

Japanese Swordsmanship

Malcolm Tiki Shewan



Japanese Swordmanship – First edition,
April 2013

ISBN

Other

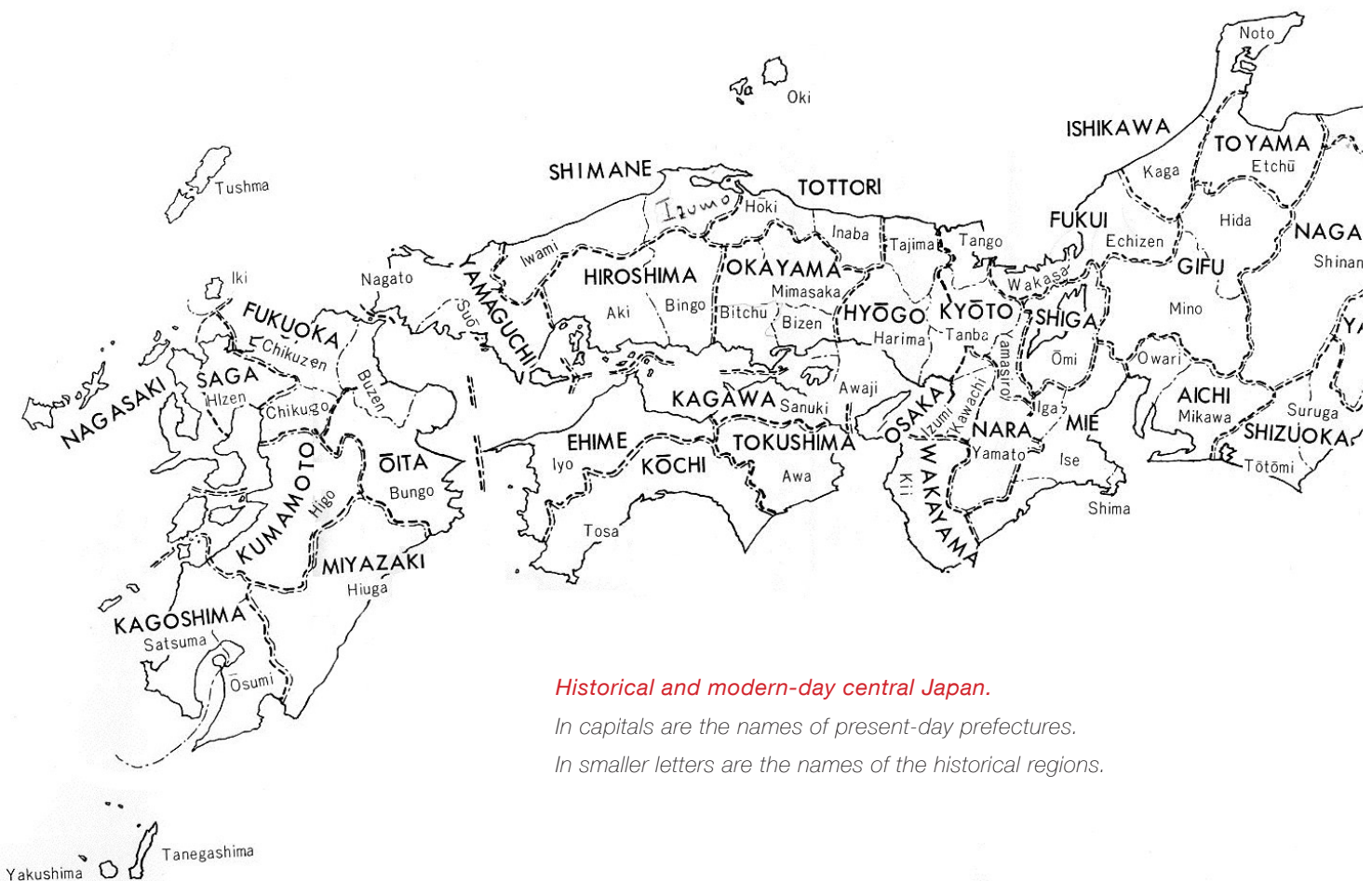


**Japanese
Swordsmanship**

Malcolm Tiki Shewan

Cédric Russo photos

Pascal Krieger Calligraphy/layout



Historical and modern-day central Japan.

In capitals are the names of present-day prefectures.

In smaller letters are the names of the historical regions.



*This book is dedicated to all those,
without exception,
who were kind enough
to pass on to me
their learning and knowledge.*

MTS

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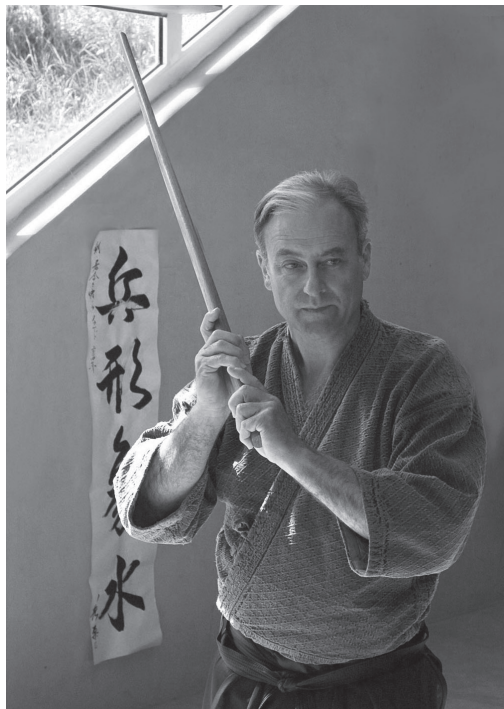
In memory of my old friend René van Droogenbroeck, VDB.

Preface

It has been quite a number of years since I first published my book on Japanese Swordsmanship. I feel that at the time, given the overall experience of most practitioners, it contained the basis of what they needed to know. It was written with the idea of furnishing a reference for those wishing to attain the level of *Sho-dan* according to the technical requirements of the European Iai Federation (EIF). In this sense I feel that it was a useful effort. Furthermore, it has been extremely gratifying to see how much the interest in *Ken* and *I-ai* has grown over these years and, more particularly, how much progress has been made by so many people in the practice and knowledge of these arts. It is with this in mind that I have taken a different approach in writing this book. Also, I would add that I feel that it should also be a reflection of the way that I, myself, see things 25 years or so later on in my life. Even though a river runs under a bridge it's never the same water. I like to think that we are in the current and moving along.

Without losing sight of something that I said in the Preface to my previous book: "The aim of a book is rather to serve as a sort of "aide-memoire" and in no way is it meant to replace learning with a qualified teacher and regular daily training. It may come as somewhat of a surprise to many to learn that in reality nothing can be 'learned' from a book." I have included numerous explanations and indications that will help better understand the practical movements. I will also be using a lot of Japanese vocabulary with which, I will assume, that the reader is familiar and, therefore, I will not make an immediate 'translation' in parenthesis ie. – *Ashi-sabaki* (foot movement) or *Ke-sa-giri* (diagonal cut), etc., etc. However, I will have a glossary of terms at the end of the book (Page 170) where definitions will be given as well as the Japanese characters for the terms where feasible*. So much of the

* The spelling of the Japanese words follows the Hepburn method normally used in English translation. The words begin with a capital letter and are slightly bolder and italicized. When the translation concerns two characters or more, the following characters are in small letters and linked to the first one with a hyphen. Except for the names of people, I indicated long vowels, like "Dô", the way (among many others), to distinguish it from "Do", earth (among many others).



understanding of a word or term is dependent on having a good grip on the varied meanings that a 'pictograph' can contain. A simple example can be found in the name "*Ik-kyô*" in Aikido where the two characters that make up the word are: "*Ich*" = one, unique, first, unity, and, "*Kyô*" = principle, fundamental law. As a word you can see immediately how it could have different nuances in translation. Attempting to pin one meaning (interpretation) on it can be sufficient but also limiting. Here we could see *Ik-kyô* as being the "first principle" (in a series where there were others), on the other hand we could see it as meaning 'the one principle' or the unique principle. Further, we could read it as "the principle of one/unity".

As may be seen the more one understands about Japanese calligraphy the richer becomes our understanding for interpretation, variations and nuances. I highly recommend the book "*Ten-Jin-Chi, or a Calligraphical Approach to Budô*" by Pascal Krieger. It is written in a trilingual edition (English, French and Spanish) and should be standard reading for all people interested in calligraphy and *Budô*.

I have incorporated in this work the entire technical curriculum of the EIF as far as the *I-ai* movements are concerned. Each movement will be introduced by the following commentaries:

- 1) *The name and pertinent information about its meaning as well as the Japanese character(s).*
- 2) *The general situation that is usually understood to be represented.*
- 3) *The general spirit behind the movement.*
- 4) *Details of interest. Some of these will be concrete and others will introduce ideas to think about.*

There is also an interesting aspect that one discovers in the learning process of most Japanese arts. There are many details that are taught or given out in the form of "hints" or subtle indications on a one-to-one basis. Some schools will refer to these elements as "*Hi-den*" or secret teachings. Everyone loves a secret and many people tend to misinterpret what is

meant here. Though there are sometimes technical aspects that are taught only to selected students within a school, many times things are taught this way in order that the practitioner will make a further effort to acquire a clear understanding of what things mean, could mean or meant before. This teaching aims at allowing the student to discover (through considerable effort on his part) the connections and relations which are not immediately apparent in the outward structure of the teaching. It is given entirely at the discretion of the teacher at a moment when he considers the student is in a receptive state. Sometimes this is referred to as *Omote-waza* and *Ura-waza*.

In this book the *Ken* will be treated only superficially and, thus, will be the subject of a further volume. It is quite vast and certainly merits being dealt with in greater depth than would be possible within the scope of this book.

I have also included at the end of certain movements a number of parallel or alternative details. Many movements may differ slightly from teacher to teacher. Sometimes for the student who is concerned with exactly what is the right and the wrong these differences can cause considerable confusion and discomfort. Some of these differences can also be quite striking and I have considered that it would be of interest to show or explain a few of them. I am not presenting them as alternatives that are to be mixed in to one's work indiscriminately. The main series of photos is the standard and coherent form to be doing but knowing other aspects only adds to the open mind of the practitioner. It will perhaps be instrumental in creating an

attitude that "nothing is engraved in stone".

Tameshi-giri, test-cutting with a sharp sword, has been somewhat controversial for a number of students and I feel that it would be good to treat the subject in the latter part of this book in order to clarify and simplify attitudes towards this aspect of practice.

There is also the subject of the *Nip-pon-tô* (appreciation and study of the Japanese sword as a work of art) which will not be gone into in depth. Again this is a vast subject and in the interim period many authoritative books on the subject have been published both in English and in French (and other languages, of course). I will try to include some references in the bibliography at the end. However, I would add here that it is an essential aspect of the overall study of the art of the sword and that I strongly feel every student should try to learn all he can on the subject.

As always, I sincerely hope that this book will be of value to those interested in the study of Japanese Swordsmanship.

Malcolm Tiki Shewan

December 2010

Clans, France



Légendes à venir de Tiki

Preface of the FEI/EIF President

This second book on *Iai* by Malcolm Tiki Shewan arrives almost thirty years after his first book. For some people this may seem a very long time, however, when you take into consideration the experience of the individual it appears natural. To transmit the art of physical movement in space (the ephemeral memory of a movement) allows one to perceive the difficulty of the task. To determine precisely when this search may be frozen in time by a 'printed medium' is not an easy decision to make. This work presents a vision of the practice of Japanese swordsmanship within a cultural context. But for those who know the author personally it is something more...

The person :

Malcolm Tiki Shewan was born on the 19th of May, 1951 in Somerville, NJ, USA. An America, modern and animated with the post-war dynamics. His education was highly influenced by his father and becomes a mosaic of travels and studies in varied countries and cultures (Great Britain, Switzerland, both East and Western America, Western Europe – France – the Orient – Japan – Sri Lanka....). With a gift for languages, Tiki has always been intensely interested in 'communication' between human beings and has always sought interesting exchanges through language.

His practice of Martial Arts began at about age 6 when the language of movement was discovered through training in western fencing and shortly after, the discipline of *Jûdô* and other combative arts. These soon became his major interest. At age 14 he began the practice of *Iai* then, at 18, Aikido and after that *Jo-dô* – at 28 – a serious apprenticeship in the forging of the Japanese sword. Inevitably he is given responsibilities within the groups and federations of these activities in recognition of his competence. In this manner he has always aimed at technical perfection imbued with a profound cultural search. The spirit of his path has always been for us a model of refer-



ence.

As a friend :

Ah yea! So here's that path that Martial Arts throws at us... Start on the road and explore in the company of others; share experiences, perceptions and discoveries – the good things and the hard knocks that Life presents us with... Living. Nothing really new in all that, of course, but 35 years leaves us enough time to appreciate truly with whom we travel the road. The study of *Budô* transforms every individual in one manner or another. With Tiki there's no question – he has within him a profound sense of humanity.

As an author :

He conforms to the image I have just sketched of him. The meticulousness of his own study explains of itself the care he has taken in his writing. I know that "freezing in time and on paper" the study of a living movement cannot be satisfactory for Tiki. This transposition is one more source for 'work on oneself'.

Does this book symbolize a 'life work'? Does this publication represent an end? By no means, I assure you – it is a snapshot of an on-going and 'living' search. It is a reference work for members of the EIF as well as for anyone interested by the of the Japanese sword and/or more particularly, *Musô Shinden Ryû*. This book is 30 years of work and friendship for all those who have participated in its creation – Each one with many years of experience and knowledge in various other martial arts with a common interest in transmitting their knowledge. Thusly, I recommend it to you.

Today, as president of the EIF, I am happy for this book is the image of our federation. It presents a serious study of the universal aspects in the discipline of the sword. In this manner it constitutes an important technical compliment for our members and I am sure to the joy of its author it will open new directions and horizons for its readers.

With gratitude,

Dominique Pierre

President of the European Iai Federation

Preface from the General Secretary of the FEI/EIF

“

What the hell are you doing with that chinese sword!”

This humorous exclamation – which was uttered with a strong accent issuing from the remote Swiss mountain region – came from a man who had stumbled accidentally upon a lone ‘laidoka’ practicing one beautiful august morning within the confines of a meadow where this patriotic swiss ‘man of the land’ too was busy scything the taller grass. The ‘laidoka’ in question replied that this was not a ‘chinese sword’ but rather a sword whose origins were Japanese.

“Well I’ll be..., and there are people who do that stuff here in our Switzerland?”, he uttered, his eyes opening as wide and round as those of the observant bovines standing about also in a state of perplexity since sun-up.

“Well, yes there are” I answered. “Not only that but there exists a European Federation that brings together adepts from all over....” I doubt very much that I was able to satisfy his curiosity with my explanations. Nonetheless he continued to greet me every morning with a joyous “Howdy, Mr. Samurai!”

This incident comes to mind now when I have been asked to write a preface for this book by M. Tiki Shewan and I can hear other similar experiences echoing in my memories from the thirty plus years that I have known Tiki and that time when I first performed *Sho-hat-to* under his guidance. Considering the number of members that are listed in the European lai Federation (FEI/EIF) – that is to say, 1300 at the writing of these lines – I find myself somewhat sympathetic to our mountain man’s interrogative state of mind: What is it that we seek as practitioners of the art of lai? What is our underlying quest in the practice of this discipline which is codified, traditional and somewhat ritualised?

Most certainly this search remains fundamentally personal and specific to each practitioner. However, I would risk adventuring that a common point to all deals with the ‘creation of a center of gravity’ and the concentration of our existence. In this world filled with so much ‘explosion’ and ‘dispersion’ it is the trajectory of the *Kis-saki* which, both in reality and symbolically, brings us to the realization of the essential simplicity of things. This truth manifests itself in technique and essentially technique is nothing in and of itself.



The individuals who founded the FEI in 1979 were imminently perspicacious. In the Statutes they put forward the following definition: “the study of *I-ai* is that of a discipline both moral and physical”. They chose *Musô Shinden Ryû* as a reference school while, at the same time, maintaining a healthy recognition of the existence of a great diversity of styles and schools. They stated their aim as “preserving the values of the classical *Bu-dô* which are an integral part of lai”, particularly by prohibiting any idea of competition and in maintaining its inherent character as a “*Dô*”. Since these beginnings the guiding members of the FEI have worked unceasingly to maintain, with-

out concession, a high technical standard in spite of the considerable growth of the Federation (At this time, 16 countries in Europe and many groups elsewhere). It is, indeed, an extraordinary fact, among its other virtues, that the FEI was able to bring together so many men and women in a unified spirit of practice despite the diversity of nationalities, language, culture and political and religious convictions.

To define this ‘Spirit’ remains illusive, particularly when addressing those who do not practice “The Way of the Sword”. At first non-practitioners usually see what may be called “*Satsu Jin Tô*” (The Sword that Kills). But what words can serve to describe the true ‘transcendence of violence’ or the futility in the belief that “might is right” or our swollen egocentric illusion of our own technical competence? Notwithstanding, these are some of the concepts that the ‘practice of the sword’ brings to Life (*Katsu Jin Ken*), and we are given a rare chance to put into practice these philosophical values.

This is very much the spirit towards which the teaching of Tiki Shewan *Sensei* leads us – class after class; seminar after seminar. His kindness, sense of humor, tranquility, assurance, wisdom and insistence on the quality of the learning experience are the characteristics of a true teacher (*Sensei*). May this book widely reflect and promote this spirit... And may each and everyone of us contribute when it is our turn, modestly and precisely the transmission of that which we have received from our *Sensei* and others who “came before”.

Jean-Marc Spothelfer

General Secretary of the FEI/EIF

About the Nippon-tô

The sword was not the first or most ancient weapon used by the warriors of Japan but it certainly came to be the most important. It was the instrument that permitted their race to occupy the whole of the archipel and, very much for that reason, it came to be a symbol of their position both socially and politically. In 1588 a law was created that even stipulated that only the *Bu-shi* was allowed to possess this weapon and, indeed, the upper ranks were distinguished by the carrying of two swords. This endured until the *Hai-tô-rei* of 1876.

The *Nip-pon-tô* is considered the soul of the *Bu-shi* (*Katana wa Bushi no tamashi de aru*). During the period that the ruling warrior/aristocracy dominated Japan, it was the symbol of everything that he represented and he was never without it: he lived by it, and he died by it. Further, it allied his whole being, in the most intimate way possible, to the question of life and death. He was faced with the necessity of transcending the ordinary concept of life and death and this state of mind was referred to as "*Sei-shi wo chô-etsu*". It was this paradox which brought about a change of inner attitude and gave to the sword a double purpose: the external one of cutting down that which opposed the will of its owner, and the internal one of cutting through the Ego of the owner himself, and thus enabling him to attain a spiritual awakening. Thusly the sword came to symbolise moral qualities such as Loyalty, Self-Sacrifice, Honor, Sincerity, Justice and Courage.

However, the earliest examples do not resemble the *Nip-pon-tô* familiar to us today. Metal working, forging and iron making were known in Japan about two centuries before the christian era. In the dolmens and stone crypts dating from the Kofun-Bunka (period from 400 B.C. – 700 A.D.) iron implements including swords have been uncovered. They are all straight and have angled points. This technology is thought to have been brought to Japan from China and Korea. Some experts maintain that it came to the Orient from the Near East (ie. Luristan, etc.) probably through overland communications made possible by routes such as what we know today as the "Silk Road".

In the Shoso-in depository there are a number of these ancient swords preserved along with records pertaining to their age.

These swords are known as *Jo-ko-tô*. However, inspection of their *Ji-hada* shows that they were forged in much the same manner as later *Nip-pon-tô*.



Sei-shi wo Chô-etsu

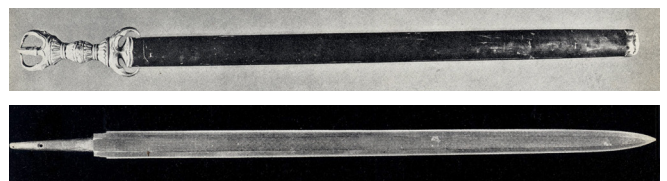
They show forging, folding of the steel and differing hardness of the steel. Their temper lines are *Sugu-ha* of nie crystals as one finds in later Yamato works.

This metallurgical knowledge was further developed and refined over time becoming a unique set of techniques, each known individually elsewhere, applied together to create the *Nip-pon-tô* that has been in existence since roughly the late Heian period to the early Kamakura period (1100-1232).

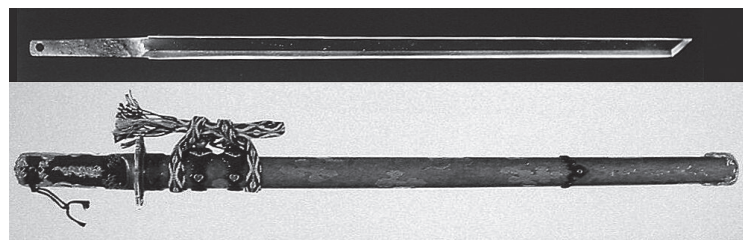
The first honor goes to a smith named Amakuni. There is some argument as to when exactly he lived, dates vary from 700 A.D. (end of the Kofun-Bunka) to 900 A.D.

The legend goes that:

"Amakuni and his son, Amakura, were standing at the entrance of their smithy, watching the Emperor's warriors coming home from battle. Contrary to previous occasions, the Emperor did not give any salutation to Amakuni. He then noticed that a great number of the returning warriors had broken their swords in the battle."



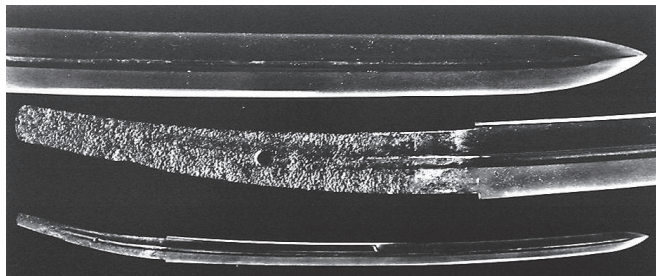
Tsurugi



Jo-kotô (Suiryû)

Thus Amakuni and Amakura checked the remaining parts of the swords. He concluded that the forging had been poorly executed and consequently under the stress of combat they had broken. He and his son worked day and night and prayed to the gods. Thirty days later, Amakuni and his son had forged a single-edged sword with curvature. The legend says that it stood the test of battle successfully."

Amakuni's exact birth and death remain a mystery in spite of the apparent survival of the story. Further, legend has it that one of his swords survives. It is known as the "Kogarasu Maru". This blade, albeit double-edged part of its length, shows the early curved form such as could have been made by Amakuni. This sword constitutes a transitional example of sword evolution.



