

Basic Guidelines for Iaido & Budo



Compiled by the Japanese Swordsmanship Society

Courtesy & Etiquette

(Reiho & Reigi)

Guidelines for Training

*“I know nothing about how to win over others,
I only know the way to win over myself”
— Yagyū Tajima No Kami Munenori*

1. Always treat your Sensei and fellow students with courtesy and respect.
2. Never question your Sensei's abilities.
3. Always be in control of your actions and emotions.
4. Practice your techniques as often as possible.
5. Take constructive criticism with an open mind.
6. Never be arrogant about what you know. Never think that you know everything about something.
7. Remember that you can learn something from anyone.
8. Never say, *“I cannot.”* Have a positive attitude.
9. Remember all techniques are ultimately self-taught over time.
10. Always look inward and try to improve yourself.

Entrance

1. The uniform must be clean, worn correctly, and adjusted properly. At the end of every class, the hakama, keiko-gi and obi must be neatly and respectfully folded up.
2. **No jewelry, patches, emblems** may be worn within the Dojo except approved ones. An exception to this rule will be allowed for wedding rings that cannot easily be removed.
3. If a student arrives **late** for a training session, he/she will bow-in away from blocking the entrance. From there, he/she will wait at the entrance of the Dojo and **wait to be recognized** by the Sensei. After recognition he/she will bow-in using the correct manner and may then join the class at the Sensei's direction.
4. If a student must leave **early**, he/she should **inform the instructor** beforehand. When it is time, go to the side facing the Shomen and bow-out.
5. In matters of training, protocol, and etiquette, always **follow your senior's directions**. Do not question his instruction while you are in the Dojo, even if you think he/she is mistaken. The time for discussion is after the training session.

Weapons Management

“We strive to master ourselves through our training, so each student’s efforts toward this goal should be honored”

1. Never ask directly to examine another’s sword or other equipment.
2. When accepting another’s sheathed sword, always take the sword in both hands, parallel to the floor, cutting edge towards the other, and bow to the sword with a short, respectful bow. Return the sword in the same fashion except that the cutting edge is towards yourself. The **general rule** is that when passing a sword to another (either sheathed or unsheathed), the edge should always be toward the person who is passing the sword to the other person.
3. When accepting an unsheathed blade, grip the tsuka firmly with your left hand near the tsuba; after the owner relaxes his grip, turn the cutting edge towards yourself and grip the tsuka with both hands. Bow to the sword and it’s owner. Reverse the procedure when returning the blade.
4. **Never** stand over, walk over, or stumble against another’s sword, bokken, shinai, jo or other equipment. **Never** use another’s sword or other equipment without permission.
5. When bowing with the sword along your side, make sure the sword is not resting upon your hakama.
6. Treat all analogs (iaito, bokuto, shinai, atarashi naginata, kata naginata, etc.) of the actual weapon with equal respect and handling as you would the real weapon. Never drop, toss or kick or throw the weapon.
7. Treat all budo equipment related to your weapon in the same manner as in #6.
8. When placing a sheathed sword (naginata, etc.) on the floor, place it along a wall with the cutting edge pointing toward the wall, and the tsuka pointing in the direction of the Shomen. The tip should point away from the Shomen.

Safety regulations for laido practice

Always enter and leave area with caution, particularly when others are practicing. **DO NOT CUT TOWARDS ANOTHER PERSON.** When practicing a kata and someone is in your line of cut, change your position and cut in a safe direction. Do not assume you have the right to a particular direction because the kata indicates it should be there. **SAFETY OVER FORM.**

Be aware of where you are in the Dojo floor and how near other students are to you. There are no “choice” places in the Dojo. If the Dojo is being utilized by many other students, it is better to wait for an opening rather than crowding next to another student and imposing yourself upon his concentration.

