

Preface to the 3rd Edition

Due to the success of the first editions of this book I have been asked on numerous occasions to update and expand on the information in it. With the recent introduction of two new kata to the ZNKR curriculum and changes in grading requirements the time now seems right to do so. This new edition draws heavily on the first and second. Information concerning Koryu has not been changed, but appendices have been brought up to date, the descriptions of Zen Ken Ren kata have been revised and expanded with photographs to assist in interpreting the descriptions. Also the first chapter, particularly that concerning etiquette has been considerably enlarged, with photographs of torei, and drawings of methods of folding Hakama, tying obi etc. Explanations of terms have been expanded too.

The decision to include photographs was made under pressure from the considerable number of people who asked for them in this edition. I am not convinced that it is a good idea. Photographs are too fixed, do not change with my changing interpretation and increased learning. They get out of date even faster than a brief description. I know I will look at a copy of this in 10 years time and be embarrassed, and wonder why I ever allowed it. But for now, I have included what users seem to want.

The previous issues were spiral bound. There have been numerous requests to make this issue more flexible. Therefore what you have now is punched for binding in various methods. The new edition allows you to disperse the page amongst your own notes, or add your own notes to the book. Pages can be easily removed and replaced for study, photocopied for annotations without spoiling the original, etc.

Included with this edition is an order form for obtaining an optional CD ROM version of the book. The disk contains the book exactly as you see it here, in interactive pdf format for easy reference on your computer, while the printed copy can remain handy in your kit bag for reference at the dojo.

Good luck to you all. I hope that this reference remains helpful throughout your study

PETER WEST Rokudan Renshi
MYOKEN DOJO



Foreword

Many modern systems of education develop ways for people to broaden their minds and explore the varied fields of art, science and technology. However, training in laido sharpens the facility to believe in oneself and at the same time activates the willingness to seek for the highest personal ideals. Accordingly, the study of laido has become the object of rapidly increasing international interest as a valuable way of developing spiritual strength and physical power. Though originally developed in Japan, laido has become part of the cultural heritage of the whole world and it is my sincere hope that this book will serve as a useful guide to both the beginner and the experienced practitioner in their search for knowledge.

ISHIDO SHIZUFUMI Hachidan Kyoshi
January 1995

The term 'lai' is taken from the phrase 'Tsune ni itte, kyu ni awasu'. The meaning of this is, whatever we may be doing or wherever we may be, we must always be prepared for any eventuality.

Through the sword we seek to improve our spirit and become better people, to promote peace and good feeling beyond the walls of the Dojo and into our daily lives. There are many styles of lai, many ways to cut, to move, and as one learns one improves technically. However, we train not only to learn techniques, but also to cultivate the heart and spirit, and in this respect all 'styles' lead to the same goal.

One must bear in mind the higher goals to achieve and take each step and overcome each obstacle, but at the same time, though the path may be a difficult one to follow, one must relish and enjoy the challenges.

HARUNA MATSUO Nanadan Kyoshi
December 1994

Perception is strong and sight is weak.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Preface

Foreword

Chapter 1. General 3

1. Safety, Etiquette and Dojo Behaviour
2. Cleaning the Sword
3. Saho – Etiquette
4. Parts of the Body
5. Items of Clothing
6. Parts of the Sword
7. Kamae, Shisei, Foot and Hand Techniques
8. General Dojo Vocabulary
9. Concepts in Iaido
10. Seitei Iaido
11. Koryu
12. Genealogy of the Muso Ryu

Chapter 2. Zen Nihon Kendo Renmei Iaido 31

1. Introduction
2. General Points
3. Technical Points
4. Torei
5. The Forms

Chapter 3. Muso Shinden Ryu 75

1. Shoden
2. Chuden
3. Okuden
4. Tachi Uchi no Kurai
5. Tsumiai no Kurai

Chapter 4. Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu 84

1. Omori Ryu
2. Eishin Ryu
3. Tachi Uchi no Kurai
4. Okuiai
5. Tsumiai no Kurai
6. New Forms

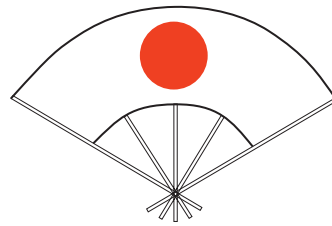
Chapter 5. Gradings and Competitions 97

1. Shinsa
2. Shinsa-in
3. Taikai
4. Team Taikai

Appendices 111

1. Sample Kyu Grade Syllabus
2. Some Kae Waza and Henka Waza
3. Sample Dan Grading Written Questions
4. Criteria for Judging and Grading Panel Members

CHAPTER 1



General

There is a time and a place
for the use of weapons.