Kogarasu Maru



Yasutsuna

After the legend of Amakuni, we have the surviving examples of Yasutsuna of Hoki province (after 806-810) and of other smiths such as Sanjo Munechika (and his school) of Yamashiro province, the smiths of the Ko-Bizen tradition and others from

Kyushu (Satsuma, Buzen and Chikugo provinces). These smiths were working in the late Heian period and early Kamakura periods.

Yasutsuna's most famous blade (others exist) is known as the "Dôji-giri" and possibly dates from sometime in the early part of the Heian period. Compared with the Amakuni legend, this is a much more precise example indicating when the Japanese sword took on the form that we can truly recognize as *Nippon-tô*. Even though many technical changes were made according to the times and the smith's skill, the overall shape of the blade has remained the same since and this is what we still refer to as the *Nippon-tô* today.

It is said that there were roughly over 37,000 smiths that made weapons between 800 and 1876. Not to mention that there were many working from the Meiji Restoration up until the end of WWII making swords for the Japanese armed forces and then again after 1953. Presently the number of active swordsmiths in Japan, working with the traditional methods, is over 300.

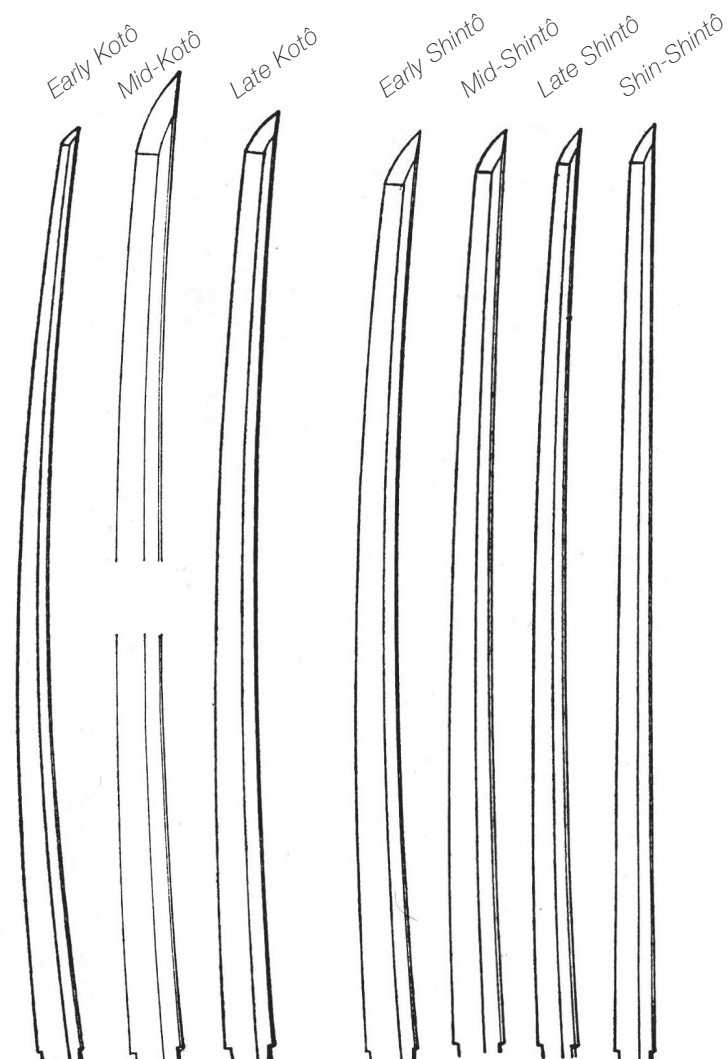
* In about 1500 we know there were roughly 300 important warrior families and each one retained its own militia. Further, it is stated historically that the population of Japan by 1600 stood at somewhere around 12,000,000 and in 1720 it rose to around 31,000,000. It is estimated that the *Bu-shi* varied from about 6%–8% of the total population at any given time. The demand for swords is obviously a factor affecting production numbers.

This represents quite a number of smiths but by playing with some numbers, we can get a rough idea of the volume of swords that possibly was produced. We should keep in mind though that production varied considerably in times of war or peace. *

Smiths could produce only a few masterpieces but their workshops could supply many blades per month. For example, if we make a conservative calculation based on only 5 blades a month for each smith between 800 and 1876 (and considering a generation to be 15-20 years) we get a potential huge number of swords. I'll let the reader play with the numbers himself but my point here is that the metallurgical technology and knowledge had an extremely favorable climate for refinement and development. It is no wonder then that the *Nippon-tô* came to be considered the finest bladed weapon ever made.

In the beginning, smiths and their schools would locate themselves in propitious places. Notably, important military centres where demand was high. Locations that could also provide raw materials such as charcoal and iron ore were also chosen.

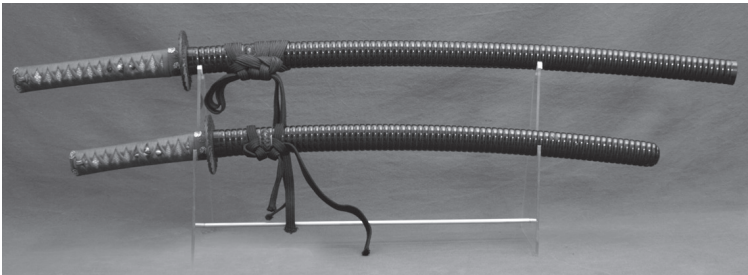
Historically, there were five main schools that came into being in the **koto period**. They, in turn, influenced other schools of smiths in other regions and knowledge was disseminated by way of the 8 major thoroughfares of the time.



The evolution of sword forms throughout Japanese history.

The five schools are called the *Go-ka-den* and we are looking at the Koto period between 987 and 1596. These schools are identified today according to the geographical areas in which they once worked:

- **Yamato** (present Nara area)
- **Yamashiro** (modern Kyoto area)
- **Bizen** (present Okayama)
- **Sagami** (Soshu) (Kamakura region)
- **Mino** (Sekai) (modern Gifu Prefecture)



A *Dai-shô* in the author's collection. Both blades were forged by the famous Osaka Shinto smith named Tsuda Sukenao (died c. 1693). The *Shô-tô* is signed in his "square" script and the *Dai-tô* is signed in his rounded manner indicating that it was made later in his life. The *Tsuba* are Myochin and the *Fuchi-kashira* and *Me-nuki* in the Goto style.

The swordmakers of these schools produced about eighty percent (80%) of all the swords of that period. Each of the "Five Traditions" had its own style and combination of techniques, which resulted in unique developments and refinements in the forging and tempering of their swords.

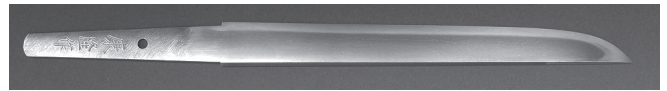
In the latter part of the Koto period there was a time from 1467-1568 of constant warfare. Needless to say, sword production was at a high pitch, however, mass production has never promoted higher quality. Another important change that was seen at the beginning of the Muromachi Period was the appearance of *Uchi-gatana* and the style of wearing it. The *Uchi-gatana* was thrust through the belt with the cutting edge upward (*Tachi* were slung from the belt with the cutting edge towards the ground). Wearing *Katana* (a long sword with a length over 60 cm.) and *Waki-zashi* (a sword with a length of 30-60 cm.) became the formal style of samurai just before the advent of the Edo period.

Further the changes of fighting style influenced the appearance of *Katana* and its style of being worn. Also the introduction of muskets by Portuguese in 1543 had a great impact on the sword.

In 1596 Japan was edging closer to unification which was finalized after the battle of Sekigahara in 1600, where the armies loyal to Hideyori Toyotomi confronted the forces of Tokugawa Ieyasu. This battle involved more than 170,000 men and there were more than 40,000 deaths. Tokugawa was victorious after a very unpredictable 24 hours of combat and an era of peace for the nation was ushered in, lasting until the Meiji Restoration.

This new period in swordmaking is called the **Shinto period**. New living conditions – peace, greater communications and commerce, more cosmopolitan environment, etc. gave new parameters to the swordsmiths.

Here it is important to remember that the production of mass produced steel began in the **Muromachi period** so that the individual smiths no longer had to produce their own steel. Also the long period of war (c.100 years) prior to this era meant that much knowledge was lost.



Shin-saku-tô. Tan-tô made by Ono Kanemasa.

The next period in sword history is the Shin-Shinto period. It is considered that this began in 1781 and was strongly promoted by the master smith Suishinshi Masahide. He noted that Shinto swords with a "Hade" style (very large and garish) *Ha-mon* tended to break. Masahide felt it was necessary to eschew the artistic tendency that concentrated on the esthetic beauty of the blade and return to the original practical function of *Nip-pon-tô*. His new theory was called "*Fuk-ko-tô*". The aim was to recapture the practical excellence of the Heian and Kamakura period swords. He wrote about his ideas in a book entitled "Token Ritsuyo Ron". Masahide died in 1825, as did his son coincidentally, but his school carried on due to the many students he had attracted to his work. The Shin-Shinto period came to an end with the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the *Hai-tô-rei* (law forbidding the carrying of swords).

After this, the demand for swords dropped considerably and many smiths turned to making other items. The swords that were made were known as *Gen-dai-tô*. It was mostly for the armed forces (particularly WWII) that swordsmiths could find work. Comparatively few blades of high quality were produced in this time because the emphasis was on mass production to boost the fighting spirit of Japan's troops.

When Japan was occupied at the end of WWII a total ban on swordsmithing was enforced. Through the efforts of a few men this ban was lifted in 1953. Once more quality blades were produced and were given the designation: *Shin-saku-tô* or *Shin-gen-dai-tô* – newly made blades. These blades carry on the swordmaking tradition today and are considered works of art.

Kenjutsu and Iaijutsu

The primary purpose of the sword was its use in combat. It is, therefore, not surprising to note that the forging of the sword evolved in perfect harmony with the different methods of handling it. Combative techniques and styles required different characteristics from the sword. In times of war swords were made stronger, heavier and more resistant to battlefield conditions (*Sen-jō ken-jutsu*). If full armor was worn by the adversary (*Ka-chū ken-pō*) greater curvature was needed. When life became more metropolitan (*Su-hada ken-jutsu*) after 1600 swords became shorter and less curved. When a technique called for a strong blocking action to the left side the smith would reinforce the blade accordingly. Still and all, the swords always maintained esthetic quality combined with combative robustness. This is one of the basic principles of all Japanese art – combining both beauty and usefulness.

The use of the sword was initiated under two principal headings :

- 1) KEN-JUTSU
- 2) I-AI-JUTSU



Ken-jutsu (Carisolo, Italy, 2005).

It is through the study of these two practices that one can perhaps best understand and appreciate the basic Spirit of the Martial Arts of Japan.

In general, from the time of Amakuni up until the Haitorei (1876) it is thought that there existed more than 2000 different schools of swordsmanship (*Ken-jutsu*), each with its own principles and theory: and as to the corollary art of drawing the sword (*lai-jutsu*) these numbers of schools would seem exaggerated, but when one examines it more closely, it becomes evident that many schools were most likely short-lived (ie. the life of the founder-however long that might have been), and that many others were branch schools which developed from the more well-known schools. Generally speaking, in those days, a school either proved itself immediately effective or it was quickly abandoned.

Ken-jutsu is the method of handling a sword once it is drawn and out of the scabbard. It is what is generally known as classical swordsmanship proper. It was this aspect which was considered to be, by far, the most important aspect of the two and it was here, that the greatest emphasis was placed in the training of a swordsman.

During the course of its history, *Ken-jutsu* was called by various names according to the fashion of the times, or, according to the varied philosophical or political propensity inherent in a particular school. It was called *Hei-hō*, *Kem-pō*, *Tō-hō*, *Gek-ken*, *Hyo-dō*, *Tō-jutsu*, *Tachi-uchi*, and so on. However, *Ken-jutsu* is now the most widely used term to designate the art of classical swordsmanship.

Iai-jutsu is, specifically, the art of drawing the sword and making an effective cut, in one and the same motion. Because of the rapidity with which one could unleash an attack, *Iai-jutsu* came to occupy an important position in swordsmanship, though secondary to that of *Ken-jutsu*. The development of *Iai*, or *Battō-jutsu*, is generally attributed today to Hayashizaki Jinsuke Shigenobu, but the fact that he lived in the late 16th. and early 17th. centuries would make it seem inordinately late for the discovery of such an important technical advantage.

There is an important evolution that takes place in Japanese warrior history which is of interest here. *Tachi* and *Tan-tō* (*Koshi-gatana*) had been the standard swords for *Bushi* (warriors) from the earliest times. The *Tachi* was hung from the belt with the edge toward the ground. (There was also the *Ō-dachi* (or *Se-oi-dachi*) of the Nambokucho Period (1334-1393) which was carried slung across the back). This

way of wearing the *Tachi* evolved to the more practical style of the *Uchi-gatana* beginning in the mid-Muromachi period (c.1467-1554). By the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1576-1600) *Uchi-gatana* were worn as a pair with the edge upwards inserted directly into the sash. It is evident that this manner of carrying the sword would make *Nuki-uchi* a logical development. This remained the style that was worn up until the Meiji Restoration.

Thus, it is safer to conclude that *lai* had already been in existence for an indeterminate period of time, prior to Hayashizaki Jinsuke, and that it developed in conjunction with the various styles of *Ken-jutsu* and that it was Jinsuke who became its principal innovator and his efforts in this field made the real value of the quickdraw known on a wider scale than ever before.

lai-jutsu, likewise, was also called by various different names throughout its existence: *Batto-jutsu*, *Saya no uchi*, *Tachi-uchi*, *Nuki-uchi*, *Nuki-waza*, *Battô*, *Battô-hô*, *Batto-dô*, and *lai-dô*. *laijutsu* therefore remains a distinct and yet a complementary practice to *Ken-jutsu* in most schools.

Schools of swordsmanship

The following succinct summary is probably a more functional classification for study than it is historically precise. It would seem more a reflection on the fact that when someone was “on to a good thing” in a specialized field there was not an infinite variety of ways to accomplish the same activity when taking its global principle into account. “As one descends from the mountaintop there become available more and more choices of paths”. There exist other classifications according to different authors and different studies (ie. there is the geographical affiliation system – the Eight Western Schools (Kansai (Kyo) Hachi Ryû) and the Seven Eastern Schools (Kantô Shichi Ryû). And, of course, there were family traditions or teachings (*Ka-den*) in existence before the documented period here below.

According to reliable historians swordsmanship was developed through the following main schools or traditions (Sandai Gen Ryû): the Nen Ryû tradition, (part of the Kansai Hachi Ryû) the Shintô Ryû tradition, (part of the Kantô Shichi Ryû), the Kage Ryû tradition. The Nen Ryû tradition would seem to be the oldest and gave rise to the Chûjô tradition, which, in turn, gave rise to many major schools. Below is a list of some of the more well-known schools.

Keep in mind that these traditions were not limited only to the sword in their curriculum but that they studied the important weapons that a warrior of the time needed to be familiar with: *Yari*, *Naginata*, *Yumi*, Long-sword (*Dai-tô*), Short-sword (*Sho-tô*), Two-swords (*Ni-tô*), Special weapons (ie. *Kusarigama*, *Bô*), Grappling (*Yoroi-Kumi-uchi*, *Ko-gu-soku*), Horse-riding, Swimming, Strategy, Fortifications,

Troop deployment, Signals and communications, etc. This is known as *Sô-gô Bu-dô*. This is a very cursory listing and many more existed over the course of Japanese history.

Nen Ryû is said to have been founded at an early period by a Zen Monk called Nen Ami Jion. This school, originally located in the southern part of today's Nagano Prefecture is said to have been founded in about 1368. At one time, it was considered quite an important school in the history of Japanese classical swordsmanship and it is said to have been an important influence on other schools, most notably the Chûjô line. Today, there is still in existence, the Maniwa Nen Ryû, officially founded by Higuchi Matashichiro in 1591. Other schools descended from the Nen Ryû were:

- Tsutsumi Hozan Ryû of Tsutsumi Yamashiro no Kami Hozan c. 1400
- The Nikaido Ryû of Nikaido Umanosuke (one of Nen Jion's students)

Chûjô Ryû whose precise dates are not known, but it is generally agreed that the school was founded between 1390-1430 by Chûjô Nagahide. Below is a list of schools related or issuing from Chûjô influence.

- The Toda Ryû of Toda Kurozaemon Nagaie
- The Kanemaki Ryû of Kanemaki Jisai Michiie (founded C. 1596-1615)
- The Gan Ryû of Sasaki Kojiro (founded C. 1596-1615)
- The Ittô Ryû of Ittosai Kagehisa (founded C. 1596-1615)
- Ono-ha Ittô Ryû of Ono Jiroemon Tadaaki
- Nakanishi Ittô Ryû



- The Hokushin Ittô Ryû of Chiba Shusaku (1794-1855)
- The branch schools of the Ittô Ryû (of which there were 8 or 10, which I will not enumerate here)
- The Tomita Ryû
- The Mutô Ryû of Yamaoka Tesshu
- The Shinkyoku Ryû of Hasegawa Soki (active C. 1568-1595)

Shintô Ryû

The founder of the Shintô Ryû tradition was Iizasa Choisai Ienao (1387-1488) and the full name of the school is “Tenshin Shoden Katori Shintô Ryû”.

The following styles of schools evolved in close relation to the Shintô Ryû tradition :

- The Kashima lineage of Tsukahara Tosa-no-kami Yasumoto
- Kashima Shin Ryu of Matsumoto Bizen no Kami Kii no Masamoto (1468?-1524?)
- Kashima Shinden Jiki Shinkage Ryû of Yamada Mitsunori Ippusai (1638-1713)
- The Kashima Shintô Ryû of Tsukahara Bokuden (1490-1571) (see also Kage Ryû)
- The Tendô Ryû of Saito Denkibo
- Tennen Rishin Ryû of Kondo Kuranosuke Nagamichi (c.1790)
- The Honma Ryû of Honma Kageyuzaemon Masayoshi
- The Arima Shintô Ryû of Arima Motonobu (Genshin),
- The Mijin Ryû of Negishi Tokaku
- The Jigen Ryû of Togo Shigekura
- The Hozoin Ryû of Hozoin Inei
- The Ippa Ryû of Morooka Ippasai Kagehisa
- The Icchu Ryû of Baichuken Icchu
- The Tenshin Sho Ryû of Kimura Yaheiji Nyudo
- The Shindô Munen Ryû of Fukui Yoshihara (c. 1750)

and other less well-known schools. It is also maintained that this lineage influenced Shintô Musô Ryû Jôjutsu of Musô Gon-no-Suke Katsukichi.

Kage Ryû

The founder of the Kage Ryû tradition was Aizu Hyuga-no-Kami Iko (1452-1538). The Aizu Kage Ryû gave birth to the following schools :

- The Shinkage Ryû of Ise-no-Kami Nobutsuna (c. 1520-1577)
- The Yagyu Shinkage Ryû of Yagyu Tajima-no-Kami Muneyoshi (C. 1527-1606)

- The Yagyu Ryû (which evolved from the above)
- The Taisha Ryû of Marume Kurando (1540-1629)
- The Shinnuki Ryû of Okuyama Tadanobu (developed from Taisha Ryû)
- Mujushinken Ryû of Harigaya Sekiun (1593-1662)
- Shin Shinkage Ryû of Ogasawara Genshinsai
- The Hikita Kage Ryû of Hikita Bungoro Kageyasu (founded 1536-1605)
- The Okuyama Ryû of Okuyama Kimishige (1525-1602)

The following were influenced by Kage Ryû Tradition :

- The Kashima Shinto Ryû of Tsukahara Bokuden
- The Kashima Shinden Jiki-Shinkage Ryû of Matsumoto Bizen-no-Kami (c. 1500) and Yamada Mitsunori Ippusai
- The Kashima Shin Ryû of Kunii Genpachirô Kagetsugu and Matsumoto Bizen-no-Kami (c. 1500).

Many schools came to have multiple influences to the point that it is hard to ascertain what lineage they are.

Also, outside of these main traditions there existed a number of schools which had a legitimate character of their own even though they were usually influenced more or less by the above traditions. Some examples are:

- The Kurama Ryû of Ono Shogen (Momoyama period).
- The Tatsumi Ryû of Tatsumi Sankyo in Ehime (founded c. 1504-1521).
- The Kyoshin Meichi Ryû of Momoi Naoshi (founded c. 1773)
- Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645) developed the Niten-Ichi Ryû (Emmei Ryû) tradition. And his writing “Gorin no Sho*” is standard reading for students of *Bu-dô*.

A school of swordsmanship, centered on sword-drawing, was founded in the early Edo period (c. 1601-1615). It is of particular interest here, since it is the subject of this book, the school of Hayashizaki Jinsuke Shigenobu.* It is based on a method of quickly drawing and simultaneously cutting with the sword. He called his method *Bat-tô-jutsu*. Hayashizaki Jinsuke’s school became rapidly popular. It exercised an important influence upon swordsmen and it was instrumental in the founding of many other schools of *I-ai* throughout Japan.

* It should be noted, however, that the school of Iizasa Choisai, the Katori Shintô Ryû, included earlier documented sword drawing techniques. Further, the existence of the *Uchi-gatana* as a popular weapon in the latter half of the Muromachi period would have encouraged the development of sword-drawing techniques at an earlier period than that of Hayashizaki Jinsuke.

Musô Shinden Ryû

The founder of what has come to us today as the Musô Shinden Ryû, was a man named Hojo Jinsuke Shigenobu, or, Hayashizaki Jinsuke Shigenobu. His life is rather obscure, and many stories have arisen concerning this man. Some accounts say that he was born in the province of Sagami (Sôshu), others say in the province of Dewa, somewhere in the mid-sixteenth century (1540-1550). It is said that he later lived in the province of Mutsu in the northern part of Japan. There is no known proof of how expert a swordsman he was, but he did study swordsmanship intensively from about 1596-1601, and, thereafter, devised a series of sword-drawing techniques, called *Battô-jutsu*, which was called by various different names such as: *Junpaku Den*, *Hayashizaki Ryû*, *Shin Musô Hayashizaki Ryû*, *Shigenobu Ryû*, etc.

We know, also that he made a tour of Japan in *Mu-sha-Shû-gyô* fashion, and that, at that time, he attracted many disciples to his system. The exact techniques that he taught remain as obscure as his own life, but it is more or less agreed that they must have been relatively simple, practical, and highly combative, in their essence.