1. **Maintain your equipment** to the highest standards so as not to be a danger to yourself or others. Particularly, watch for broken Mekugi (sword pins) and bokken that are splintering. Iaito, bokken, or other equipment will be **kept along the sides of the practice area** or off of the practice floor when not in use by the student. Never leave equipment unattended in the middle of the dojo area.
2. When the student's **uniform** becomes undone in the course of practice, the student shall go to the side of the room at the first appropriate opportunity and readjust his/her uniform before resuming practice.
3. **Beginning students may not use “live blades”** (*shinken—true swords*) without permission of the Sensei. A Sensei has the right to ask anyone in a class not to use a live blade or not to use equipment that is judged unsafe or improper.
4. When practicing laido Kata, those with “live blades” will try to stay to the right and in front.
5. If during **group practice**, the student must **stop in the middle of a kata** or accidentally begins the wrong kata, they must immediately return the sword, move to the terminal position of the kata and remain there until the rest of the class finishes the kata. Do not remain in the same position. Do not turn around to watch others.
6. **If injured during practice, immediately notify the Sensei or senior student** present who shall assign another student to administer first aid or to accompany the injured to the hospital. An injured student shall not return to the practice area until the Sensei is satisfied that the student has sufficiently recovered both in physical and mental condition so as not longer to pose a threat to either himself or others.
7. **THERE WILL NEVER BE ANY “HORSEPLAY” or other dangerous behavior allowed in the Dojo.** Anyone who performs such actions will be subject to immediate disciplinary action as specified in the By-Laws.

Basic Terminology for Iaido and other Budo

Iaido	Literal translation: Existing in Harmony with Others Way or Philosophy.
Jodo	The way of the stick.
Naginata	(Way of) the reaping sword.

Commands

Shomen Ni Rei	Bow to the front of the Dojo.
Otagai Ni Rei	Bow to each other.
To Ni Rei	Bow to the sword.
Sensei Ni Rei	Bow to the instructor (if instructor is present in front).
Shizen Ni Rei	Bow to the spirit of Iaido or Dojo (if used).

Note: the following are voiced in response to Otagai Ni Rei:

Onegai Shimasu	Please do me the favor (At the beginning).
(Domo) Arigato Gozaimshita	Thank you very much (At the end).

Hajime	Begin or start.
Keiko	Practice.
Ki O Tsuke	Attention! (used like the military).
Rei	Bow.
Yoi	Get ready to begin.
Motoe	Return to starting spot.
Yame	Stop, finished or complete.
Mate	Halt. Break.
Yoshi	Done (good).
Owari	End or finish.
Soremade	It's Finished, ended.