Miyamoto Musashi

1. SAFETY, ETIQUETTE AND DOJO BEHAVIOUR

Safety

When handling potentially dangerous weapons I think no-one will disagree that safety must always be a major consideration. When we are training with others we must consider safety as a threefold strategy: avoiding injury to others, avoiding others injuring ourselves, and avoiding self-inflicted injury. This can also be broken down as:

1. Equipment Safety

- Are clothes correctly fitting?
- Are himo (chords) correctly tied and tucked away?
- Has any splintering or chipping of bokken been repaired?
- Is the sword/laito cracked or bent?
- Is the mekugi secure?
- Is the tsuka ito secure?
- Are the tsuba and seppa correctly fitting?
- Is the saya undamaged (koiguchi or any other join split)?
- Does the habaki fit well onto the koiguchi?

2. Personal Safety

- Does your hair obscure your vision?
- Are finger and toe nails adequately trimmed?
- Are any injuries correctly bandaged etc.?
- Do you have injuries which should require rest?
- Do you have enough space to practice in?
- Are you in anyone else's way?
- Do you know what forms the people around you are practising?

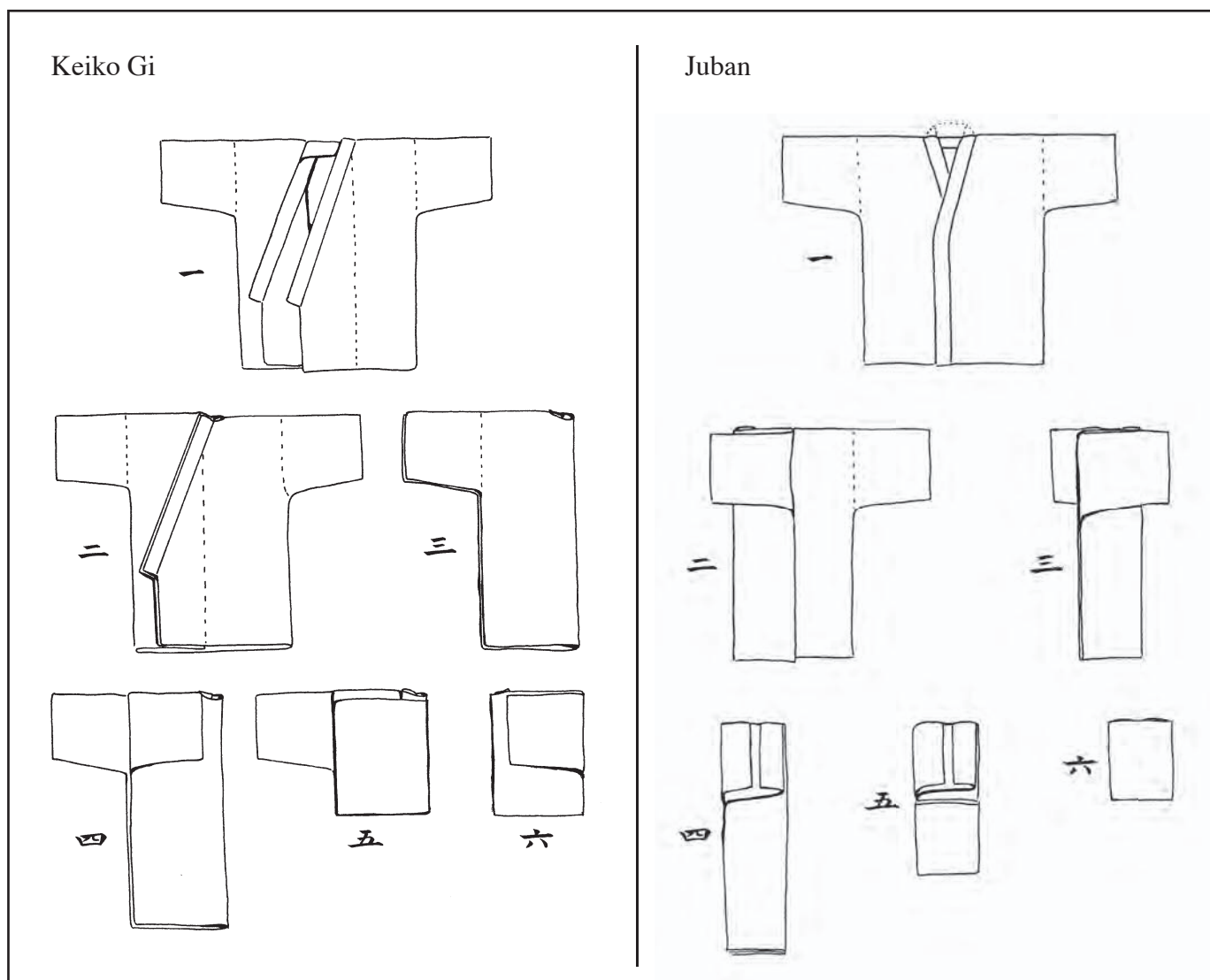
3. Safety of Premises

- Is the hall large enough?
- Is the ceiling high enough?
- Is the floor surface secure and suitable?
- Is the lighting adequate?
- Is first aid available?
- Does anyone in the dojo have first aid training for the most likely injuries?
- Is there access to or for emergency transport?
- Do you know where the nearest Accident and Emergency Department is?
- Where is the nearest phone, does anyone in the class carry a mobile phone?

5. ITEMS OF CLOTHING

Embui gi	display/demonstration clothes
Hakama	wide/pleated trousers
Haori	over jacket
Hera	peg inside rear of hakama
Himo	cord or lace
Keiko gi	training jacket
Kesa	lapel/part of monks costume hanging from left shoulder (not used in laido, but mentioned in kata names)
Koshiita	board at back of hakama
Matadachi	split at side of hakama
Montsuki	wide sleeve top with mon on chest, sleeve and back
Obi	belt
Sode	sleeve
Tabi	formal soft footwear for general use and in the dojo
Zekken	chest patch embroidered with own name, dojo name, nationality, etc.
Zori	sandals for use outside Dojo designed to be slipped onto either bare feet or over tabi

Folding a Gi



6. PARTS OF THE SWORD

This list is by no means complete, there are many more details each with their own name

Boshi	curve leading to kissaki
Fuchi gane	metal band around tsuka next to tsuba
Ha	cutting edge
Habaki	collar (usually copper) reinforcing join between blade and tsuba
Ha machi	'step' at end of cutting edge where the blade meets the habaki
Hamon	line of tempered section
Hanami	cutting line of sword (from mune to ha)