It is said that in 1616 at the age of 73, he made a second tour of Japan, during which, he disappeared. Under his influence, many different *I-ai* schools emerged as is shown in the geneological tree (see pages 21 to 23)

After his death, the tradition of the Shinmusô Hayashizaki Ryû was carried on by Tamiya Taira-no-Hyoe Narimasa who, it is said, was teacher to Tokugawa Ieyasu, Hidetada and Iemitsu. This fact would most certainly have contributed to the popularity of this style. He created his own lineage of teaching which is still in existence today – the Tamiya Ryû. This would seem to be an important moment in the history of Musô Shinden Ryû so let us look at a few details.

Tamiya Ryû Iaijutsu was the result of a cooperative effort together with Katayama Hôki no kami Hisayasu (the founder of Hôki Ryû) and Sekiguchi Jushin (the founder of Sekiguchi Ryû). These men were all pupils of Hayashizake Jinsuke Shigenobu.

Tamiya Heibei Narimasa was in the service of Dai-nagon Yorinobu of Kishu Province and his teaching was known as Kishu Tamiya Ryû. In February of 1670, the second son of Yorinobu, Matsudaira Yozumi, while acting as the ruler of the Iyo region brought Tamiya Ryû to Saijo Province. In 1797, Tsumaki Junjiro Motoya inherited Tamiya Ryû. From that time onwards the teaching has been in the Tsumaki family. The 14th generation Headmaster was

Tsumaki Seirin who recently passed away. The school is presently under the direction of Tsumaki Kazuo.

The Shinmusô Hayashizaki Ryû teaching line was carried on and Tamiya Narimasa was followed by:

- Nagano Murakusai Kinro, 3rd *Sôke*. This man also created a separate school of his own – Muraku Ryû.
- Momo Gumbei Mitsushige, 4th *Sôke*
- Arikawa Shozaemon Munetsugu, 5th *Sôke*
- Manno Danuemon Nobusada, 6th *Sôke*, it is said he had a very strong influence on the 7th *Sôke*.

The 7th *Sôke* was Hasegawa Chikara no Suke Eishin. He studied Shinmusô Hayashizaki Ryû under Nobusada, in Edo, during the Kyoho period (1716-1735), and he gained the reputation of being an exceptionally highly skilled swordsman. It is said that he transformed many techniques, and that it was he, who devised the style, where techniques were performed with the cutting-edge upwards in the *Obi*. He took his style back to the province of Tosa and called it Eishin Ryû.

- Arai Seitatsu Kiyonobu, 8th *Sôke* took the elements contributed by Hasegawa Eishin and incorporated them into the main teaching curriculum. The line was then known as the Jinsuke-Eishin Ryu and remained located in Edo.

The ninth *Sôke* Hayashi Rokudayu Morimasa (1661-1732) was a vassal of Yamanouchi Toyomasa, 4th *Hanshu* (chief of a province), and while living in Edo, he studied Eishin Ryû *I-ai* under the eighth *Sôke* Arai Seitatsu. He also studied Shinkage Ryu under the direction of Omori Rokuro Saemon Masamitsu. This man had devised a method of *I-ai*, which was practiced from the seiza position (*Za-shiki*), and he taught it to Hayashi Morimasa, who later incorporated it into the curriculum. This is what is known today as **Shoden Omori Ryû**.

- Hayashi Yasudayu Seisho, 10th *Sôke*. (died 1776). He was the adopted son of Morimasa.
- Oguro Motoemon Kiyokatsu, 11th *Sôke* (died 1790).

After the eleventh *Sôke*, there is a split in the teachings caused by political issues and the fact that he had two highly skilled students who developed their own styles. After his death the *Ryû* split into two *Ryû-ha*: Tanimura-ha (Tosa) and Shimomura-ha (the names of the two disciples).

Afterwards the whole question of tracing lineage becomes very foggy indeed.

Later the 17th *Sōke* of the Tanimura-ha, Oe Masamichi (1852-1927) made efforts to reunite the teachings of the Shimomura-ha and Tanimura-Ha branches. He learned both the Tanimura and the Shimomura-Ha. He was, for a time, the 15th generation *Sōke* of the Shimomura-Ha while being the 17th generation *Sōke* of the Tanimura-Ha. Oe Masamichi officially gave the Tanimura branch a new name – Muso Jikiden Eishen Ryū.

However, the present situation shows that he did not quite get things together again. This was largely due to disagreement over the choice of the next *Sōke* after his death. However, it is generally considered that Hokiya Namio was the 18th *Sōke* followed by Fukui Harumasa as the 19th *Sōke*.

Nonetheless, this is a confusing period and we see significant technical variations in the multiple branches (ha) that came into being. It is an on-going research to try to sort out precise information, particularly technical differences for these later periods. And it is quite certain that many new elements will be found that will change our vision of things.

Nakayama Hakudō

The 16th *Sō-ke* of the Shimomura-Ha, was Nakayama Hakudo (c.1873 - 1958) *Sensei*. He studied Jinsuke-Eishin Ryū in the province of Tosa, under the direction of Hosokawa Yoshimasa, 15th, *Sōke* of the Shimomura-Ha and Morimoto Tokumi of the Tanimura-Ha. It is said that he worked considerably with Oe Masamichi, 17th *Sō-ke* of Tanimura-Ha, to codify and classify the techniques of the teachings. However, we know that Nakayama Hakudo was not accepted to study with Oe Masamichi because the school was only taught to the people of Tosa and he was born in Kanazawa in the Prefecture of Ishikawa.

For example, Nakayama Hakudo elaborated a twelfth movement (*In-yō-shintai-kaete*) to the Ōmori series of *Kata*, and Oe Masamichi Shikei renamed them and codified them as the *Sho-den* series. The *Oku-den* series was standardized to eight techniques in *Tate-hiza* and thirteen in *Tachi-waza* that are practiced today in both Muso Shinden and Muso Jikiden Eishin lines. In fact, it is largely due to their work that the teachings are divided into 3 levels: **Shoden**, **Chūden** and **Okuden**.

Hosokawa (Gisho) Yoshimasa, the fifteenth headmaster of the Jinsuke-Eishin line (Shimomura-ha), named Nakayama Hakudo the sixteenth and last undisputed successor headmaster of the Jinsuke-Eishin line in Shimomura-Ha.

Nakayama Hakudo *Sensei* also studied Shindō Munen Ryū when he was young under Shingoro Negishi and achieved a very high rank in this school in Tokyo where he lived. Among his many accomplishments he attained a *Men-kyo Kai-den* in Shintō Musō Ryū Jōdō and is said (in the 1930's) to have been the

creator of the Toyama Ryū (Sword curriculum of the Toyama Military Academy). He was also highly influential in the creation of the All Japan Kendō Federation after the war. He held a *Jū-dan* and was *Han-shi* in this discipline. He was close friends with many of the most influential *Bu-dō* masters of the period which included Ueshiba Morihei, founder of *Ai-ki-dō*. Through this relationship he arranged the marriage of Nakakura Kiyoshi and Ueshiba's daughter, Matsuko. And, in his turn, he trained many of the top sword exponents of the day in his Yushinkan Dōjō near Kōrakuen in Tokyo.

In 1933 Nakayama adopted the name **Musō Shinden Ryū Battō-jutsu** (later **Musō Shinden Ryū Iaidō**) for his teachings, and they steadily grew in popularity, thanks to his own unceasing efforts and the steady devotion of his disciples.



Here are some pictures of Nakayama Hakudo performing, on each side of a formal portrait, *Uki-gumo* (above left) and *Sho-hat-tō* (above right) and giving us a nice smile (right).

The picture below is a very interesting photo (see the original caption under the picture). Though he is not named in the legend Nakayama Hakudo is seated the second from the left in the front row. I believe that he and the man third from the left next to him are sword teachers and testers involved in the *Nihonto Denshū-Jo* founded in Tokyo (Akasaka-ku) on July 5th 1933 by Kurihara Hikosaburo.

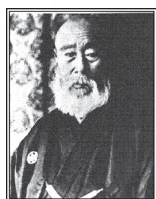
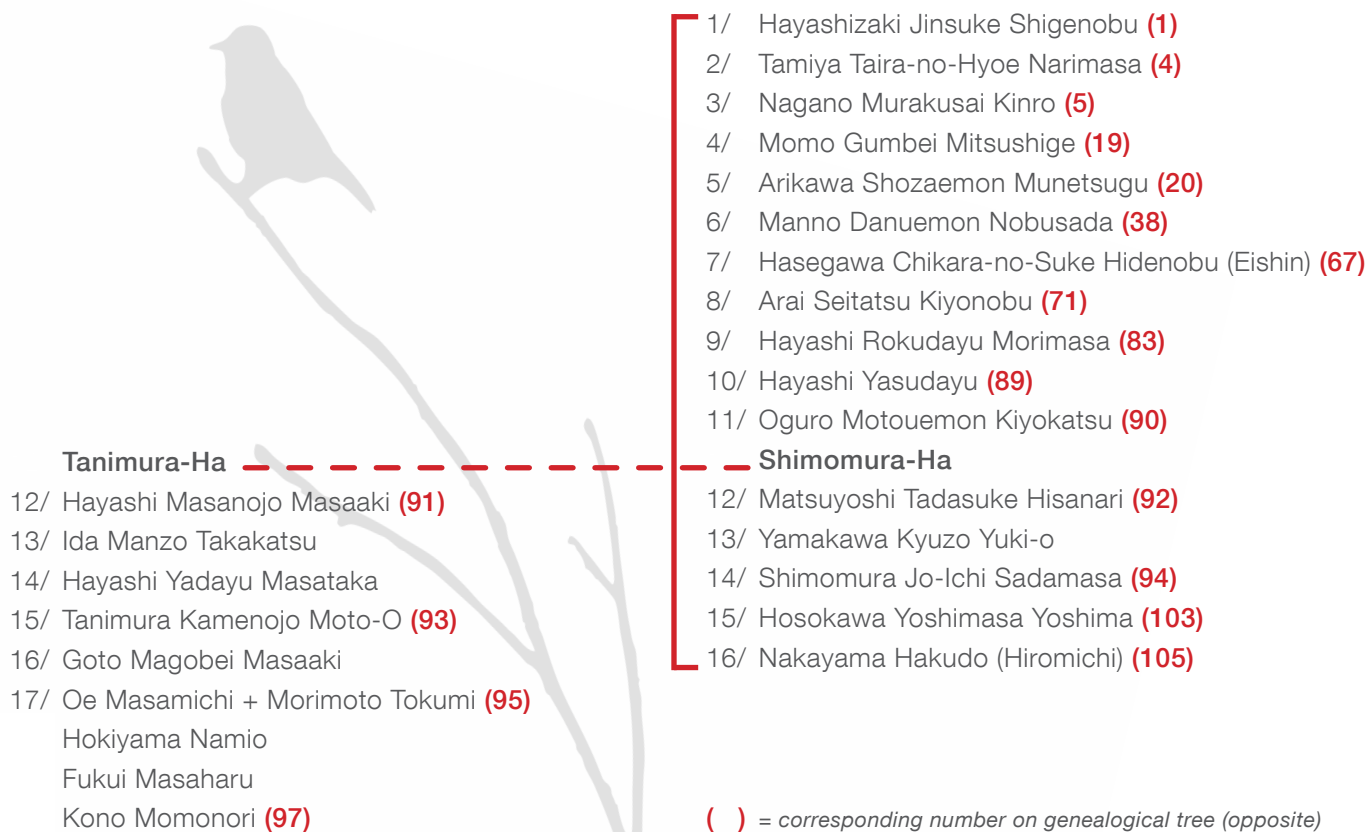


Original caption: The first students on completion of their course of training at the *Denshū-Jo*, with their instructors (the student are wearing white and standing). Kasama Shigetatsu (front row, far left), Kurihara (front row, fourth from left), Beppu Kiyoyuki (far right), Dr. Tawara Kuniichi (front row, second from right), and Yoshihara Kuniie (back row, far right).

Influence of the Hayashizaki Jinsuke Lineage

- 1) Hayashizaki Jinsuke Shigenobu (Shin Muso Hayashizaki Ryû)
- 2) Takamatsu Kanmbei Nobukatsu (Ichinomiya Ryû)
- 3) Azuma Shimotsuke-no-Kami Motoharu (Shinmei Musô Tô Ryû)
- 4) Tamiya Taira-no-Hyoe Narimasa (Tamiya Ryu, Batto Tamiya Ryû)
- 5) Nagano Murakusai Shinro (Muraku Ryû)
- 6) Sekiguchi Yarokuemon Jushin (Sekiguchi Ryû)
- 7) Takeda Kyobuzaemon Zenshin (Daimyôjin Musô Ryû)
- 8) Katayama Hoki-no-Kami Hisayasu (Katayama Hoki Ryû, Ikkan Ryû)
- 9) Takamatsu Heihachiro Shigenobu
- 10) Sakurai Gorozaemon Naomitsu
- 11) Tamiya Tsushima-no-Kami Osakatsu Joen
- 12) Miwa Genbei
- 13) Ichinomiya Sadayu Terunobu (Ichinomiya Ryu, Ichinomiya KoRyû)
- 14) Tsuchiya Sozo
- 15) I-no-Shikibu Moriyoshi
- 16) Shirai Sebei Naruchika... (Hayashizaki Tamiya Ryû)
- 17) Kamiidzumi Magejiro Yoshitane (Josen Ryû, Minya Ryû)
- 18) Numazawa Jingozaemon Nagamasa (Shin Ryû)
- 19) Momo Gunmbei Mitsushige
- 20) Arikawa Shozaemon Munetsugu
- 21) Sekiguchi Hachirozaemon Ujinari (Kanso Ryû)
- 22) Takayama Hoki-no-Kami Hisakatsu/Yasukatsu (Shinro Ryû)
- 23) Katayama Hoki Hisataka
- 24) Katayama Kurozaemon Iemasa
- 25) Katayama Daigaku Hisatatsu
- 26) Asami Ichigusai Aritsugu
- 27) Yamamote Hisaya Masakitsu (Kageyuki Ryû)
- 28) Nagai Sakunoemon Hirokata (Shin Ryû)
- 29) Izawa Genzaemon Ryoeki (Izawa Ryû)
- 30) Asaka Yazaemon Katsuchika (Asaka Ryû)
- 31) Narita Matazaemon Narimasa
- 32) Watanabe Shirobei Shigekane (Sekiguchi Shinshin Ryû)
- 33) Katagiri Mokuemon Shigemasa (Sekiguchi Ryû Battô-ha)
- 34) Hisase Isaemon Sadakatsu... (Jushinshin Ryû)
- 35) Sekiguchi Yazaemon Yorinobu/Ujinari.. (Shinshin Ryû, Shinshin Ryû)
- 36) Matsuda Matanojo (Jushinshin Ryû)
- 37) Shibukawa Bangoro (Shibukawa Ryû)
- 38) Manno (Banno) Danuemon Nobusada
- 39) Kanda Shichibei Katsushige (Tamiya Kanda Ryû)
- 40) Ashizawa Yahei Tadamichi
- 41) Watanabe Sanemon Munenori
- 42) Murakami Chikuro
- 43) Wakabayashi Shirobei Naonobu
- 44) Ichinomiya Sadayu Nobutoshi (Ichinomiya Tô Ryû)
- 45) Yamamoto Yahei Seimu
- 46) Asahina Mudo Hiroyasu
- 47) Tamiya Hyobei Osaie
- 48) Eda Gizaemen (Tamiya Shinken Ryû)
- 49) Suzuki Yoshisada (Ishin Ryû)
- 50) Mima Yoichizaemon Kagenobu (Sui-O Ryû)
- 51) Tamiya San-no Suke Jokai
- 52) Tsumaki Shorin
- 53) Mima Yohachiro Kagenaga
- 54) Katsusei Mitsuyasu Kagemasa
- 55) Tamiya Jirozaemon Tsunemichi
- 56) Wada Heisuke Masakatsu
- 57) Taga Jikyosai Morimasa (Jikyo Ryû)
- 58) Tani Kozaemon Toshimasa (Ichinomiya Ryû Tani-ha)
- 59) Tsune-i Kihei Naonori
- 60) Sasamori Junzo
- 61) Miyake Shoshinsae Masanobu
- 62) Ishida Shinemon Ryoto
- 63) Tomomatsu Hijiye
- 64) Ohara Toshichika
- 65) Honda Tadanari
- 66) Takekawa Yohei Shigenobu
- 67) Hasegawa Chikara-no-Suke Hidenobu/Eishin (Hasegawa Eishin Ryû)
- 68) Shibukawa Bangoro (Shibukawa Ryû)
- 69) Izawa Nagahide (Higo Ryû)
- 70) Isoyama Shirozaemon Chikamasa (Isoyama Ryû)
- 71) Arai Seitatsu Kiyonobu
- 72) Akabori Seibei Norinawa
- 73) Hase Yoshimori
- 74) Ohara Moshi Shun-in (Hayashizaki Shin Muso Ryû)
- 75) Akahane Toshichika
- 76) Kato Hakuho Sukefusa (Hayashizaki Muso Honshin Muteki Ryû)
- 77) Iga Moritake
- 78) Aoki Kiyokatsu
- 79) Tamiya Sunemon (Kisshu Tamiya Ryû)
- 80) Kawai Kyoami
- 81) Suji Gettan (Mugai Ryû)
- 82) Sasaki Ryukokushi
- 83) Hayashi Rokudayu Morimasa
- 84) Yamagishi Ichiroemon Osasada (Yamagishi Ryû)
- 85) Kubota Sukekedayu Sei-on (Kubota-ha Tamiya Ryû)
- 86) Bessho Noriharu (Muke Ryû)
- 87) Tsujiki Mata Motohide
- 88) Yamamura Sozo Mototoyo
- 89) Hayashi Yasudayu
- 90) Oguro Motoemon Kiyokatsu
- 91) Hayashi Masu-no-Jo Masaaki
- 92) Matsuyoshi Tadasuke Hisanari
- 93) Tanimura Kame-no-Jo (Tanimura-ha)
- 94) Shimomura Jo-ichi Sadamasa (Shimomura-ha)
- 95) Oe Masamichi (Musô Jikiden Eishin Ryû)
- 96) Shimamura Uma-no-Jo
- 97) Kono Momonori
- 98) Yamamura Tsukasa Masamori
- 99) Tsuji Tatsugoro Shigeyuki
- 100) Hijikata Hansaburo (Hijikata-ha Mugai Ryû)
- 101) Takahashi Yasuke (Takahashi-ha Jikyo Ryû)
- 102) Takahashi Kiyotaro
- 103) Hosokawa Yoshimasa
- 104) Takamatsu Nobuyuki
- 105) Nakayama Hiromichi/Hakudo (Muso Shinden Ryû)

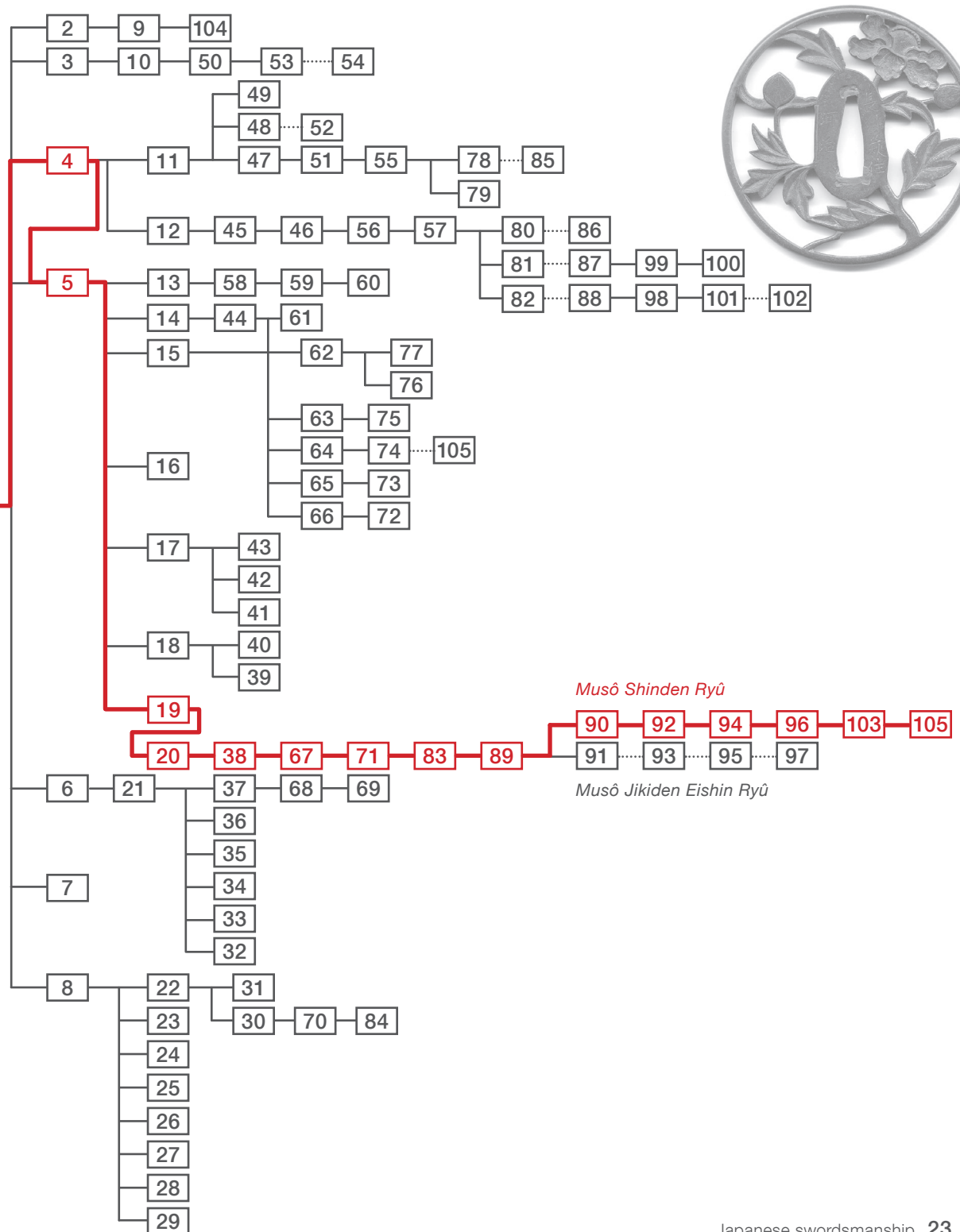
Genealogy of the Musô Shinden Ryû



Oe Masamichi



Hayashizaki
Jinsuke
Shigenobu



Dôjô

The characters which compose this word mean, literally, “the place of the Way”. This implies that it can be anywhere whose overall character denotes simplicity, linked with humble elegance and dignity.