Basic Terms

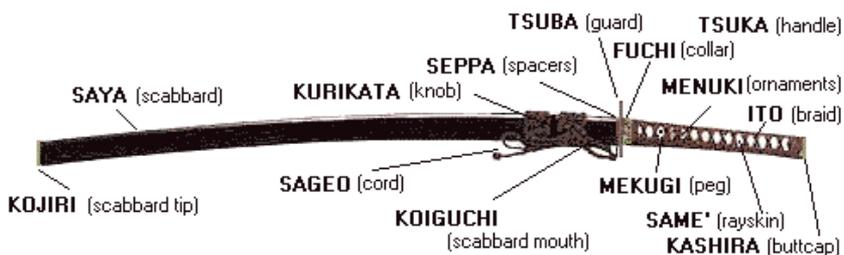
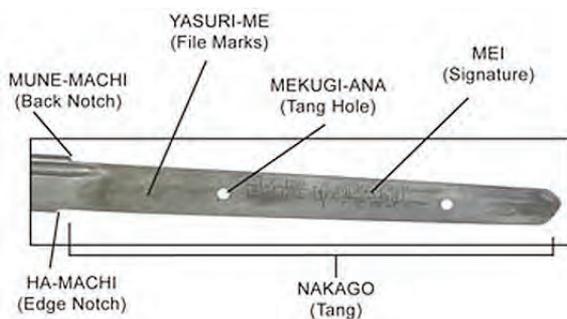
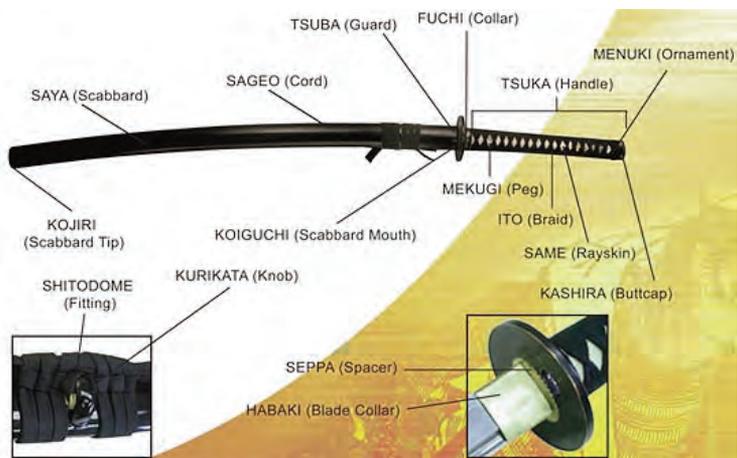
Dojo	Practice hall.
Migi (or U)	Right
Hidari (or Sa)	Left
Gyaku	Reverse
Sensei	Teacher or Instructor
Senpai	Senior in dojo
Kohai	Junior in dojo
Seiza	Sitting on the heels (basic sitting position)
Anza	Sitting with crossed legs (informal—should wait for permission to sit like this).
Tatehiza	Sitting on one foot with right knee raised.
Kata	A set of predefined movements or exercises.
Budo	Martial Arts Way with emphasis on principles and spirit.
Ki	The vital energy of a person. Located in Tanden.
Tanden	Center of Ki. Located in a spot of lower addomen.
Kiai	A shout used to draw forth the Ki from Tanden.
Kokyu	Breathing. Ability to control breath during Kata.
Kamiza	The high or honored side of the Dojo (lit. God Seat).
Shiai	Contest or tournament
Shinsa	A promotion test
Hantei	Decision! (command at end of match to judges)
Kamae	Posture or pose in a defensive or offensive stance.
Chudan No Kamae	Middle posture. (Sword is held in middle)
Jodan No Kamae	High posture. (Sword is above the head)
Gedan No Kamae	Low posture. (Sword is held point down)
Seigan No Kamae	Eye-catching posture. (Sword is pointing at eyes of opponent)
Waki No Kamae	To the Rear posture. (Sword is pointing back along the side)
Tombo No Kamae	Dragonfly posture. (Sword is held behind the head)
Uma No Kamae	Horse stance.
Atemi (Ate)	Strike or hit.
Uchi	Hit

Kiri	Cut
Ichi Byoshi No Uchi	Cut from a kneeling position down to near floor. ("I breathe, I cut")
Kiriotoshi	Cut from a standing position straight down the center.
Makkogiri	Same as Kiriotoshi.
Kesagiri	Cut down at a diagonal angle.
Gyaku-Kesagiri	Cut up at a diagonal angle.
Shomen (Uchi)	Cut only through the head.
Tsuki	Thrust.
Chiburui	Shaking the blood off the sword.
Hasuji	Cutting angle of the sword.
Iaigoshi	Keeping weight over the hips. Low kneeling position.
Noto	Returning sword to the Saya.
Nukitsuke	Drawing and cutting with sword directly from Saya.
Kumidachi	System of two person exercises using Bokken.
Iroha Uchi	Fast and hard Kumidachi drill.

Equipment

Note: A sword over 2 Shaku (60.6 cm or roughly 24 inches) is a long sword (Daito) and depending upon usage might be either a Katana or Tachi. Wakizashi are 1 Shaku or 2 Shaku in length, and Tanto are normally less than 1 Shaku.

