (4) Is the head turning towards the opponent before the rest of the body ?
- (5) When making the second cut perpendicular to the left is on the left foot sufficient vigor ?
- (6) Is the head turning towards the front opponent before the rest of the body ?
- (7) Is enough concentration shown after the *note* ?



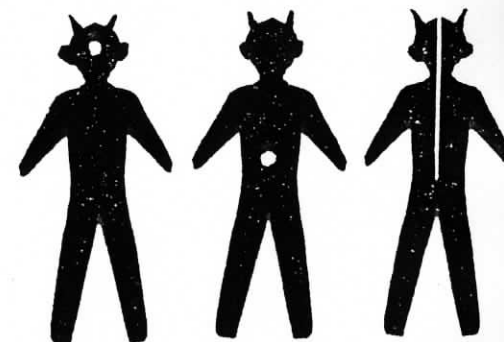
Hachihonme = Ganmen-ate

Points to watch described in the ZNKR Iai

- ① Is that *tsuka-gashira* aimed correctly at the point between the eyes ?
- ② Is the right fist placed correctly on the top of the ilium when facing the opponent to the rear ?
- ③ In this position, does the body turn round perfectly, and is the rear heel held a little off the floor ?
- ④ Is the thrust made with the feet pointing forwards ?

Further checks considering technical principles

- (1) Is there a feeling of pushing with the *tsuka-gashira* against the opponent in front as the *saya* is pulled back to make the turn to the rear ?



- (2) Is the right fist a little lower than the *kissaki* and in line with the right hip when making the thrust, and is sufficient *sayabiki* shown during the thrust ?
- (3) Is the sword pulled out and raised above the head in a *ukenagashi* movement ?
- (4) Is sufficient concentration shown after the *note* ?

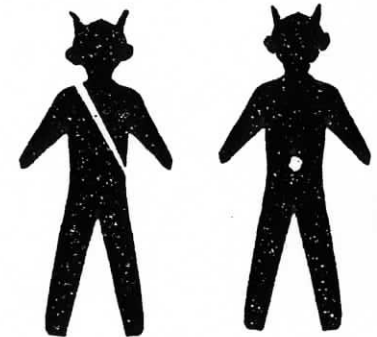
Kyuhonme = Soetetsuki

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR lai

- ① When making the initial diagonal cut is the right fist at navel height and is the *kissaki* slightly higher than the fist ?
- ② Is the blade gripped between the thumb and index finger of left hand at around its centre point, and is the right fist on the right hip ?
- ③ When making the thrust, does the right fist stop in front of the navel ?
- ④ When showing *zanshin* is the right arm straight and is the right fist no higher than the nipple ?

Further checks considering technical principles

- (1) Does the *monouchi* reach out of the body side on the initial cut ?
- (2) Is the *kissaki* pointing at the abdomen of the opponent when making the preparation for the thrust ?
- (3) Does the *kissaki* remain still when starting the *chiburui* ?
- (4) Is sufficient concentration shown after the *note* ?



Jipponme = Shihogiri

Points to watch as described in the ZNKR Iai

Further checks considering technical principles

① Is the *tsuka ate* made strongly and with the side of the *tsuka* ?

(1) Is there the feeling of pushing the first opponent with the *tsukagashira* as the *saya biki* is made on the initial turn ?

② When doing the *saya biki*, is the ridge of the sword near the *monouchi* touching the left chest and is the right hand held away from the body ?

(2) Is the thrust to the solar plexus made without pause ?

③ When making the thrust, is the *saya* pulled in front of the navel, and are the left and right hands moved towards each other ?

(3) Is there the feeling of pulling the sword out as the sword is raised above the head ?

④ Is the sword raised above the head for the final cut as part of the *wakigamae* action and not after *wakigamae* ?

(4) Is there the feeling of *ukenagashi* as the sword is raised above the head when pivoting on the left foot to turn to the right rear ? Is the cut made on the right foot ?

(5) Is sufficient concentration shown after *note* ?

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