It should be kept impeccably clean. And it might be worth mentioning that excepting very few objects at the *Kami-za* ornamental decoration is not in keeping with the spiritual atmosphere of the *Dô-jô*.

Generally, the floor is wooden, sometimes with tatamis, and may be any size. The physical heart of the *Dô-jô* is the *Kami-za*, or *Shin-zen*. The students are seated at the *Shimo-za*, facing the *Kami-za*. To the student's left is the *Shimo-seki*, and to his right, the *Jô-seki*. It is usual that the less experienced are seated farther down the line towards the *Shimo-seki*.

The *Dô-jô* will be the place where most of your training experiences will be though training outdoors (*Ya-gai-gei-ko*) can also be very important for a number of reasons. The first and foremost, being, that one immediately learns that the beautiful sliding footwork that was possible on the smooth, flat wooden surface of the *Dô-jô*, can no longer be used on rough and constantly varying ground. Classical training puts great emphasis on work outdoors to develop firm equilibrium, stable foot movements and strong hips.

I remember my strong impression when I visited in the company of Otake Risuke the original, old *Dô-jô* of the Katori Shinto Ryû on the grounds of the Iizasa family home. It was rustic, simple and quite small but there was a special atmosphere that surrounded it. Its size served as a reminder that martial teaching was traditionally done on a small scale only, if not, on an individual basis.

We have become used to large sports halls with fluorescent lighting and the omnipresent smells of plastics and disinfectants. There are warm showers and drink vending machines everywhere. They can accommodate hundreds of people at the same time and usually there is a basket-ball game, a hand-ball game or Aerobics class going on somewhere at the same time that you can hear in the background. It is not surprising that we have lost so many ideas of what *Bu-dô* training is about.

Nonetheless, this is how the situation usually is and it is not helpful to sentimentally reminisce on how things could be and what is wrong with our *Dô-jô*.



Sekai Dôjô

The *Dô-jô* is where we practice today – *Se-kai Dô-jô*. We are the primary factor that can create a *Dô-jô* spirit and even in the most “plastic” conditions.

If your teacher is lucky enough to have his very own *Dô-jô* this place will be a reflection of himself. If it is an Association-owned *Dô-jô* with a head teacher, the *Dô-jô* will also be a reflection of the teacher's attitude to the discipline(s) he teaches. If the *Dô-jô* is owned by an Association of Martial Arts with multiple teachers there will be a mixed feeling in the aura of the place but, notwithstanding, a definite *Dô-jô* atmosphere. If it is a sports hall with a Martial Arts practice room there should be some signs of the *Dô-jô* feeling while still having a “community centre” atmosphere. A full-fledged municipal sports hall, where a football training may have preceded the *Bu-dô* class, might be able to have the atmosphere of a *Dô-jô* during a class if the teacher and his students create it.

I visited *Dô-jô* in Japan where nothing but one discipline uniquely had been taught for many years/decades. It seemed to me that the “walls spoke of it” and there was always a particular smell associated with that type of discipline. A *Ken-jutsu Dô-jô* did not have the same feeling and smell as a *Jû-dô Dô-jô* or a *Sumo* stable.

It is said that the *Dô-jô* may be thought of as: “The battlefield that one may return to everyday”. This can be taken in different ways. The most basic is the physical level. One must engage in practice with a “life and death” attitude but, at the same time, there must be no destruction or hurting. The experience should be positive. Donn Draeger *Sen-sei* always reminded me that this was a “Blood, sweat and tears” process. On the spiritual level it implies that the *Dô-jô* is where we confront our greatest adversary: one's own ego. Working with this aim certainly can be called “inner battlefield” experience. But, once again, the experience should be overall positive. Always remember that the aim of training in the *Dô-jô* is... **training**.



Equipment

The Sword

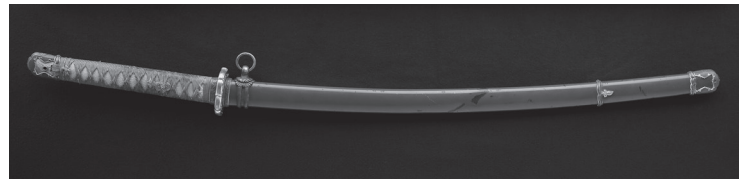
For the correct practice of lai, a *Shin-ken* is required. It is only through the use of a sharp steel sword that one may create the spiritual attitude (*Sei-shin Tan-ren*) necessary in the practice of this art. In each and every instant of training, the student comes within millimeters of the sharp edge, and thus, an error on his part, entails the risk of a serious wound, or even death. This must be kept constantly in mind, and this is an all-important element in training.

However, today, the student is faced with certain very real problems as far as a “live” blade is concerned.

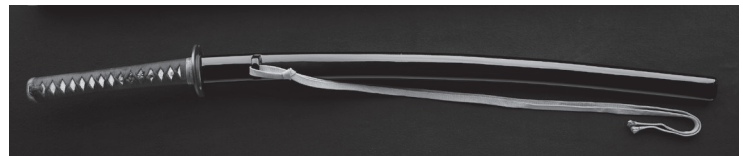
First of all Japanese swords are very rare and/or expensive, and even when one is found, it usually is not mounted correctly for use in lai training. For the beginner this is definitely restrictive.

There will also be the question of correct length for the user. Most swords of the past were shortened for various reasons. In WWII many military swords were made and have been used by many *I-ai* practitioners. However, the blade dimensions that were considered good for a Japanese officer's service sword are not necessarily good for traditional *I-ai* practice. Notably, the length of the *Gun-tô* was 63 cm. to 66 cm. or 68 cm. at most (some exceptions existed) – this is not conducive to learning good extension and this length tends to encourage ‘small’ movements. Not to mention that many people are morphologically ill-matched with such a sword. Someone who is close to or taller than 1.80 m. tall should definitely practice with a sword longer than 70 cm. The practitioner will do much better to acquire eventually a *Shin-saku-tô*. These blades, made in the traditional manner have become much more available in the past few years. I do not include *Sunobe-tô* in this category though there are some good ones available that might be perfectly alright for training.

Further, it is also highly desirable NOT to use an old blade as it might be damaged in the course of training and it certainly is not responsible behaviour to degrade or destroy objects that might have already been in existence for a hundred or more years. Think to preserve a tangible cultural and artistic heritage. And do not make the mistake of thinking that you have enough knowledge of swords to judge its quality and value after even a few years of familiarity with the subject. And do NOT make the mistake of judging military swords to be of no historical value or interest – this is not the case.



Gun-tô



I-ai-tô

Further, one must keep in mind the potential risk involved in practicing with others in close proximity. Insurance companies and doctors do not necessarily take a sympathetic view of accidents and hurting someone else has nothing to do with forging the spiritual attitude, spoken of above.

For all these various reasons the beginner will probably use a training sword; an authentic reproduction of a Japanese sword, which does not cut, which is correctly mounted for *I-ai* practice, which is the right length for the student. These *I-ai-tô* (*Mugi-tô*) have no cultural or historical value, and they do not sell for an exorbitant price. However, they also do not have the same “feel” as a steel blade. They can be rather “wobbly” in practice.

It should be for later that the confirmed practitioner makes the decision to procure a *Shin-ken* for his training. He will then have accumulated enough experience to make his choice to spend the time and money and buy a “*Shin-saku-tô*” traditionally made by a reputable swordsmith.

The “*I-ai-tô*” should be mounted as shown in the photo, and should be somewhere between 67 cm. and 75 cm. long (measured from the *Mune-machi* to the *Kis-saki*), according to the requirements and morphology of each student. Generally, to determine a good length one can consider that if the point of the blade just touches the ground at his foot when held in the right hand with a relaxed arm. A bit more is not a problem if it is comfortable in your hands and during use. The length may also vary according to the school one might practice

Bok-ken or Boku-tô

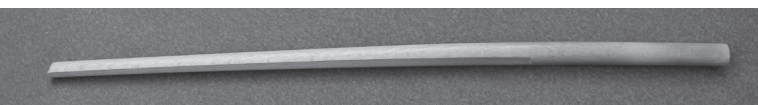
The *Bok-ken* or *Boku-tô* is a wooden sword which faithfully reproduces the length, weight, form and feel of a *Katana*. Because of this, it is used in exactly the same manner as a real sword. It was widely used in traditional practice, largely for economic and safety reasons. However, it was considered a weapon in its own right, and there were even many famous swordsmen who preferred to use a *Boku-tô* in combat, because of its indestructibility. The most famous example was the duel between Sasaki Kojiro and Miyamoto Musashi. The latter preferred to use a *Boku-tô* he had made from the oar of a boat.

There was also a style of using a *Bok-ken* that did take into account that it was wooden and could be used any way that was effective and practical in combat. This type of usage is not what interests us here and, for all intents and purposes, the *Bok-ken* is used as a real sword would be handled.

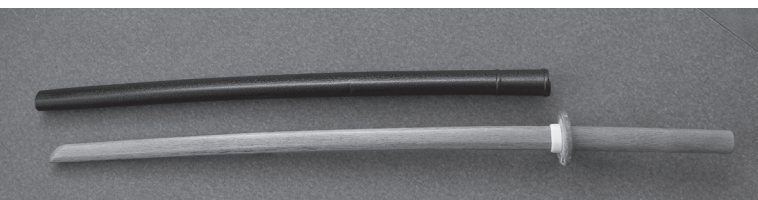
Its overall length is usually about 105 cm but its size, shape and weight sometimes varies according to which "school" one is practicing. A *Bok-ken* suitable for Jikishin Kage Ryû Hojô techniques is very different from a *Bok-ken* that is used in Yagyû Shinkage Ryû training. Generally speaking, the size and shape of the *Bok-ken* used in *Jô-dô* or *Ken-dô* are best for all-purpose use.

It is made of a hardwood, such as the Japanese white, or red (*Shira-kashi*, *Aka-gashi*) evergreen oak, loquat (*Biwa*), ebony (*Koku-tan*), or *Su-nuke*.

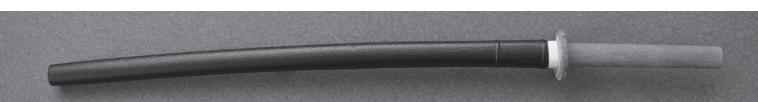
Very often it will include a *Tsuba*. There are two types: plastic and leather. Given the choice, the leather ones are far superior but also more expensive. Sometimes it is also sold with a plastic *Saya*. This can be of use for beginners and for executing *Kumi-dachi* that begin with a sword draw.



Bok-ken



Bok-ken with Tsuba



Bok-ken with Tsuba and Saya

In buying a *Boku-tô* the following is important:

- 1) Buy one that is made of a traditional wood for bokken (usually *Shira-kashi*);
- 2) make sure that the grain is fine and smooth, that it runs the length of the *Boku-tô*. There should be no knots in the wood;
- 3) that the weight and length correspond to your physical and technical needs.

In general the center of gravity should be in the first third of the *Boku-tô*, but this again varies with different styles.

It will be much easier to make your choice when you have accumulated practical experience.

Hakama

The *Hakama* was the traditional dress of the noble classes throughout the history of Japan. Various texts first mention the wearing of the *Hakama* by the nobility, in the Nara period (646-794 AD.), and from this time on, it was standard dress for the aristocracy. However, it was in the Edo period (1616-1867 A.D.) that it took on the form that we know today.

When one looks at the images of olden times and sees the overly long ceremonial *Hakama* worn at court one thinks that it certainly could not have been practical. Arikawa Sadateru Sensei explained that this was precisely the point: would-be attackers could be seriously hampered by it! Not to mention that it might have been a fashionable trend.

For the practice of *Bu-dô* the *Hakama* used is derived from a form called a *Jo-ba Hakama* or *Umanori Hakama*. It is shorter than a dress *Hakama* and is divided like an ample pair of pants.

It is both beautiful and practical; its ample cut allows complete freedom of movement, and at the same time, tends to conceal the positions and movements of the feet; further, it enhances the fluidity and roundness of movements.

Training *Hakama* are made today in cotton and polyester. Both types are good but if you choose to get a cotton *Hakama* it is good to fix the dye in it before practicing. You can do this by soaking it overnight in vinegar.

Black, blue and white, are the most common colours, it has one large fold behind, and five in front. It has a small back-piece (called *Koshi-ate*) to help keep one's back straight. Originally this was a piece of wood but today it is made of plastic. I was told by an elderly *Ai-ki-dô* teacher that there were known to be accidents, injuries to the back and so forth because of the hard *Koshi-ate*. In some *Ko-ryû* there exist techniques that make use of the *Koshi-ate* which are

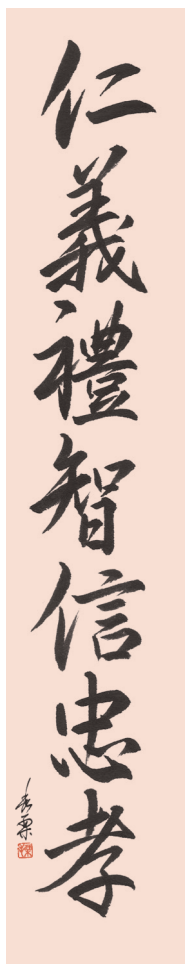
not easy to perform properly with plastic but, then, one must adapt to it for practice but keep in mind that the technique might have been more effective than the impression one might have. An example comes to mind in Isshin Ryû *Kusari-gama-jutsu: Furi-komi (zen)*

The *Hakama* is usually required to be worn for practice in all those martial arts which belong to classical tradition. It is a symbol of their noble background. In *I-ai*, all students, regardless of rank, should wear a *Haka-ma*. In *Jû-dô* and *Jû-jutsu* the *Hakama* was put aside for training because it was an impediment to the legs in vigorous training. Notwithstanding, it is worn on ceremonial occasions and for the demonstration of *Kata*. In Martial Arts whose origins were not in the Japanese warrior/aristocracy a *Hakama* is not a suitable part of the dress (acceptably, it is seen as a national dress and is, nonetheless, often worn).

It is sometimes said that the folds in the *Hakama* are symbolic of the seven virtues of *Bu-dô*. Whether this is 'urban legend' or not is something I'll leave to the reader to investigate.

This is illustrated by the following:

"They symbolize the seven virtues of *Bu-dô*. These are *Jin* (benevolence), *Gi* (honor or justice), *Rei* (courtesy and etiquette), *Chi* (wisdom, intelligence), *Shin* (sincerity), *Chû* (loyalty), and *Kô* (filial piety). We find these qualities in the distinguished samurai of the past. The *Hakama* prompts us to reflect on the nature of true *Bu-shi-dô*. Wearing it symbolizes traditions that have been passed down to us from generation to generation. *Bu-dô* represents the spirit of *Bu-shi-dô* in Japan, and in our practice we must strive to polish the seven traditional virtues."



The seven virtues of *Bu-dô*

Whether or not this fact is historically universal and correct is not what is most important here. This story constitutes a magnificent subject for reflection while one is carefully folding one's *Haka-ma* at the end of training. Keep those virtues unwrinkled.

The Keikogi

Kei-ko = training. *Gi* = suit.

It is the same as that worn in the other martial arts. White, blue, or black are the most common colours white is the most commonly used color of the three.

Sometimes, in demonstration, the student will dress in a proper *Ki-mono* with large, amply-cut sleeves.

The Obi

The *Obi* is simply the belt worn underneath the *Haka-ma* to keep the *Kei-ko-gi* closed.

Two types may be worn:

- The wide traditional style *Obi*
- The *Jû-dô* type *Obi*

The wide style is preferable because it holds the sword in the proper position.

The knot is placed at the back, as in all the traditional *Bu-dô* (The exception is *Ai-ki-dô*, where for practical purposes (*Uke-mi*), it is tied in front for training).

How to hold a sword (Te no uchi)

It is extremely important to hold the sword correctly with the hands because it is through the hands that the sword will be directly connected to the hips and to the center of gravity of the body. Without this connection, it is impossible to have the power necessary to cut effectively with one's weapon.

There are, however, different ways of holding the *Tsuka* in order to create proper *Ki-ken-tai*. The most difficult aspect is that it implies a dynamic, changing hand grip of the sword as one uses it. It is not a fixed emplacement of the hands.

To complicate matters the Japanese language and different schools have numerous names for hand positions and there is not always agreement in their usage.

The term *Te no uchi* itself can also indicate a small hand-held weapon but this is not the meaning we are concerned with here. It is also used to express the grip and the tightening of the hands during a cutting motion.

For example, in the Shinto Musô Ryû one finds the words "*Hon-te* (normal grip), *Gyaku-te* (reversed grip) and *Saka-te* (reversed grip)" used. Sometimes you will see "*Kiri-te* (cutting hand), *Uchi-te* (striking hand)" and sometimes "*Jun-te*, *Gyaku-te*" are spoken of. In certain styles the left hand has one type of grip and the right hand another.

Arikawa Sadateru Sensei once explained to me that in olden times the hand was seen as having two sections: the upper half (thumb, index and middle finger) was called "*Ten*" (Heaven, sky) and the lower part (pinky, ring finger and also the middle finger) was called "*Chi*" (Earth). He explained that the Yin-Yang aspect of the image was important so the Earth side should be solid, stable, firm, strong and the Heaven part should be light, relaxed, flexible. The proper use of the hands was to have these two different characteristics functioning harmoniously at all times. Everyone agrees that the three last fingers (pinky, ring and middle) should be used for creating a strong grip.

Shown in the photo (right), is the standard hand position for *Sei-gan no kamae* (point directed at the adversary's eyes).

It is said that one should hold the sword as though one had a bird in one's hands:

Squeeze too hard, and you kill the bird, too softly, and it will fly off.

Another illustration is "*washi zukami*" - like an eagle gripping a branch.



How to hold a sword correctly

In the practice of any *Bu-dô* (such as *Ai-ki-dô*, *Jô-dô* or *I-ai-dô*, etc.) we must insure specific connections with the instrument, the body, the ground, the mind and so forth. I wish to illustrate this here but keep in mind that a hands-on approach learned with a qualified teacher is the only way to really understand this properly.

There are two principal ways one can hold an instrument/tool/weapon/sword.

In the first case, the instrument is perceived only as being held and handled by the hands. Something that is felt as separate from ourselves. We are 'wielding' the instrument/tool/weapon/sword as an object in our hands.

In this case (which some may consider the most 'instinctive') the swordsman will automatically seize the instrument/tool/weapon/sword in a perpendicular relation, without the notion of "being one with". We can see what this way of holding an instrument/tool/weapon/sword looks like in illustrations (below). Note that the forearm is at a right angle with the *Ken*. In this position one is holding a separate object.



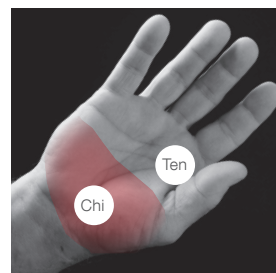
Grips at right angles

This position should not be confused with a correctly formed "*Gyaku-te*" or "*Saka-te*" grip which also incorporates the principles of the 'unified' grip explained here**. The second way (upon which we will be focusing) is the manner of gripping a sword so that it will become an extension of the body of the swordsman (photos in the right column). A stable and strong contact must be established between the instrument and the hands, which, (through the arm, shoulder and back) are perfectly connected with the hips and lower abdomen (*Sei-ka Tan-den*), which, in turn, connects with the ground. Right from the beginning it is important to learn and master this manner of holding the sword in order to discover the principle of being "one with the sword". This most basic grip is most often referred to as '*Hon-te*', '*Jun-te*' or '*Kiri-te*'.

**Different systems use different words to designate their techniques of holding a sword but the principles involved remain the same. But the swordsman who has mastered *Ki-ken-tai* (Unity of mind, body and sword) will be able to grip the sword in various ways without disturbing the union between body-weapon/weapon-intention.

The Hon-te grip

The part of the hand which correctly represents a solid connection with the rest of the body is situated in the base of the hand. This part of the hand should be firmly joined to the sword (or other implement) in order to achieve unity of body and sword "*Tai-ken*".

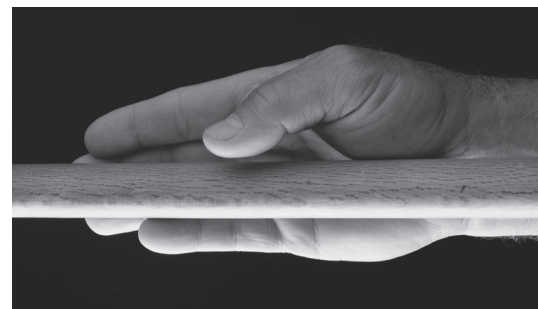


The little finger plays the important role in the correct execution of this unity, followed by the ring finger and, finally, the middle finger. It is interesting to note in the illustration, that the little finger alone can maintain a correct position in line with the *Chi* point and therefore requires to be particularly precise and strong, thus this will be reinforced by the other two fingers.



Positioning

- For the right hand – start by putting your straightened hand, flat out on the *Bok-ken* (wooden sword) as shown on the illustration on the right.

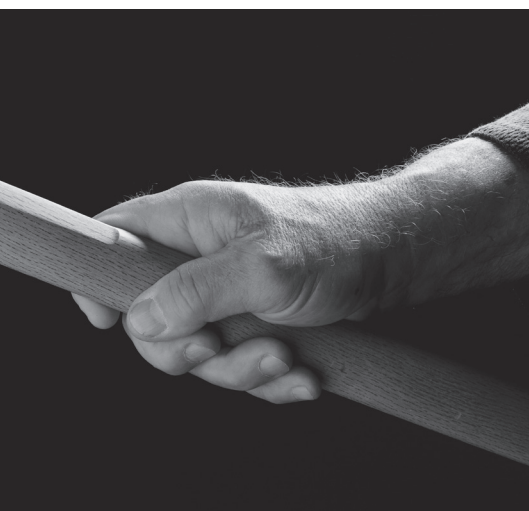


- Then place the little finger straight above the "heel" of the hand without letting it twist out of place. Thus establishing contact in the central line from the base of the hand. This is of primary importance and should be carefully followed in order to develop the correct position.

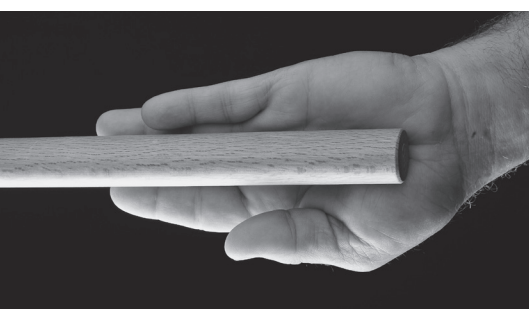




- Next firmly place the other two fingers (ring and middle) in order to reinforce the position of the little finger. Leaving the index finger and thumb to fall naturally in place leaving them to be relaxed, yet not detached. They should be as shown in the illustration left.