Bokken/Bokuto	Hardwood practice sword
Shinai	Bamboo practice sword (Kendo)
Jo	4' long hardwood stick (Jodo)
Tendo Ryu Naginata	Solid hardwood naginata used for Tendo Ryu, Zen Nihon and AJNF Kata
Atarashi Naginata	Naginata used in Shiai. Has flexible bamboo blade.
Nihon-To	Japanese sword (general term)
Katana	Long sword wore through the obi (belt), edge up
Tachi	Long sword wore hanging from belt, edge down
Iaito	Practice sword for Iaido. Based upon Katana
Mogito	An Iaito not made from steel.
Shinken	A real sword made from steel, normally live (sharp).
Wakizashi	A short sword made as companion to a Katana.
Tanto	A knife.
Yari	Japanese spear. Used to thrust.
Naginata	Japanese halberd/glaive. Used to slash or thrust.
Ehbu or Eh	The ovate pole or shaft of the Naginata
Ishizuki	Butt-end of the Eh that can be used for strikes and thrusts
Sendanmaki	Method of wrapping around the upper part of the Eh to reinforce it.
Habu	The bamboo section of an Atarashi Naginata.
Kissaki	Point of the blade
Mune	Back of the sword blade
Mine	Back of the sword blade (Naginata)
Ha	Cutting edge of blade
Monouchi	Striking section of the blade (upper 1/3). Considered "sweet spot"
Shinogi	Ridgeline of sword for normal shape Katana (side of the blade)
Bohi (Hi)	Groove carved in blade along it's length



Horimono	Designs carved in blade (i.e. a dragon)
Machi	Transition notch between the blade and tang
Nakago	Tang. Section of the sword that fits into the handle.
Yokote	Line that defines point of Katana.
Hamon	Pattern of hardened steel along edge of the blade.
Yakiba	The hardened steel along the edge of the blade.
Hada	The pattern of grain in the steel.
Sori	The amount of curvature in the blade.
Nagasa	The length of the blade measured from the Mune-Machi to Kissaki in a straight line.
Kasane	The thickness of the blade. Measured at Machi and Yokote.
Motoha	Width of blade at Mune-Machi.
Sakihaba	Width of blade at Yokote.
Mekugi-Ana	Hole thru the Nakago used to fasten Tsuka to Nakago.
Saya	Scabbard
Kojiri	Tip of the Saya
Koiguchi	Mouth of the Saya that the blade enters. (Lit. "carp's mouth")
Kurigata	Knob on the side of the Saya that holds the Sageo
Sageo	Cord roping hanging from Kurigata that holds the Sageo to hakama himo.
Habaki	Metal sleeve (Blade collar) that fits over Machi
Tsuka	Handle of the sword. Pommel.
Tsuba	Handguard between Tsuka and the blade
Seppa	Washers between Tsuba and Habaki/Fuchi.
Kashira	Fitting on buttend of handle of the Tsuka.
Fuchi	Collar fitting on end of handle next to the Tsuba.
Tsuka-Ito	Silk, leather or cotton braid wrapping over Tsuka.
Same	Rayskin used to cover the wood of a Tsuka.
Menuki	Small decorative piece under the Tsuka-Ito.
Mekugi	Pin that holds the blade in the Tsuka.

Bogu (Armor worn for Kendo and Naginata)

Order as they are put on. Reverse order when removing.
Left–Right order putting on, Right–Left when removing.

Tare	Hip/groin protector
Do	Breastplate
Sune-ate	Shin protectors (greaves). Naginata only.
Tennugui	Head wrapping towel
Men	Helmet
Kote	Gloves (gauntlets)

Targets in Kendo and Naginata

Men	Head (center 90°)
Soku Men	Left or Right Side of the head-temple (45° from center)
Kote	Wrists/forearm
Do	Strike to side of breastplate.
Sune	Shins (Naginata only)
Uchi	Inside shin
Soto	Outside shin
Tsuki	Thrust to throat (Maidari-Throatguard of Men), upper chest or upper hip area