Hasuji	pointing line of sword (from mune machi to kissaki)
Hi	grooves
Hira	face of blade from shinogi to ha
Hitoe	top of tang which meets mune at mune machi
Kashira	end of tsuka
Katahaba	measure of thickest part of blade
Kissaki	point
Koiguchi	open end of saya
Kojiri	closed end of saya
Kurigata	device on saya through which sageo passes
Mei	signature on tang
Mekugi	bamboo pin through tsuka
Mekugi ana	hole through which mekugi passes
Menuki	decorations under tsuka ito to aid grip
Monouchi	cutting part (approx. 6 inch section up to kissaki)
Mune	back edge of blade
Mune machi	'step' at end of mune where the blade meets the habaki
Nagasa	measure of the length of the blade from kissaki to mune machi in a straight line
Nakago	tang
Nakago jiri	end of tang
Sageo	cord, ties into hakama himo
Same	ray skin under tsuka ito
Saya	scabbard
Seppa	washers either side of tsuba
Shinogi	ridge at widest point along blade
Shinogi ji	face of blade from shinogi to mune
Sori	measure of the curve of the blade, measured from the mune to the line
Nagasa	at the deepest point
Tsuba	hand guard
Tsuba moto	back edge of the blade close to the handguard
Tsuka ito/Maki ito	tsuka binding
Yasuri me	file marks left on tang

5. THE FORMS

Ippon me	Mae
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Scenario:

One enemy, front in seiza.

Method:

Rise onto the knees as you draw, then stepping forward with the right foot, cut horizontally across the enemy's eyes. Reposition the sword over the head by pushing the kissaki back along the line of the cut and round past the left ear while simultaneously sliding forward on the left knee to close the distance. Without stopping take the tsuka with the left hand and cut kirioroshi while pushing the right foot forward to recover the posture. Stand as you perform o chiburi. Bring the back foot up to the front to move closer where you can better observe the enemy. Pull the right foot back to recover the previous posture with feet reversed. Perform noto, slowly sinking to the left knee. Stand and return to the start line.

Specific grading points, basic:

Is nukitsuke effective? (height, direction, depth, speed, strength, kime).

Is shisei of nukitsuke correct?

Is furikaburi strong, maintaining seme with adequate but not excessive forward movement?

Is kirioroshi effective?

Is the stand in chiburi stable?

Is shisei of chiburi correct?

Is there a feeling of meaning in the change of feet?

Is noto smooth and sonkyo controlled?

More advanced points:

Is the draw directed to the centre line of the opponent's face?

Are the toes lifted in time for the cut, but without interrupting the flow of the overall attack?

Is the slide forward to the correct distance to ensure that the kirioroshi cuts an enemy who is in exactly the same place as the one cut with nukitsuke?