- For the left hand – place the end of the *Ken* in contact as for the right hand but with the end of the *Ken* (*Kashira* = pommel) slightly in front of the base of the hand, as illustrated left.

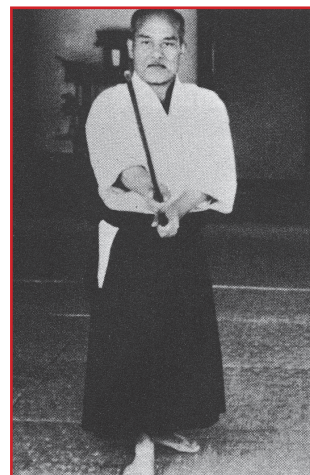
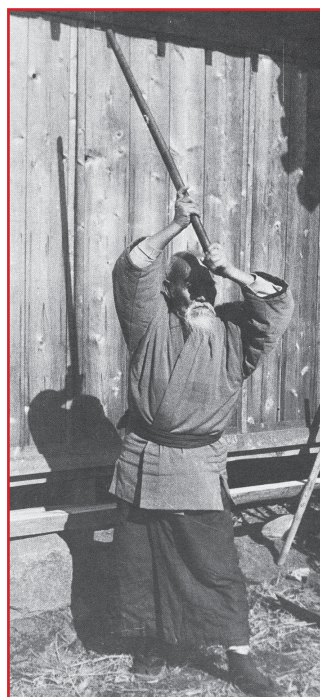
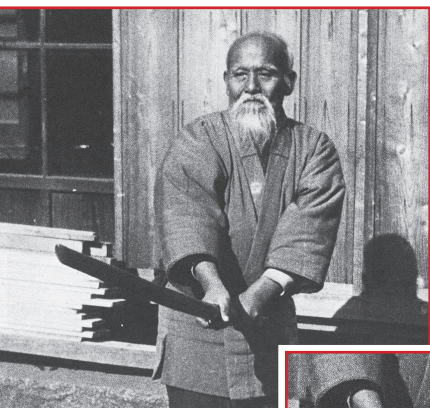


- Proceed as for the right hand in placing the little finger (without TWISTING the hand) followed by the other two fingers as above.

- In this manner you can place both hands on the sword making sure to fully maintain the two hand positions described above. Refer to the illustration of the hand position seen in O Sensei Ueshiba's position.

At this point, we will have two strong connecting points in each hand directly in contact with the *Tsuka* and by extension with the cutting edge of the blade (*Ha*). This proper hand position will, in turn, have a strong influence on a correct body position.

Please study closely the photos of O Sensei Ueshiba standing in *Kamae* with a *Bok-ken* and try to get a feel of the meaning of all this. The more you practice conscientiously to understand this the more the photos will become clear. "*Ki-ken-tai ichi*" or "*Ken-shin-tai ittai*" are expressions of this unity and with experience will be ever-present in all your positions in a flowing, living, dynamic way.



Etiquette (Reishiki, Reigi-Sahô)

禮

Rei

In all the martial arts and, for that matter, most of all studies in spiritual discipline, etiquette is absolutely essential and necessary. For it is the means by which a pupil learns before he has understood fully what he may be doing. In *Bu-dô*, it has several different purposes.

First of all, it teaches polite and proper behaviour in relation to other individuals. In Japan etiquette is a very important thing. Someone lacking the good manners expected of him will often find it difficult to access the study of things he might be interested in. Of course, there is a social etiquette that one must be familiar with. Usually it is good and common sense that enables one to choose the correct behaviour in a situation.

One of the most important things to remember is that in Japan, etiquette is structured around the idea that one should never do or say anything that could put someone out, disturb him or cause him embarrassment. This can go a long way. Many westerners are used to being frank and open but it is good to think when this frankness might be disturbing. When will your questions to a Japanese teacher be out of place?

What attitude is one displaying at a given moment? What effect is one's action having on someone else? Are you thinking how best to make the other feel comfortable? Is there true sincerity in your attitude? These are all questions that should be considered in Japanese etiquette. It should remain something completely 'natural' and non-affected. It cannot be the result of memorized rituals. Egocentricity is a great obstacle to making a proper choice.

A foreigner commits many acts that are impolite without being aware of it and the Japanese are usually quite tolerant and forbearing with him. However, a foreigner who does not make any progress in understanding things will definitely come up against a brick wall in short order. We must spend quite a lot of time reflecting on this.

I once was permitted to visit a training in a sword school not generally open to the public. I considered it was an honor to be invited. It was February and the

weather was freezing cold. All the doors and windows of the *Dô-jô* were opened and there was little difference in temperature inside or out, just I think the wind-chill factor was lower inside. I arrived all bundled up in a nice warm coat. Shortly before it had been explained to me (after being guilty of the error) that when in the *Dô-jô*, out of respect for those training, it is considered proper etiquette to adopt the

same amount of clothing as those participating actively in the lesson. So I went my overcoat and I was invited by the teacher to sit on the floor and watch. *Sei-za* was, of course, the position that was expected. In any case, after about 20 minutes everyone was working hard and keeping warm. Then in walks another foreigner, wearing an ample overcoat, who saunters over to the teacher (in the middle of an explanation to a student) and introduces himself (in broken Japanese)

saying he is here to watch the class. The teacher calmly finished explaining to the student and then, without saying anything or even looking particularly at the newcomer, walked over to the entrance to the *Dô-jô* followed by the visitor. Then looking him straight in the face said, in no uncertain manner to the effect that he felt that with such a coat this man would be better off outside. The formula was understood and the man left the *Dô-jô*.

Secondly, it teaches the student of *Bu-dô* how to conduct himself in such a way that ensures for himself the best security, as far as an unforeseen attack is concerned. As an example, it teaches a student never to walk in front of the line of students in *Sei-za*, when one enters the *Dô-jô*; that one should always pass behind: in this way, one is both polite and correct towards others and also is not exposed to a possible attack.

Etiquette teaches one to "know one's place". This means not only in a situation of social hierarchy but also in the sense of developing the capacity to



properly judge situations and distances – between oneself and other people or objects.

Etiquette teaches, in some cases, to sit facing the doors or windows, not to sit in slovenly postures where one’s back is not straight nor one hands free; to use, rather, the left hand so that the right hand remains free at all times, to walk in low-lying terrain, and so on. Etiquette, in this sense, develops the proper and positive sense of caution that has to become instinctive in any and all real combat situations.

Etiquette is also a method for the student to mentally and spiritually calm and compose himself in training. Both before the session and punctually at the beginning and conclusion of training experiences, for example, before and after a *Kumi-gata*.

It symbolizes, therefore, the “inner purification” of the trainee. Etiquette will vary, in detail, from one school to another, but its essence will always be the same, in every case.

Here are some illustrations of the various procedures you need to incorporate at different times in your etiquette.

Carrying the sword when not practising

The proper manner to carry a sword when one is not actually practicing, is shown below.



Sage-tô (right side)

The *Sage-o* is held as shown and the heel of the right hand assures that the *Tsuba* is held firmly, locking the blade in the scabbard.



Sage-tô (left side)

This will also be a position for carrying your sword. Be sure your thumb is keeping the *Tsuba* in place.



Tei-tô

In this position the sword is held in the left hand as though it were being carried in the belt.



Tai-tô

This is the position when your sword is properly placed in the *Obi*.

Tachi-rei, Ritsu-rei (standing bow)

A standing bow (*Tachi-rei*) is made upon entering the *Dô-jô* as shown below. The trainee then passes behind the other students sitting in *Sei-za*, at the *Shimo-za*, and takes his proper place.



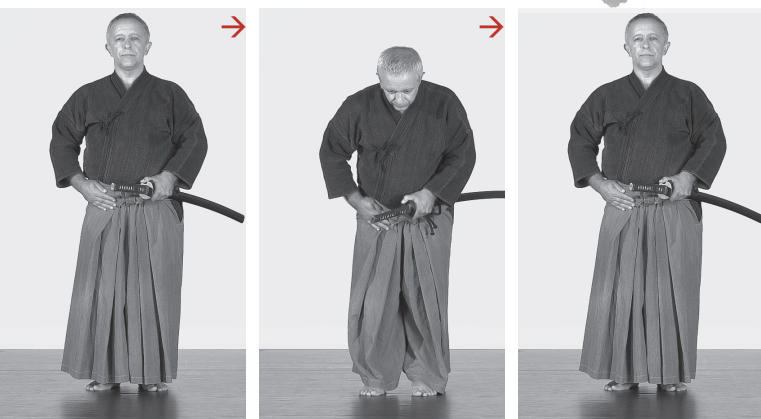
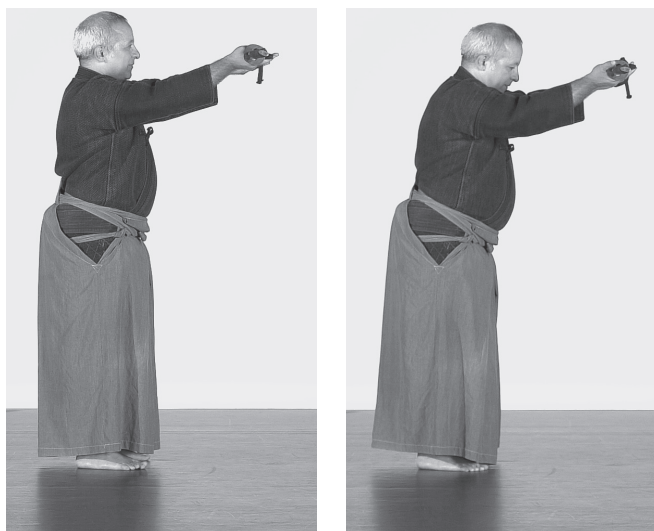
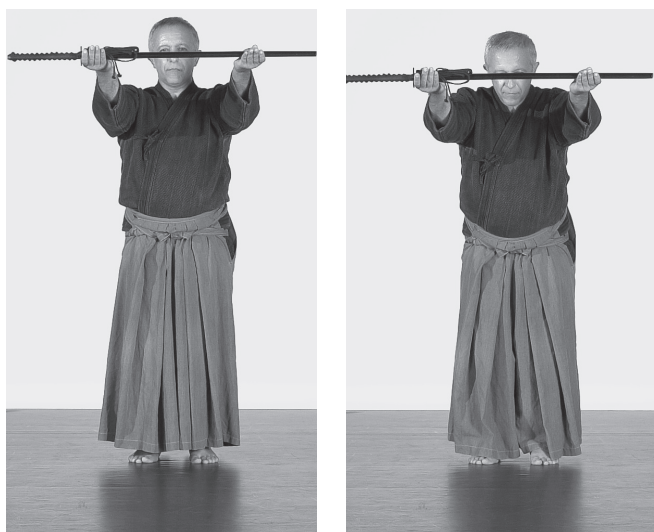
Changing hands

Changing from one hand to the other and assuming *Tei-tô* and bowing



Standing bow to the sword

If you are required to bow to your sword in a standing position.



Za-hô (Sitting in Seiza)

Keeping in mind that there are different ways of sitting down according to the degree of formality which one wishes to express and the clothes one is wearing, the basic way for *Bu-dô* practice will be shown here.

Further, different schools will have slight variations on the position. *Sei-za* is still today a posture of respect, and formality, especially for someone who studies a traditional Japanese *Bu-dô*, art or craft.

Aikido practitioners also practice their movements from a sitting position (*Suwari-waza*) and many *Ko-ryû* have techniques which take into account this position.

Sei-za was and is a posture adopted for formal occasions in Japan. It is intimately related to everything in their culture.

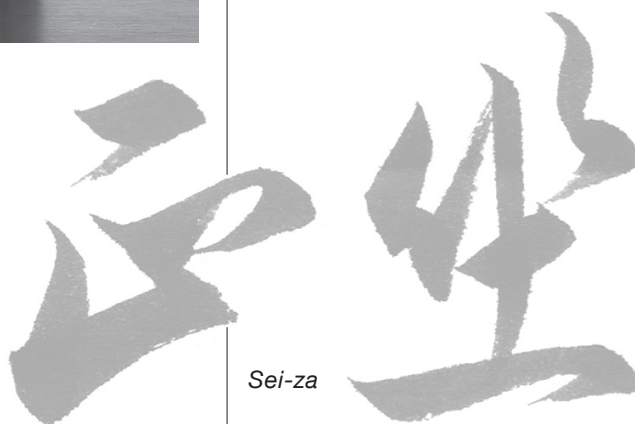
Sei-za is written with two *Kan-ji*. The character pronounced *Sei* (*Tadashii*) means “proper, right, true”. The character *Za* means “seat or sitting”.

Traditional etiquette in Japan was taught in the Ogasawara Ryû and Ogasawara Kiyonobu wrote a book called “*Nihon no Reiho*” where he speaks of *Sei-za* at length.

“Proper *Sei-za* helps to naturally align your body and spine, and brings on an alert mind and body”.

I would like to point out that here we meet with one of the paradoxes in *I-ai*. It is a debatable question whether a *Dai-tô* (long sword) was worn in *seiza* by a warrior. The short sword (*Waki-zashi*, *Shô-tô*) was normally worn when indoors. It remains perfectly true that *Sei-za* presents a valid and good position in which

to learn and perfect *I-ai*. Further, I have made the observation that most of Omori Ryû could have been used with a *Shô-tô* by a classical samurai.



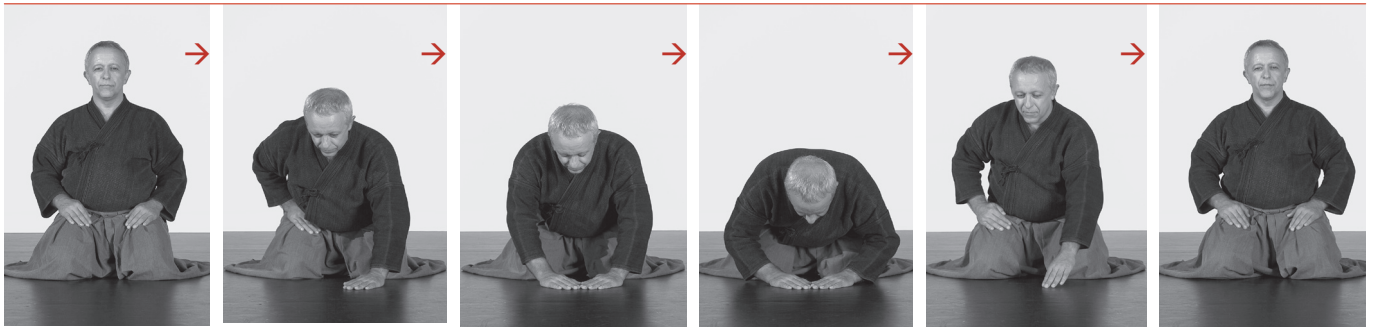
Sei-za

The proper way to sit down in the kneeling position (*Sei-za*) is shown on the following page.

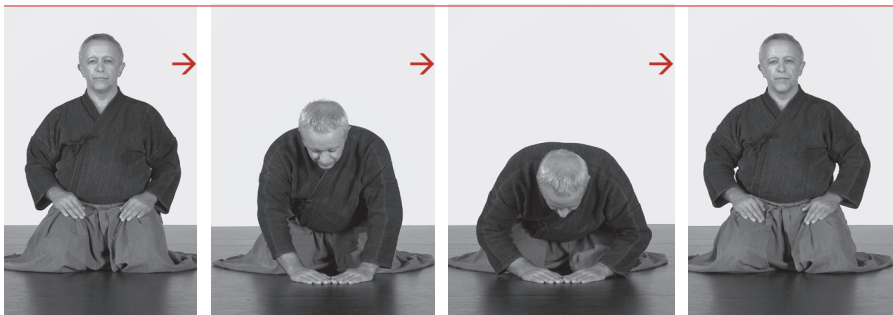
Develop *En-zan no me-tsuke* (seeing all, as a mountain in the distance) and, particularly do not look with your eyes at every movement you make, where your *Sage-o* is, how you have placed your sword, how your *Hakama* has been arranged – all of these things must be automatically and correctly done because of repeated practice.



Once seated there should be no further need to rearrange *Hakama*, *Katana* and *Keiko-gi*. This means that there will be no impediments to good movement from the position.



Bowing in Budô This manner (beginning with the left hand) is considered to embody a more martial attitude. It is usually used when in a situation of adversity. Thus in certain situations it may be seen as impolite..



Bowing to Kamiza

This is the more polite way of bowing from seiza ie. to the *Kami-za* or your teacher.

Exchanging weapons

Passing a sword to another person has several acceptable forms. The illustrations show one way with the *Tsuka* to the left.



Bowing to each other

The bow is performed with the sword in *Sage-tô* position – it is only after the bow that *Tei-tô* or *Tai-tô* is assumed*.

* The distance between the adversaries in this illustration should be about 5 to 6 meters. (this distance is not obvious in the photo).

Reishiki at the beginning of Kata

Transfer sword to the left hand and hold it as though it were in the *Obi*. The right hand arranges (not slapping) the *Hakama* first to the left, then to the right, and then one kneels down, first on the left knee, and then upon the right.

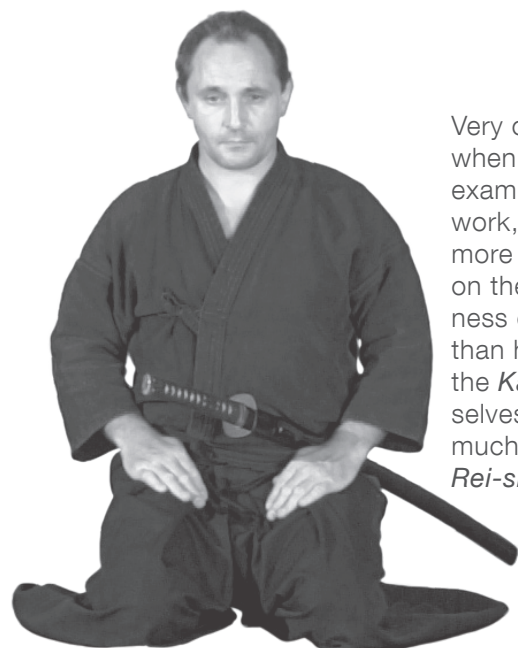


The sword is placed on the right side as shown.

Thereafter, the body is kept straight (nose and navel – *Sei-ka tan-den* – in alignment and the chin slightly in) and further movements are made with the legs, the body must not bend forward. This correct alignment is called: *Sei-chû-sen* and learning it in *Sei-za* will constantly be a reference for your other positions – *Sei-chû-sen* is important everywhere.



Za-rei from the back



Very often, when a teacher examines your work, he will put more emphasis on the correctness of *Rei-shiki* than he will on the *Kata* themselves. There is much to study in *Rei-shiki*.

Breathing (Ko-kyû and Kokyû-Ryoku)

It is often heard said how important proper breathing in the Martial Arts is and how it is the key source of the power in one's movements. However, it is my observation that quite often very little concrete knowledge is transmitted about this important subject.

Frequently, the student is taught some fundamental breathing exercises and it is understood that from there he will be able to discover and feel all that is necessary to understand the question of *Ko-kyû* through practice. This may or may not be the case. Further, he is often told that the main problem with any given technique he performs lies in the question of breathing...

Breath is such a vast subject and susceptible to many and varied interpretations that it is, indeed, difficult to be affirmative in terms of "sweeping statements of truth". However, when it is done correctly one can 'feel' that something is on the right track.

Here, I would like to share some ideas with the reader which have been very enlightening and useful to me. At the same time I do not wish to say 'this is it' or this is THE correct way.

There are a number of words that we habitually use in the vocabulary of any study of *Bu-dô*. Let's look at a few of these words and their meaning – then I will put them together into a form which I feel will help grasp some of the meaning of 'breathing'.

Ko-kyû – this word is composed of two characters (See *opposite*):

Ko or *Yobu* whose meanings include to call, to call out, to invite or, more commonly, exhale/breath out.

Kyû or *Suu* whose meanings include to sip, to imbibe, to suck or to inhale/breath in.

The whole word taken together in Japanese can take on various shades of meaning including, of course, the simple act of breathing. It can also be extrapolated to mean 'timing' 'movement', 'correct use of power', 'harmony in movement', etc.

Let us see it here as the definition of the universal process of 'filling and emptying', of 'accumulation and dispersion' or of 'growth and perishing'. In this manner, the concept acquires greater dimensions.

For example, the '*Ko-kyû*' of the sea can be seen as the tides, the '*Ko-kyû*' of the earth may be seen as its yearly rotation around the sun and the seasons, the '*Ko-kyû*' of day and night, the '*Ko-kyû*' of a human life. All these natural cyclical processes that we can observe in ourselves, in Nature and in the Universe

can all be seen as a "*Ko-kyû*" process. The image which has been strongest and most vivid for my understanding of *Ko-kyû* has been the sea and the tides. But then I grew up close to the Pacific Ocean and, almost every day I was on and around the water. Someone who has never been near to the sea will find some other example in Nature perhaps easier to relate to – ie. the seasons, biological or planetary cycles, geological cycles etc. Nonetheless, I feel that looking to the Universe as our teacher here is a good way to go.

In the practice of *Bu-dô*, however, we are given a certain number of hints and indicators that we must work with for our physical movements to become effective and natural technique.

A) Movements that are expansive, centrifugal, outwards or upwards are moments where energy accumulates and is stocked for use. This is the time when inhaling is most used.

B) Movements that are compressive, centripetal, inwards or downwards are moments where energy is 'out-streamed' and is used for actions. This is the time when exhaling is used.

C) There are two phases where the tide comes to the culmination of its on-going process (slack tide) and there is an (apparent) absence of movement (but not process). This occurs, of course, at the end of the out-going tide (slack low-tide) and at the end of the in-coming tide (slack high-tide). These are 'magical' moments and are a very important aspect in the whole process – are they the end of one phase or are they the beginning of the next?

All of this sort of 'cyclical' vision of things immediately, and quite correctly, brings the reader to think of Taoism, of Yin & Yang etc. It is in this ancient Chinese school of thought that we find the basis for breathing in *Bu-dô* – breath in the human being. As well as a myriad of other subjects that seek to balance their process through the idea of "*In-Yô*" (Japanese words for yin/yang). As a matter of fact, the concept of *In/Yô* is probably the most powerful and prevalent, though largely tacit and unmentioned undercurrent of Japanese thought that exists.

For example, the 'Zen' of Zen Buddhism, this unique aspect to which we are most attracted is mostly the result of the Taoist influence. This study is not within the scope of this book but for those who wish to go deeper into the subject should read works such as "The Tao of Zen" by Ray Grigg (see bibliography). One cannot approach Japanese Art or Culture in any of its aspects without becoming acutely aware of this. But

it would seem that acknowledging Taoism is quietly passed over and things are presented generally as 'self-evident'. It is only when one meets, over and over again, these same concepts within the disciplines one might study that one becomes convinced of this underlying assembly of common principles. So let's look at how this is expressed in breathing.

In the beginning we are taught (somewhat artificially) this sequence until it becomes normal and natural. It takes a lot of repetition and this is part of the work we call *Su-buri*. At first, it is confined to relatively simple movements perhaps done slowly so it can be done correctly. Afterwards speed may come into the picture. Later, we might be asked to perform 2 cuts (front & back) *Zen-gô-giri* (plus turning the body) in



呼吸

Inhaling is expressed as "*Yô no Ugoki*". This may be translated as the "transformation towards a state of *Yô* (yang)" or "accumulation of Yang energy".

"*Yô-kyoku*" means the "state of Yang" or plenitude. However, like slack high tide movement stops - before reversing to the "transformation towards a state of Yin" or "*In no Ugoki*". When this process reaches the 'slack low tide' it is referred to as : "*In-kyoku*".

So to apply this to the movement of *Shô-men-uchi* – "*Yo no Ugoki*" is used to raise the sword to '*Furi-kaburi*' where "*Yô-kyoku*" is reached and the energy process reverses and the tide starts to go out. Very much as is true of the tide it begins slowly and gains force and momentum. The impact of your strike should coordinate with the strongest of "*In no Ugoki*" (exhalation). If this is done properly (with *Ki-Ken-Taï*) the cut will be the strongest a human being can perform.

one out-breath (*In no Ugoki*). This may be followed by exercises in 3 or 4 directions (*Shi-hô-giri*) always paying attention to a correct and specific breathing pattern.

These exercises (and many others), as well as the *Waza* of the school, will teach the student how to breathe and under the watchful eye of the teacher he will be guided to the proper acquisition of breath/movement coordination. Needless to say this is a long and assiduous study and there will be no absolute 'one right way' that could be written in stone.

These elements should give you a basis for understanding what to be looking out for when you tackle the question of breathing.

But don't hold your breath!

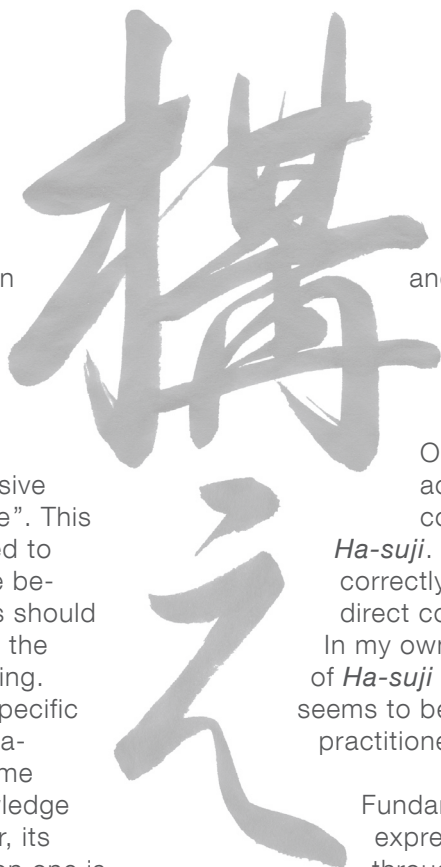
Attitude (Kamae)

A *Kamae* is NOT simply a posture in which you brandish your sword towards your adversary. It should contain several technical aspects at once.



There is an expression: *Kô-bô-ichi* – “the offensive and the defense are one”. This is very true when applied to *Kamae* and the balance between the two elements should be chosen in relation to the situation that one is facing. Each *Kamae* allows a specific repertory of cuts and manoeuvres but, at the same

time, it also disallows others. Knowledge of these factors is essential. Further, its application according to the situation one is facing can only be understood through long



Kama-e

and careful practice and repetition of codified or well-known and proven combinations. Freedom of movement here will take long practice.

One of the most important things to acquire from the start is complete control over *Ha-suji*. This can only be correctly taught through direct contact student/teacher. In my own experience this question of *Ha-suji* awareness and control seems to be grossly overlooked by practitioners.



Fundamental *Kamae* are a static expression of a future dynamic evolution through a cutting movement and ending in the following *Kamae*. It is also the expression of an inner attitude. It will give a feeling of the spirit with which the practitioner is dealing with the situation.

These 5 *Kamae* are also often equated with the five elements of Taoist thought. This relation often gives hints as to the interrelationship of these stances.



Kô-bô-ichi



Hidari Chû-dan no kamae

Chû-dan and *Sei-gan no Kamae*

Chû-dan no kamae is a universal, balanced and neutral position. It is also sometimes called *Tsune no kamae* which means the “Natural Posture” or *Hito no kamae* which implies “natural for man”. It is the one guard position from which all the eight cuts are equally accessible but none, with the exception of *Choku-tsuki*, is truly direct. ***Chû-dan no kamae*** may be oriented anywhere from the navel to the eyes of the adversary. ***Sei-gan no kamae*** implies that the *Ki-saki* is kept precisely oriented towards the eyes of the opponent. There is psychologically a very strong effect when the sword is constantly aimed towards the eyes. It is very much like having the barrel of a loaded gun leveled at the eyes. Further, if done correctly, it should be extremely difficult for the adversary to see the blade (length). It is also the most balanced offensive/defensive position. It is associated with the element ‘Water’



Migi Sei-gan no kamae



Hidari
Ge-dan
no kamae



Migi
Ge-dan no
kamae

Ge-dan no Kamae

Ge-dan no kamae (sometimes *Chi no kamae* – earth posture) strengthens the defensive aspects in the lower part of the body and creates a feeling of greater opening (*Suki*) of the upper body. It facilitates cuts from down to up (*Kiri-age*), evasive *Tai-sabaki* and strong *Tsuki*. It is very often taught as an answering *Kamae* to *Jô-dan no kamae*.

This *Kamae* was associated with the element 'Earth'



Hidari
Jô-dan no
kamae



Migi
Jô-dan no
kamae

Jô-dan no Kamae

Jô-dan no kamae is considered a predominantly offensive position. It facilitates downward cuts (*Kiri-otoshi*) but it is not adapted to protecting the lower body. Sometimes it is referred to as *Ten no kamae* – Posture of Heaven or *Kô-geki no kamae* – Attack Posture. This position is associated with the element 'Fire'.



Waki-gamae

Waki-gamae is a powerful *Kamae* that hides within it some very offensive aspects. It is also referred to as *Yô no kamae* – positive posture. It is sometimes taught that the sword should be dissimulated behind the body where it does not allow the adversary to judge the length of one's blade. There are two major variants that are seen: *Ge-dan waki-gamae* and *Chû-dan waki-gamae*. It permits direct, powerful cuts both from below (*Kiri-age*) and from above (*Kiri-otoshi*). *Gyaku-kesa*, *Yoko-ichi-monji*, *Kesa-giri*, *Shô-men-uchi*, *Kesa-giri* (opposite side) and strong *Tsuki*. It also has free body movement and footwork. This *Kamae* is associated with the element 'Metal'.



Hidari
Ge-dan
waki-
gamae



Migi
Ge-
dan
waki-
gamae



Migi
Chû-dan
waki-gamae





*Hidari
Has-sô no
kamae*

*Migi
Has-sô no
kamae*

Has-sô no Kamae

Hasso no kamae. This position was referred to by Donn Draeger Sensei as the “wait-and-see” position. He often assimilated it with the soldier’s rifle on the shoulder. This guard also allows strong cuts, some from unexpected directions. It is often said that it is the best guard when surrounded by multiple adversaries. It is also called *In no kamae* which implies its more passive qualities. It is associated with the element ‘**Wood**’.



Variants

All of these basic *Kamae* have variants that may be seen in different styles, each with advantages and disadvantages. However, these five postures are the basic ones that everyone swordsman must master. They must all be studied completely both right-sided and left-sided.

A very popular variant of *Gedan no kamae* (though not basic) is *Mugamae no kamae* – the “guard of no-guard”.

Further, within movements or *Kata* a transitory *Kamae* may be taught. This type of position very often (in a given school) will carry the name of the *Kata* within which it is first taught. An example here is *Ryû-tô no kamae*. From this point onwards we are moving into specialty elements which this book is not concerned with.



*Migi
In-Yô
no kamae*

*Ryû-tô no
kamae*



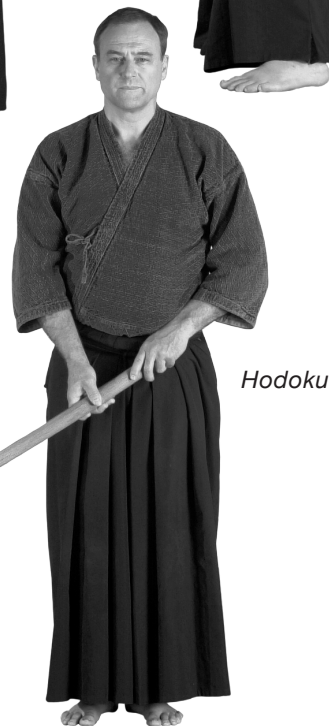
*Migi
Ge-dan
waki-
gamae*



*Migi
Chû-dan
waki-
gamae*



Mu-gamae



Hodoku

Preparative exercises

Comments on Hap-pô-giri (Page 42)

The name implies:
cutting in eight directions.

Keep in mind that the concept of eight directions (also four directions - *Shi-hô*) means, by extension, all directions. Symbolically, it has the connotation of being “complete”. Many processes are seen as being composed of eight phases from beginning to completion. For example, the one we are most familiar with is the *Dan* grade system. But also the basic strokes for learning calligraphy also align themselves with this idea.

Details:

- Begin in a *Sei-gan no Kamae* position for the *Shô-men* cut and the *Tsuki*. After that all the remaining directions will be done from a *Ki-ba-dachi* position until *Shô-men* at the end.
- Before you can gain proficiency in these cuts you must develop a strong feeling of *Ha-suji*. Your cuts must be entirely in line from their very beginning to their end. You will be very surprised to learn from an observer just how curved your cuts can be and you are not even aware of it.
- When you become proficient at doing one series and then beginning a second series and a third etc. you will then be able to initiate a continuous series by immediately moving on to *Tsuki* of the following series after the last *Shô-men* cut.
- Doing this for extended periods is a necessary part of training and it is often considered in terms of *Sei-shin-tan-ren*.



Comments on Kata-te-nuki (Page 44)

The name implies:
sword-drawing with one hand.

Details:

- *Kata-te-nuki* or, sometimes, *Kata-te-uchi* is important to establish precision and proper muscular development for your continued practice in *Iai*.
- The concept of *Ha-suji* once more is acutely felt in these exercises and you must make an effort to keep precisely to the trajectories. If, per chance, your sword has a groove (*Bô-hi*) you can use the sound that is generated during a cut to become more precise. It should sound immediately at the start of the cut and sound the same all the way through. But don't get too attached to this trick, use it positively.
- It is important to practice this series as often as possible. In old martial arts systems, since there was no idea of sport, there were no “warm-ups”, calisten-

ics or practice runs. This type of *Su-buri* is about as close to the idea as you traditionally may expect.

- Nothing is strictly defined here but it is best to keep the movements as closely as possible to the principles you will be practicing in *Kata* training.
- This practice can also form as basis for simple *Tameshi-giri* exercises.

Comments on Moro-te-nuki (Page 50)

The name implies:
sword-drawing with both hands.

Details:

- The directions and the *Ha-suji* is the same as the single-handed drawing exercises but the placing, as soon as possible, of the left hand to reinforce the cutting action requires a slightly different body movement and alignment.

Suburi

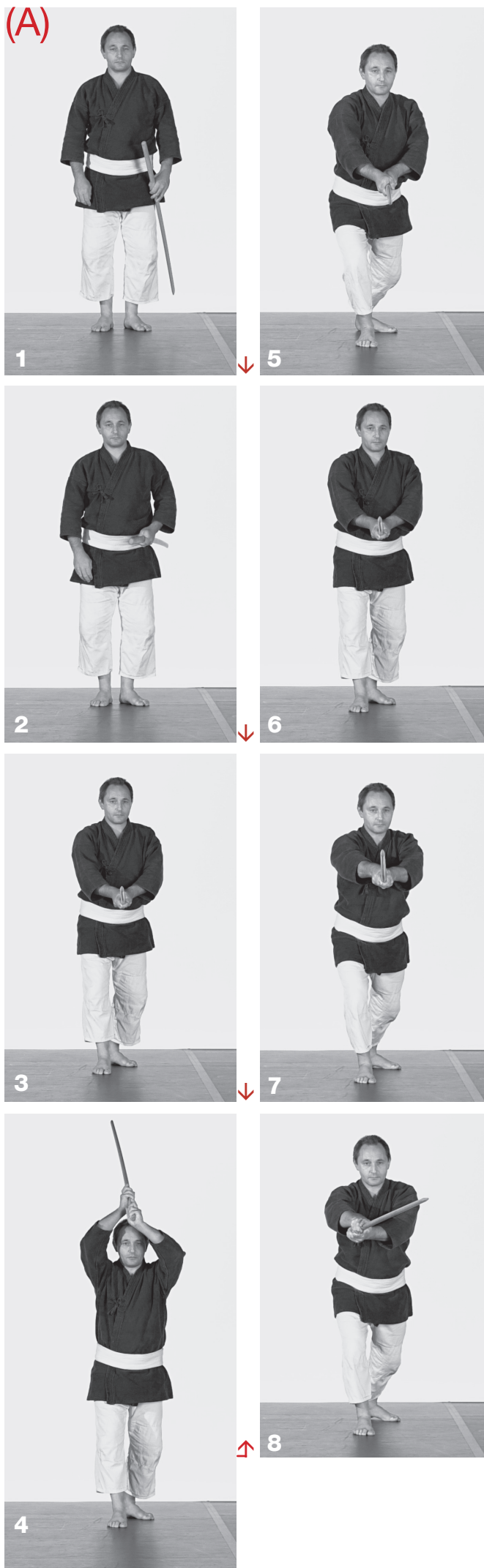
Aside from the formal *Kata* that are the essential heart of Iai practice, there are many other things that will be used to strengthen your capacities. *Su-buri* are one of these exercises.

There are no fixed rules as to how they should be performed (unless they have been formalised as part of a technical curriculum).

Su-buri should be performed taking into account their overall place within your training program. Indeed, many teachers will create *Su-buri* based on what they feel one needs to reinforce. At other times you may use a part of a *Kata* as a basis for your suburi. For example, it is a good idea to take just the *Nuki-tsuke* phase of *Sho-hattô* and repeat it, say, 500 or 1000 times in a row, non-stop.

If you are studying a particular school which emphasizes a strong *Kesa* cut then many exercises should be done which reproduce this particular movement. Aikidô practitioners incorporate the principles of their art in doing *Su-buri*. Aiki's basic body position is *Hitoe-mi* and very often a *San-kaku-irimi* movement is used to enter in triangularly to one side or the other of the adversary. Their *Su-buri* will reflect this technical aspect in their construction.

For the most part, suburi are practiced without a partner. This is known as *Tan-doku-ren-shû*.

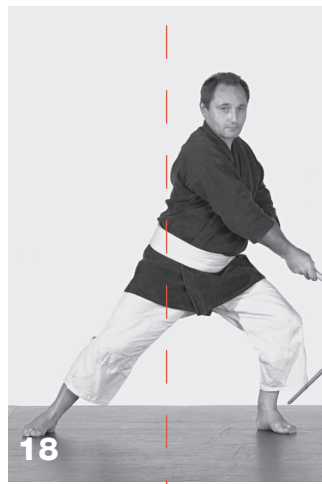
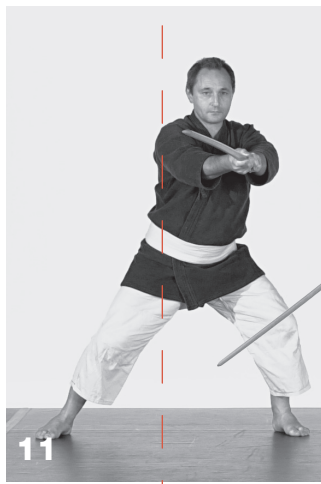
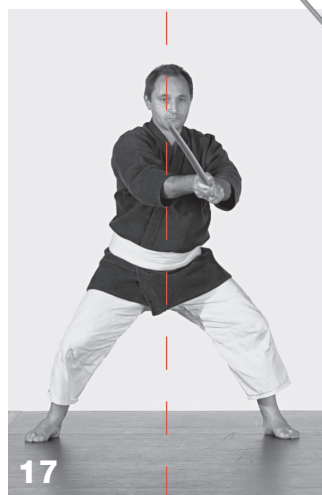
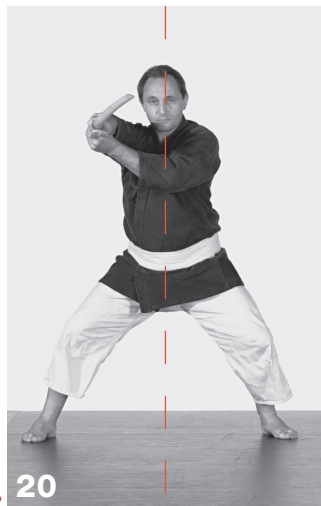


These movements have been illustrated here by Dominique Pierre, current President of the EIF/FEI.

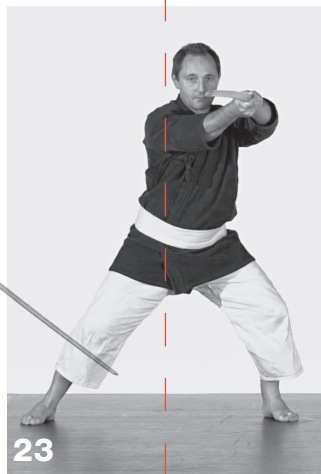
A) The first series of *Su-buri* presented here is *Happo-giri*. It is done usually with a *Bokken* but using a *Iai-tô* will help to create an intense feeling of *Ha-suji*. It contains the eight fundamental cutting movements of the sword. As you practice it correctly you will discover that it also contains the fundamental *Kamae* of Japanese Swordsmanship. Dominique has taken off his *Hakama* for better visibility of the movements.

The way it is shown in the photos puts the focal point on purely learning the cut. The *Kiba-dachi* position (next page) makes it possible to concentrate on the cut itself and the proper function of the upper body, developing the correct twist, reinforcing precise *Ha-suji* and firmly centering oneself in the hips. The most important feeling to generate here is *Sei-Chû-Sen* – the vertical line of the body's center of gravity.

The *Shô-men* cuts and *Tsuki* require assuming a proper *Sei-gan no kamae*. This exercise, despite its apparent simplicity, contains many very important features. And later on (not included in this volume), further development of the movements will lead to studying in greater depth the various applications of the cuts and it will lead to some interesting *Sô-tai-ren-shû* applications.



“It is important to keep your *Te no uchi* correctly for each cut”





24



28



25



29



26



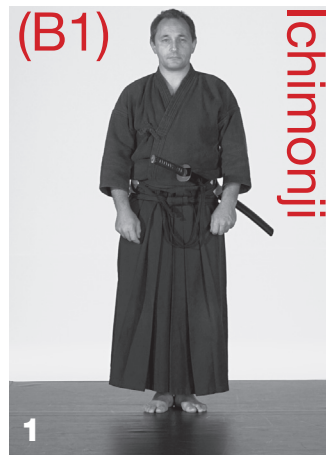
30.



27

From here, repeat from No. 6

B) The following series of suburi uses the *lai-tô*. It is a study of the fundamental sword-drawing cuts. It should be noted that because of the carrying of the sword in the *obi* at the left side of the body there are only six of the eight directions in the former exercise. These are the basic direct cuts (no intervening stops or changes to achieve the final cut). The other directions exist (and were developed in other famous *Ko-ryû*) but it is necessary to place the sword in an 'intermediate' position in order to execute them. We will see how indirect cuts come in when we do the *Morotenuki-uchi* series. Here only the final *Tsuki* movement is somewhat indirect and transitional. The most basic way of doing this series is illustrated here but a basic variation that one should try is using the other foot. For example, drawing in *Ichimonji* advancing the left foot instead of the more standard right foot and so on. Also taking a hint from the first four movements in Omori ryu doing these *Nuki-uchi* exercises in the different directions is important. There is room for quite a bit of study in this exercise.



1



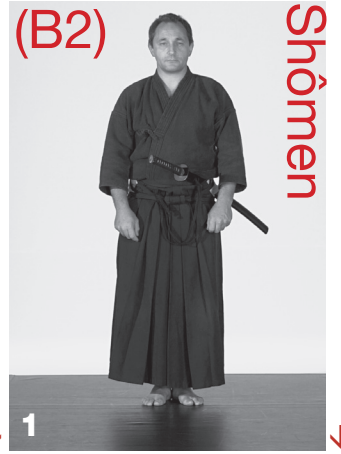
2



3



Suburi training in the Shung Do Kwan, Geneva, Switzerland - December 2008



片手

振

Kata-te-nuki

Japanese swordsmanship 45



加衣袈

Ke-sa







Gyaku-kesa



Note on Saya-biki

*In order to avoid awkward and progressively ineffective body movements during the drawing process there were 3 factors that were used by different theories and schools. For the study of Musô Shinden Ryû the use of **Saya-biki** (active use of the left-hand to withdraw the scabbard rapidly) was the principal method. Other techniques that were used in other styles were: using backward hip movement to achieve rapid and smooth **Nuki-waza**; the size and dimensions of the sword (related to the practitioner's physique) was also an important factor to balance. By using **Saya-biki** or hip movement properly it was possible to attain effective movements with a longer blade than would otherwise be possible.*



*Since the main study in this book is Musô Shinden Ryû the use of the same **Saya-biki** movement is recommended when practicing the different **Su-buri** (**Nuki-waza**) illustrated here.*

突

Tsuki





13



14



15.

C) The third series of *Su-buri* is *Moro-te-nuki*. This introduces some difficult points that the preceding series did not. As can be readily seen these cuts are mostly 'indirect' – the movement does not flow smoothly from the *Koi-guchi* directly to the target. The using of both hands for the cut also introduces some delicate and precise body movement and centering. As in the preceding exercise only six of eight cuts are shown. Once again these are possible, and, perhaps easier to do than in *Katate-nuki*. However, they are very indirect. Basically after drawing the sword one takes a passing *Migi-chûdan-waki-gamae* or a *Migi-ge-dan-waki-gamae* and then performs the appropriate cut.