Is kaburi performed with control of hanami and hasuji, with the blade remaining higher than horizontal before the kirioroshi?

Are seme, zanshin and metsuke sustained throughout the kata without loss of focus?

Higher points:

Are the feet and back leg consistently in the same line, maintaining the same centre, and the hips consistently square?

Does the overall timing show calmness and control?

Does the performance demonstrate Jo ha kyu and Kan kyu?

Does the performance demonstrate unfaltering Kigurai?

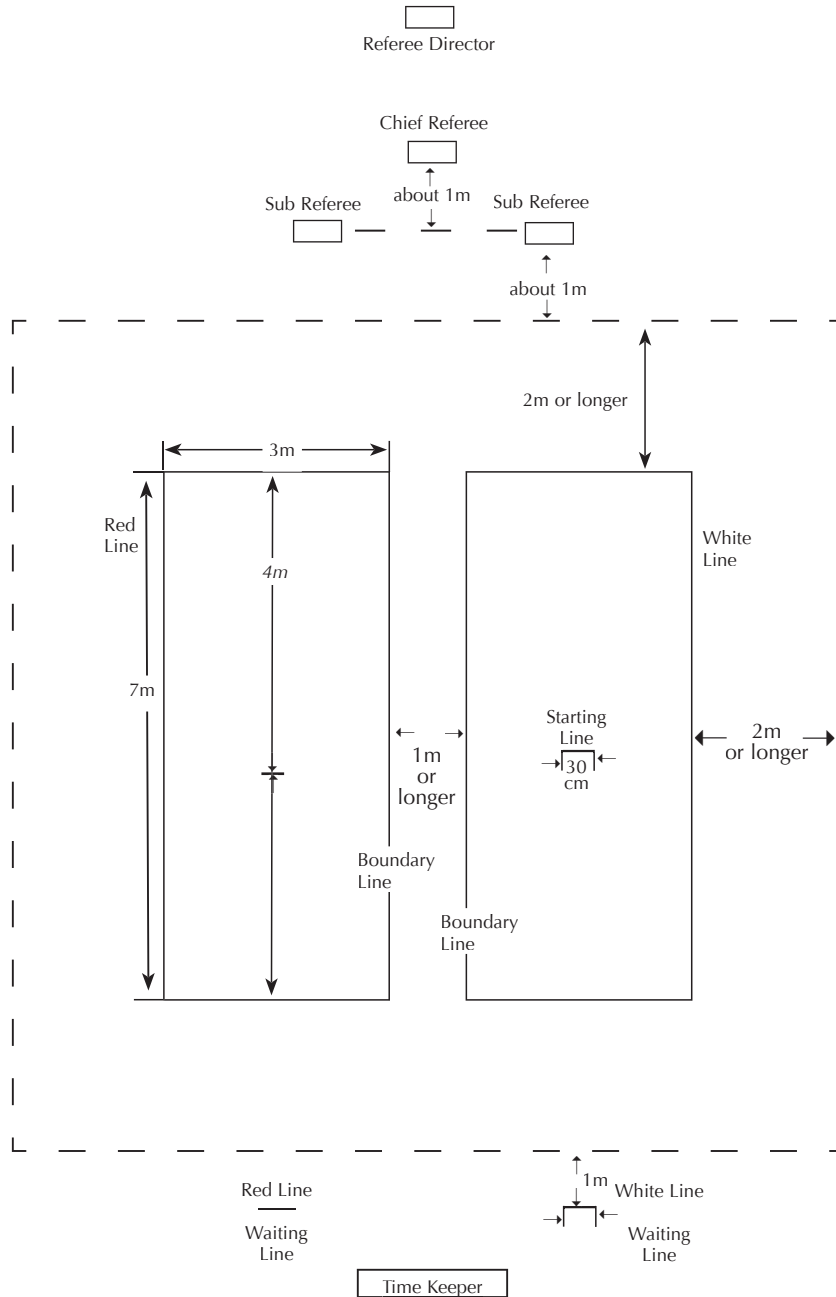
Is the breathing kept under control, and does the breathing support the flow of the kata?



TAIKAI

(For a more in depth study, see 'The Regulations of Iaido Shiai and Shimpan'. All Japan Kendo Federation, 1996).

Layout of the court for Shiai type.



There are 2 rectangular courts, each measuring 3m by 7m.

Each has a start mark 30cm long positioned 4m from the front of the court.

The 2 courts are separated by a gap of 1m.

There is a clear space of 2m around the court.

The distance from the court to the Shimpanza is about 1m.

The court to the Shinpan's right is Aka (Red), and the their left is Shiro (White).

Each court is, for preference, marked out in the appropriate colour.

The tape used to mark out the courts and the start line should be between 5 and 10cm, wide.