(C1)

Shômen-uchi

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

両手振

Ryô-te-nuki



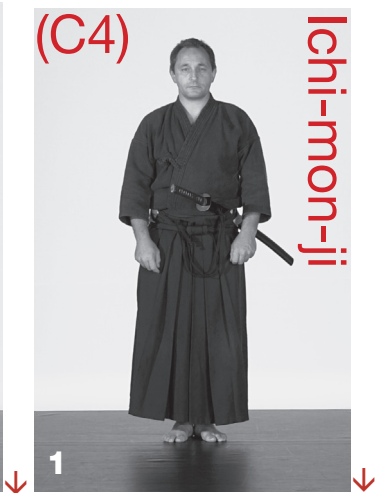
Kesa-giri





Migi-kesa





(C5)

Gyaku-kesa







Katachi
Tadashikereba
Kage
Naosu

形正影直

柔



影



*When the form
is right,
the shadow
shall stand correct.*

A Note on the notes

- I have included in this new edition many notes concerning the movements (particularly for Omori Ryû). In the first edition of this book I felt that I wished to encourage people to work with qualified teachers as much as possible in order to learn properly. I have noticed that in many cases a step-by-step, detailed description is rarely truly of any use to the student. Partially because:
 - a) nothing is engraved in stone and differences will occur from teacher to teacher;
 - b) its not for me to attempt engraving things in stone;
 - c) the descriptions are not usually very clear for someone who has no prior experience anyway;
 - d) And, just as in sex manuals, reading about it is not as worthwhile as practicing (for the most part it is downright boring to read anyway);
 - e) people tend to get the false illusion that they really know something concrete just because they have read the various details.

When making technical observations etc. it is very hard not to sound like “this is the way it is”. This is, by no means, my intention. I wish only to share some of the elements as they were taught to me. So, I have decided to comment some of the more pertinent points inasmuch as I felt it could be useful to a more complete vision of the movement and/or a related view that is complementary in other movements.



A Note on the suffix -tô

- You will notice that almost all of the movements in Omori Ryû end with the word -Tô. This is typical of the pragmatic simplicity incorporated into the names of the fundamental techniques of many classical Bu-dô. The character here is simple – it means “sword”, but how should it be understood by the practitioner?

Some people just keep its translation as literal as possible. Thus Sho-hat-tô becomes ‘Beginning Sword’, Sa-tô is ‘Sword Left’, U-tô ‘Sword Right’, Ryû-tô ‘Flowing Sword’, etc. This may be too pragmatic in terms of simplification and it may cause more confusion in the understanding of the student than a slightly more elaborate (and freer) interpretation.

In practice most people soon begin to feel that it is somewhat more comprehensive in its meaning. Its implication becomes, therefore, ‘movement or technique of (with) the sword’. It personifies also the concept of a ‘teaching’ or a ‘lesson’.

This view is reinforced by the names in various schools and with other weapons that one can observe such as in the case of : ‘... no Jo’, ‘... no Bo’, ‘Ki-Musubi no Tachi’, etc.



Ômori Ryû

大森流

Ômori Ryû is the most fundamental series of movements in the Musô Shinden Ryû curriculum. It is called *Sho-den* – the character “*Sho*” means “a beginning” and the character “*Den*” signifies “teaching or initiation”. There are twelve movements in all and each corresponds to a different setting.

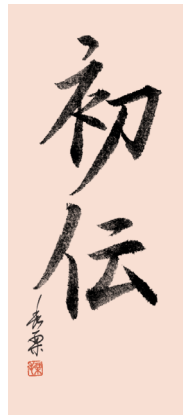
Probably there is not a connotation of “level of advancement” in the words – *Sho-den*, *Chû-den*, *Oku-den* – more likely it would be correct to think that they were adopted so as to indicate a logical and progressive method or order in which the *Kata* are best learned. Elements from an earlier movement will be an aid to learning a later movement etc.

This series comes down from the Ninth *Sôke* Hayashi Rokudayu. Originally there were only 11 movements in the series and it is said that a 12th was elaborated by Nakayama Hakudo and that the Shoden Ômori series was incorporated by Oe Masamichi into the overall curriculum as *Sho-den*. The *Sei-za* position is often criticized as being a non-combative position. Personally, I do not believe that in a society where weapons are carried at all times there could be a position in which one could allow oneself to be ‘non-combative’. Certain situations created greater openings for attack. Sleeping, eating meals, going to the bathroom were moments when awareness was likely to lapse or response to an attack was technically more difficult. There were techniques taught in *Ko-ryû* which addressed these situations (as applied to the times, living conditions and society of the period). Ômori Ryû is the result of social conditions (Edo period) in which *Sei-za* and codified etiquette were a daily necessity. There are many other schools that emphasized the importance of acting from a *Sei-za* position.

When studying *kata*, that is, pre-arranged forms, it is absolutely essential to understand that progress is made, not through the mechanical memorization of a “figure”, but rather through a profound grasp of the essence which gave birth to the outward form with which one first makes contact.

A *kata* is devised by a highly skilled expert who seeks to embody many related aspects into one concentrated form. Through proper study one is supposed to attain a state of being, equal to that of the man who created the technique, both in a physical technical sense, as well as, in a spiritual sense.

Many people make the mistake of thinking that their progress is determined by the number of forms they have memorized; but the outer appearance of something does not always contain the inner aspects.



Sho-den

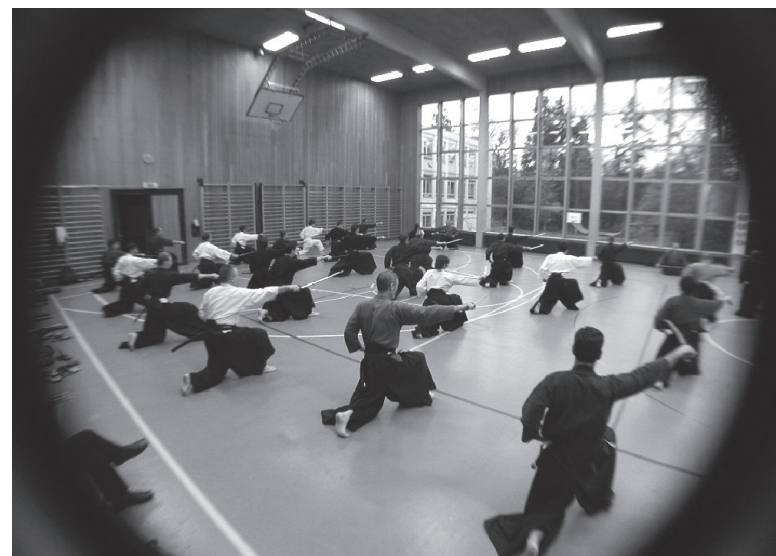
Properly directed practice and unsparing effort are essential qualities for study.

Also, practically speaking, one will see that the given situation in a *Kata* is often useless or outright illogical if applied combatively in the exact form in which it is presented to the student. The *Kata* is a highly idealized and hypothetically perfect situation. However, with certain changes – spontaneously born out of a trained instinctive and creative capacity of the individual – answers to numerous real situations will come naturally and instinctively (free of all mechanical or intellectualized superficial understanding). This is especially true in the case of the Ômori Ryû *Kata*.

The *Kata* is, then, a matrix or pattern aimed at enabling the student to relive, so to speak, the experience of the master who created it and, possibly, propelling him to an even higher level. The *Kata* is like an acorn which when planted and tended to in the correct manner will produce an oak tree. If *Kata* are taken as mere “figures” then their real essence is destroyed. They will be like empty shells with no substance within.

Moreover, one should try to see in Ômori Ryû, not twelve different techniques, but rather penetrate through to where one can feel the oneness of them all.

Outwardly each movement appears differently but, in truth, there is perfect unity in Ômori Ryû; it is only through long and persevering work, particularly on *Sho-hat-tô*, that one will clearly understand this. Don't make the obvious mistake of thinking that Ômori Ryû is only “beginner's stuff”. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is sometimes said that if one could only do a perfect *Sho-hat-tô* one would be a master. Many people practicing *Iai* today do not push their practice far enough and too soon jump to the conclusion that they have understood; this is indeed sad and counter-productive.



Shohattô



初 發 刀

The name implies “Initial Beginning Sword Movement”.

This movement is also called *Mae* in various styles, which means “to the front” or “forwards”.

General situation :

The situation, as in most of the *Kata* in this *Ryû*, is very non-specific. In *Sho-hat-tô* this is particularly true. Essentially it is a summary of all the fundamental actions that one needs to learn in this series and other series, as well as in many other styles.

Many different situations may be defined and many teachers have done so.

If you were thinking in terms of an overall *defensive strategy* you could see the initial drawing action as being a preemptive striking action as though someone was starting an attack upon you (*Sak-ki*). If you were thinking in terms of an overall *offensive strategy* you could see the initial drawing action as being a direct attack upon your adversary.

You might also envisage the initial drawing action (*Nuki-tsuke*) as being a *menace/warning* like a *Kamae* that is not actually intended as a cutting action. This might suffice to diffuse a potential attack before anything actually happens. Or further, an action aimed at *unbal-*

ancing or weakening the attacker’s position. The *Kiri-tsuke* then would become a cutting action that one was subsequently obliged to perform if the initial warning was not heeded by an attacker.

The *Kata* expresses an action that precisely is NOT defined to a specific situation so that the practitioner has a universal pattern that may be adopted to many different and varied conditions. It ultimately leaves the elaboration of the varied cases where it could be applied to the choice of the user according to the real situation he might be facing.

Again for example, it could be seen that an attacker was on his feet and attacking with an overhead cut. *Sho-hat-tô Nuki-tsuke* could be used accompanied by a body/evasion, entering movement (*Iri-mi*) to one side of the attacker and the cut being to his abdomen or legs.

Many possibilities may be construed and we should not fall into the trap of wishing to define one sweeping overall situation. Defining situations also implies a limitation to one’s freedom of action.

- There is one point that should be made clear but about which many beginners are either unaware of or find contradictory. Under most circumstances a *Kata* is performed in the direction of the *Kami-za*. We attack towards this defined direction and the opponents attack comes from this direction.

Further, we return to this position/direction at the end of the *Kata* and the same orientation is reset for the following *Kata*.

General spirit :

- Keep in mind that this series was conceived for use indoors and in formal situations.
- Try to create in yourself a very positive attitude which will express conviction in your movement.
- Try to always use large and ample movements and, in the beginning, speed is of no matter. Later on you can tackle this question.

Details:

Nuki-tsuke

- In beginning the sword draw pay close attention to the thumb to disengage the *Ha-baki* from the *Koi-guchi* (*Koi-guchi no Kiri-kata*) (2). Today many student's *lai-tô* are worn at the mouth of the *Saya* so they never perform this action properly. As a matter of fact, most are worried that their swords might "fall out" prematurely.
- The arm and hand (2) position on the draw seems, at first, uncomfortable. But when one realizes that the angle of the hands and forearms is such that it facilitates keeping the ample sleeves of a kimono from interfering with the *Nuki-tsuke* it makes more sense. Further, this action should be calm and discreet but firm.
- The toes are disengaged at the back at the earliest possible natural moment and a transitory position of *Kisa* is performed.
- By the time one has reached an upright position on the knees the blade is already well advanced in the drawing movement. This must be done in a smooth action that flows into the completion of *Nuki-tsuke*.
- Pay careful attention to your *Saya-biki*. This is considered to be one of the most important details both in *Nuki-tsuke* and in *Nô-tô*.
- An important point of *Nuki-tsuke* (*Nuki-waza*) is that the *Kissaki* reaches out to where its cut goes (adversary) (3).

抜



- The target here is sometimes said to be the eyes, sometimes the temples and sometimes the neck. The neck would seem to be a very good choice as it is more difficult to evade than a cut to the head (a cut carotid has most definite effects). If I knew someone with numerous combat experiences with *Nuki-tsuke* and he advised me which target was best I might be more specific in my advice. It seems to me that it would also ultimately depend on the adversary's position.
- The *Kissaki* should maintain a flowing movement as it separates from the *Koi-guchi*.
- At the end of the *Nuki-tsuke* there are two important points to observe: *Seme* and *Kime*.
- The blade and the arms should be at the same level as your RELAXED shoulders. The *Kissaki* may be just a touch lower than your right fist.
- All throughout this and the other phases of the movement pay close attention to *Sei-chû-sen*. The upper body should remain upright. Do NOT lean forward. The waist and abdomen should adopt a firm position (4).
- Relax the shoulders.

4 (profile)



Miscellaneous:

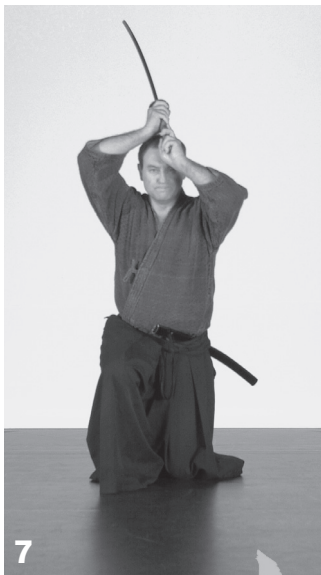
Sometimes one is told to raise the right (left) foot on drawing your sword and kick forward with a decisive stamp. It is a teaching method that helps develop a good feeling for *Ki-Ken-Tai*. However, also see the text (page 26) on *Hakama* worn at court and you might think that this has something to do with getting the cloth from under one's knees and gaining the space to slide forward for *Kiri-tsuke*? Both the stamping foot and the silent sliding step are correct.



5



6



7

circular movement and not an up and down action. Another being that it is usually understood that it is important to avoid hitting your helmet on a battlefield so here it could be wise not to change habits. Thus when the situation is the other way around one wouldn't have the problem with hitting one's helmet or head-gear having a mistaken habit from elsewhere. Just for the curiosity of it, I was also told that the thrust up and to the rear (here and in *Chi-buri*) could have a discouraging effect on anyone behind you with ideas. Further, in some styles this action is done in a *Kiri-gaeshi* like movement.

• When your sword is over your head make sure that the point does not go below the horizontal and, better yet, it should be up at about a 45° angle creating the feel of a continuous and circular movement (7).



8



9



10

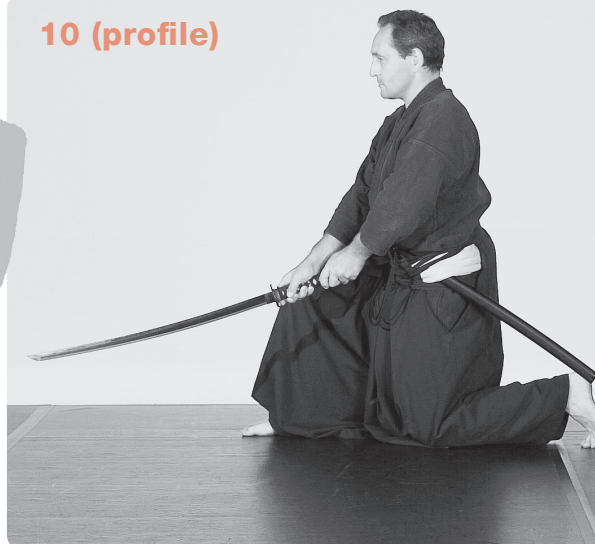
- The downward cut should be strong and firm. But do not sacrifice a relaxed muscular action. Don't let your shoulders tense up because you are trying to get more power than you are capable of.
- The *Kiri-tsuke* should stop cleanly about where your *Mono-uchi* is parallel to the ground or the *Ha-suji* has come down to the center of the adversary (see *profile*). This, of course, will vary from sword shape (*Su-gata*).
- At this point you should maintain your *Zan-shin* and the wait will be longer than between the *Nuki-tsuke* and the *Kiri-tsuke*.

Kiri-tsuke

- When bringing the sword up over the head (*Furi-kaburi*) pass to the left side of your head. (6) This could have originally been for various reasons. One being that it allows the main cut (*Kiri-tsuke*) to be done in a continuous and

切

10 (profile)



7 (profile)



振

Chi-buri

• This phase should be clearly defined in each of its phases but, nonetheless, should be a continuous flowing movement.

• The arm should be extended out, relaxed and parallel to the ground in the first phase (12). Then the forearm is brought in towards the head bending at the elbow and maintaining the upper arm parallel to the floor in the following phase. The blade should come to a 45° angle well above the head (13) (make sure the point does NOT drop down to the rear!). The third phase (14) should flow from this position and the circular cutting motion downward should have perfect *Ha-suji*. It should also correspond exactly to the body-raising with the knees. The point then comes to a clean stop at its final position (15).

• Be extremely careful to move the whole body when changing the body and feet from right to left. (16 to 18) Pay attention to maintaining a perfect *Sei-chû-sen* throughout the action. Too often only the legs are moved. This may be seen in the profile photos (*below*).

• Many feel that this *Chi-buri* movement has no combat effectiveness. I would be inclined to

agree as the only effective way of cleaning a blade after cutting is to wash it, dry it carefully and proceed to thoroughly work on it with *Uchi-ko* and cloth/paper. Then apply oil and ONLY then return it to its scabbard. This question of *Chi-buri* effectiveness is one that will generate considerable debate for a long time to come. However, I will add here



11



12



13



14



15



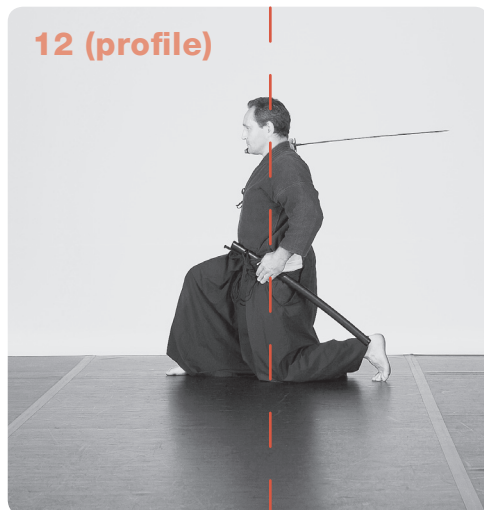
16



17



18



12 (profile)



15 (profile)

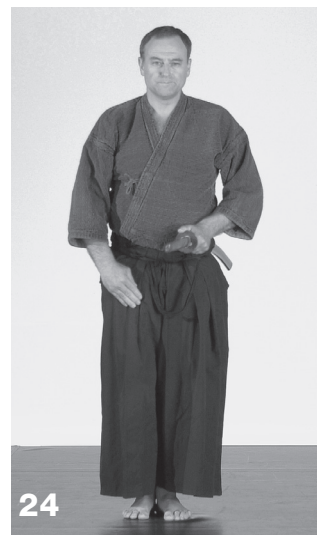
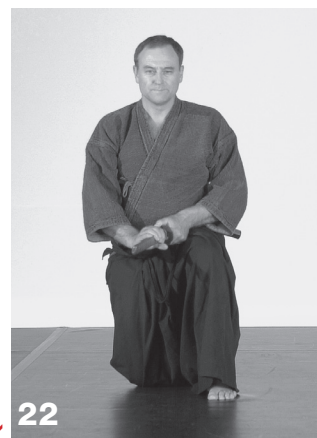
that the *Chi-buri* in Ōmori Ryū seems to be a highly stylised version of an earlier, more vigourously executed technique that would effectively remove enough material to return the blade to the scabbard given a combative situation. This would be done keeping in mind that the blade would be properly cleaned and cared for at the earliest moment permitting.

Nô-tô

- At the end of the *Chi-buri* a period of *Zan-shin* is observed while only the left hand brings the *Saya* to the centre of the body in preparation for *Nô-tô* (18).
- In this first series Omori Ryū the *Nô-tô* movement will begin close to the *Ha-baki* (19).
- It is a useful precaution to be mindful that the cutting edge of the blade be facing forward and not down. Many accidents can occur when this is not performed properly. The *Ha* may land on the index finger and cause a serious cut

or you may even slip and the blade may fall downwards with the cutting-edge aimed directly at your right knee and/or toes!

- Further, DO NOT PINCH the blade between the left index and thumb when performing *Nô-tô*. Learn to keep all the forces involved in the



movement in perfect, relaxed balance. In fact, this movement is done by a balancing on the middle knuckle of the index finger. This is something that must be taught directly.

- The left hand plays a significant role in *Nô-tô*. It is as though you actually put the scabbard on the sword rather than the blade in the scabbard (20). *Saya-biki* is just as important here as it was in *Nuki-tsuke*.
- Many things in Japanese arts are defined in 3 levels or dimensions – Heaven, Man, Earth. Here is another example: the first third of the blade is sheathed rapidly, the following third is slower and the last third is quite slower.
- You begin lowering your body when you start the slower (21), second phase of the *Nô-tô* and you must make sure that you complete both actions (lowering the body and sheathing the sword) at the same time.
- Once *Nô-tô* is accomplished it is not yet terminated.... after a short pause place your thumb on the *Tsuba* to secure the *Ha-baki* once more in the *Saya*. After this you stand up, (23) bring your feet together, (24) pause and take three steps back to your original position.
- All *I-ai Kata* in this school end in the same position from whence they begin.



Satô

左刀

The name implies “A sword movement left”.

This *Kata* is also called in other schools simply ‘*Hidari*’ which means ‘Left’.

General situation :

This *Kata* is fundamentally a turning-to-the-left version of *Sho-hat-tô*. However, from a training point of view you will be using the left lower parts of your body – legs, feet etc. This will be excellent training for balancing and becoming more bi-lateral. The difficulty comes because the sword always remains right-handed so cross-movement requires careful use of the hips.

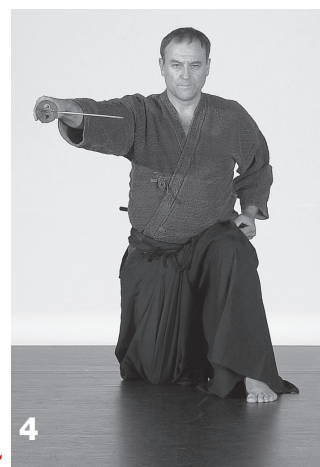
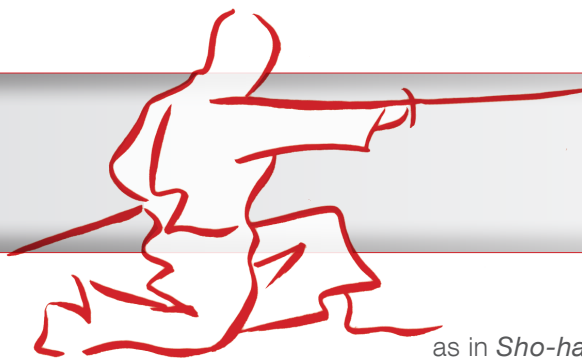
General spirit :

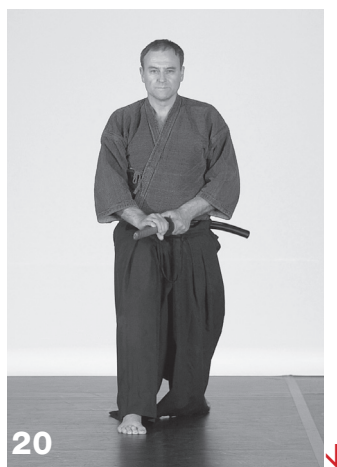
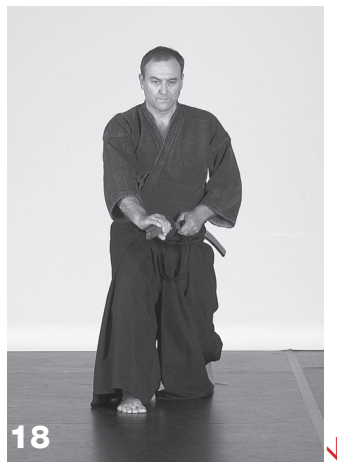
see *Sho-hat-tô*.

Details :

- All of the details in *Sho-hat-tô*. are applicable here.
- The most obvious difference is the delicate coordination of the left-turning body movement in *Nuki-tsuke*. It is important to turn the body while drawing the sword point to the *Koi-guchi*. (3) Then one should be aligned facing forward,

as in *Sho-hat-tô*, in order to complete the *Nuki-tsuke* strike powerfully in a straight line – not while the body is in the more precarious process of turning to face left. This is one of those key points that I feel cannot be described properly in a book but must be taught directly to a student. I hope that the photos will convey some of the meaning here.





Utô



右刀

The name implies “A sword movement right”.

This *Kata* is also called in other schools simply ‘*Migi*’ which means ‘Right’

General situation :

This *kata* is fundamentally a turning-to-the-right version of *Sho-hat-tô*.

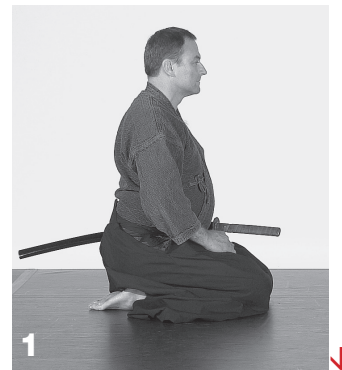
General spirit :

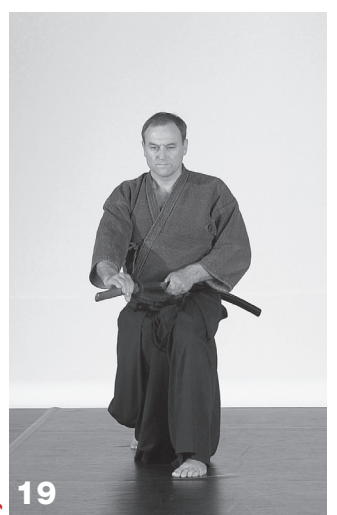
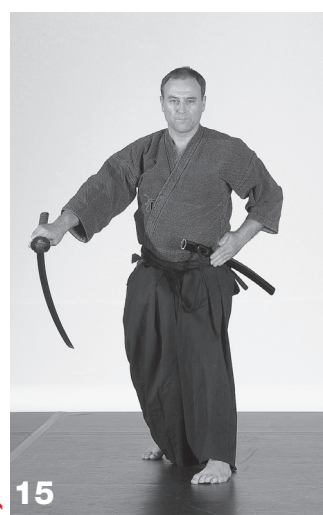
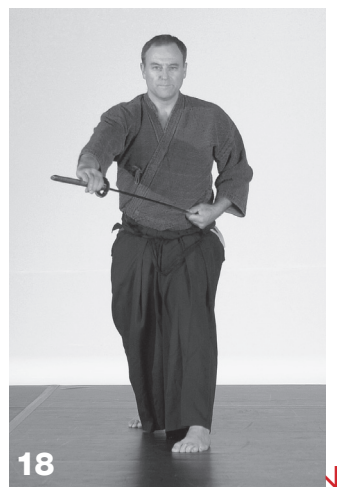
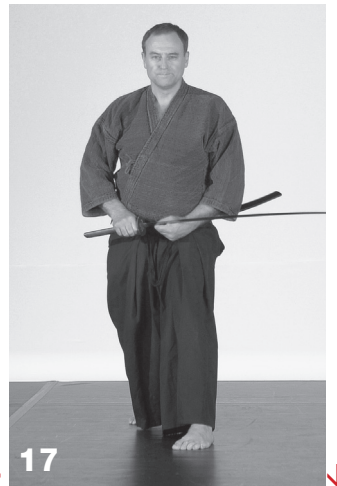
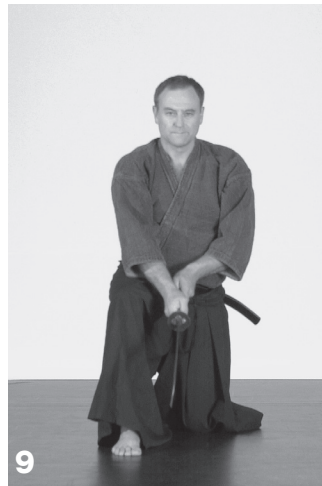
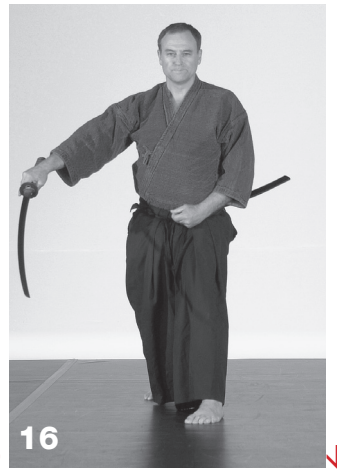
see *Sho-hat-tô*.

Details :

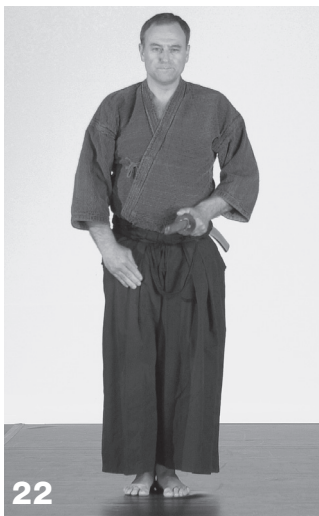
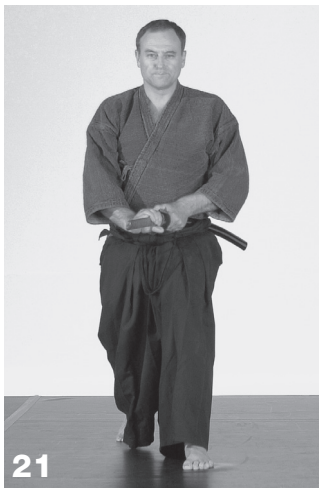
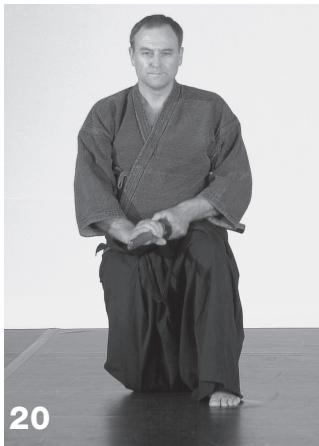
- All of the details in *Sho-hat-tô*. are applicable here.
- Once again, as for *Sa-tô*, the difference is the delicate coordination of the right-turning body movement in *Nuki-tsuke*.
- It is important to turn the body while drawing the sword point to the *Koi-guchi*. Then one should be aligned facing forward, as in *Sho-hat-tô*, in order to complete the *Nuki-tsuke* strike (3) powerfully in a straight line – not while the body is in the more precarious process of turning to face right. It is more difficult to achieve this in *U-tô* because the tendency will be to make a “sweeping” *Nuki-tsuke*

while turning to the right. This, again, is one of those key points that I feel must be taught directly to a student. I hope the photos will convey sufficiently some of the meaning here.





Ataritô



当刀

The name implies “A sword movement Checking/Striking”.

This *kata* is also called in other schools simply ‘*Ushiro*’ which means ‘Behind’

General situation :

This *kata* is fundamentally a turning-to-the-left- 180° version of *Sa-tô*. However, once again, from a training point of view you will be using the left lower parts of your body – legs, feet etc. This will be excellent training for balancing and becoming more bi-lateral. The difficulty comes because the sword always remains right-handed so cross-movement requires careful use of the hips. Overall this is more difficult to execute when turning 180° to the rear.

General spirit :

see *Sho-hat-tô*.

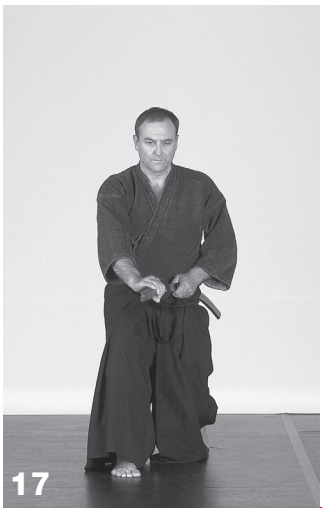
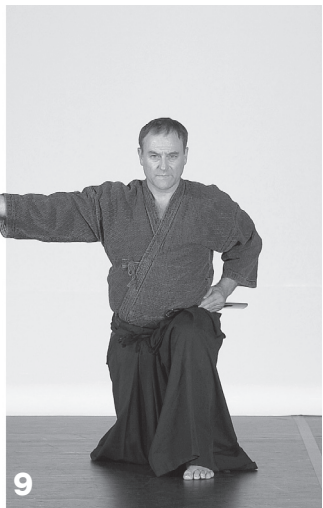
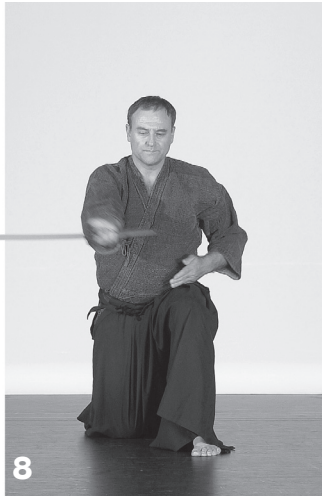
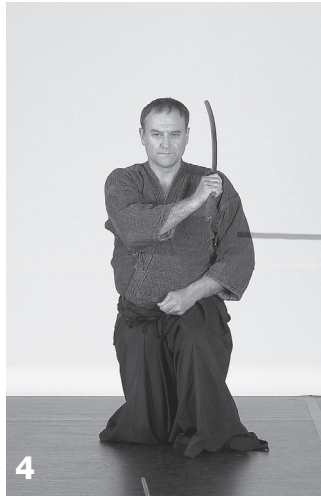
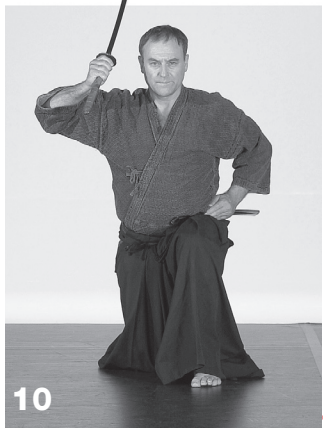
Details :

- All of the details in *Sho-hat-tô* are applicable here.
- The most obvious difference is the delicate co-ordination of the left-turning body movement in *Nuki-tsuke*. It is important to turn the body while drawing the sword

point to the *Koi-guchi*. Then one should be aligned facing forward, as in *Sho-hat-tô*, in order to complete the *Nuki-tsuke* strike powerfully in a straight line – not while the body is in the more precarious process of turning to the left. This, again, is one of those key points that I feel must be taught directly to a student.

- It is always asked why we turn to the left. One reason is that it is much easier for an adversary to block the right arm while turning and, perhaps because a right turn would be more expected. Further, a left turn of the body presents the cutting-edge of the blade to the adversary earlier in the action. Turning to the left could also facilitate an *Iri-mi* movement ending on the inside of the adversary’s position.







18



22



19



23.



20



21

These first 4 movements of Ômori Ryû may seem uselessly repetitive and overly simple to the beginner. He might even get the impression that someone actually wants to slow down his progress!

↓ However, instead of this mind-set, why not ask why were these 4 movements placed one after another with so little variation – basically just performing one movement in 4 directions?

Many things have been organized in *Ko-ryû* in a specific way by men of great experience who seek to embody wide technical applications in simple and condensed format. Sometimes it is good to keep practicing without constant questions until at some point the whole structure “speaks” to us of some aspect of our study that we had hitherto not been able to grasp. There are hints hidden everywhere that will only become evident or possible with time and practice.

So, just possibly, this principle of perfecting a movement in the 4 fundamental directions – *Shi-hô-giri* – (which implies in any direction whatsoever) could be applied through personal study and experience of the practitioner to other *Kata* in the series? There would not be any use encumbering the simplicity of the 12 (11) basic *Kata* of Ômori Ryû with numbers of other possibilities. It would already all be there for discovery through experience. the stage “*Shû*” in the study of *Budô* calls for strict adherence to the teaching. Some consider, however, that the next stage “*Ha*” implies stepping back and dissecting things with a “free spirit”. Only then is the path to “*Ri*” accessible.

In-yôshintai



陰陽進退

The name literally translates as “Yin-Yang, Forwards and Backwards”.

General situation:

This *Kata* can be considered very much as being *Sho-hat-tô* with a transition to a standing position. After the first *Nô-tô* we once again use a *Sho-hat-tô*-type configuration. However, there are subtle differences to be learned.

General spirit:

much the same as *Sho-hat-tô*.

Details:

- This movement is called “*yae-gaki*” in Oe Masamichi’s teaching line. Apparently, he felt the older name contained inauspicious characters.
- This *kata* will certainly re-enforce the leg muscles as you will discover with repetition.
- The *Nuki-tsuke* is done just as in *Sho-hat-tô*. It is important that the leg and knee positions be precise (as they should have already been in *Sho-hat-tô*) so that the

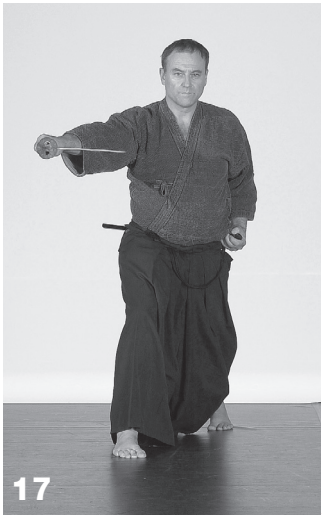
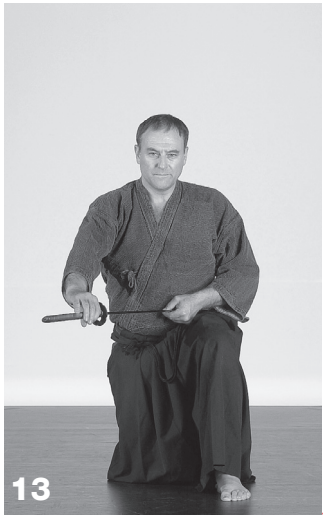
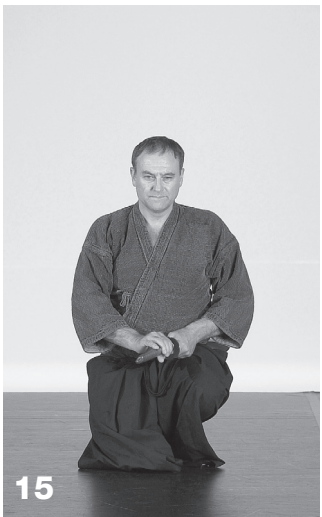
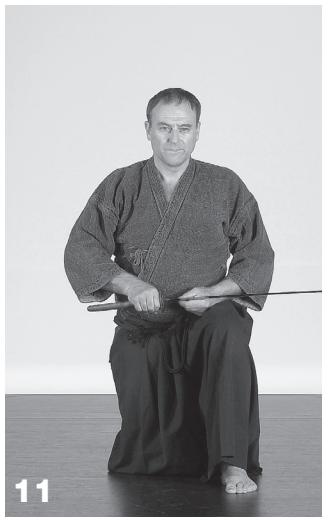
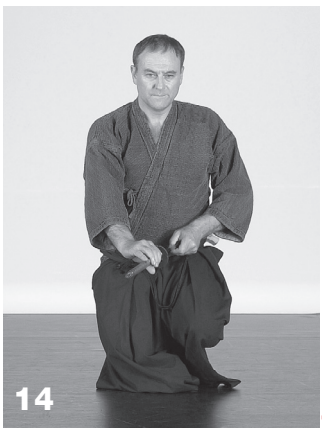
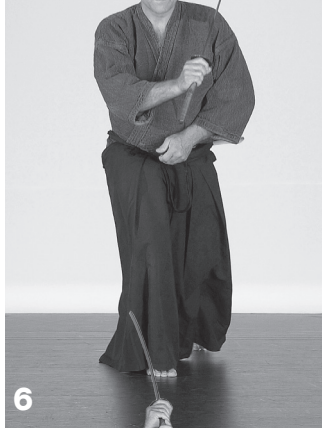
transition to the standing *Kiritsuke* is powerful and well-balanced.

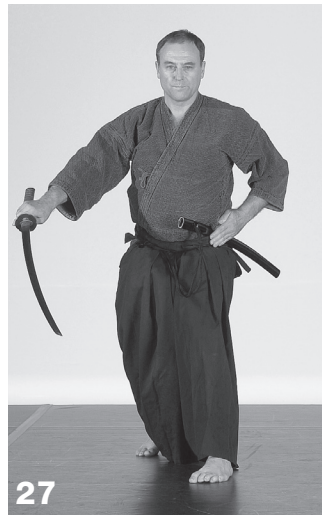
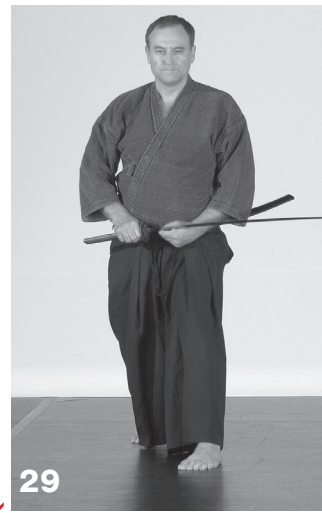
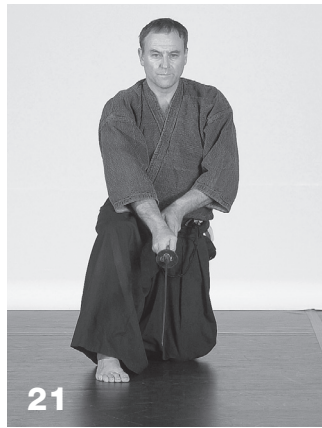
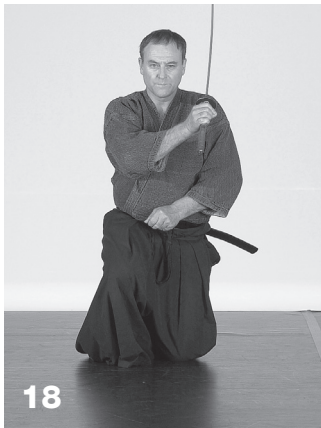
- A new time coordination takes place for the *Kiritsuke*. You must raise the sword over your head (*Furi-kaburi*) by the time that your left ankle is level with your right ankle as you step forward on the left leg and the cutting-down movement (*Otoshi*) must be completed when the left foot advances the half-step to its final position. This requires a considerable change in body/rhythm/coordination that was not an element in the previous *Kata*.
- Be attentive to maintaining the precise upper-body execution of the *kiri tsuke* as you have learned in the previous *Kata*.
- The first *Nô-tô* in this *Kata* will serve as an introduction to the *Nô-tô* movements in the second series (*Chû-den*).
- The *Nô-tô* movement should be completed when the left ankle is at the mid-point of the right tibia. This squatting position should be strong and well-balanced. The practitioner should be able to remain in that position comfortably and, at the same time,

be able to stand-up and/or react immediately with no difficulty to follow into the next *Nuki-tsuke*.

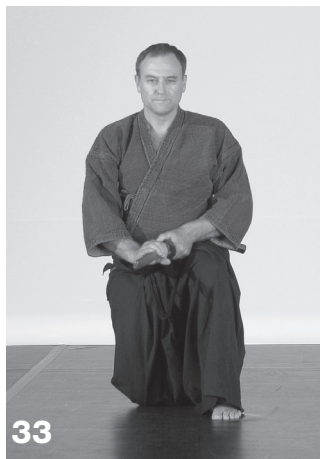
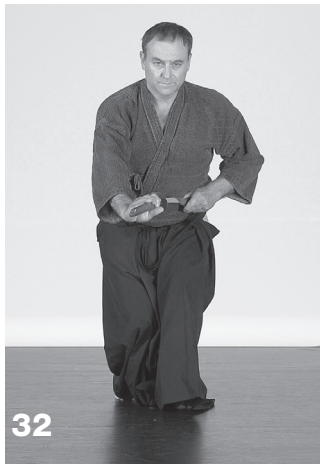
- The raised/standing position of this following *nuki tsuke* (towards the rear) also prepares the ground for movements of the *chuden* series. The transition throughout the action must be regular and steady. Do NOT bob up and down with your body and head.
- The *Nuki-tsuke* must flow into the *kiritsuke* in the same rhythm that it does in *Sho-hat-tô*. However, it is considerably more delicate to move back down to the position on the knees. This level-change should be done smoothly and progressively.
- The *Kata* now finishes with the familiar sequence as in *Sho-hat-tô*.







Ryûtô, Ukenagashi



流刀

Ryû-tô means “the sword movement that possesses continuity, which is flowing, which is uninterrupted”.

Uke-nagashi means “receiving without interrupting”.

General situation :

This movement is a wonderful change from the preceding ones. Usually the student has spent a good amount of time with *Sho-hat-tô – In-yô-shin-tai*. He has probably gotten a bit oversure of his own capacities when along comes *Ryû-tô* which requires many new body movements and positions. It is just the thing to bring the student back down from his premature confidence.

An attack comes from the left side not allowing enough time for a preemptive strike. Therefore it is avoided within a direct and simultaneous counterstrike.

Parrying a direct (probably two-handed) cut with a one-handed blocking action (plus an admittedly weak body position) is definitely not feasible or logical. *Ryû-tô* teaches us not to seek contact or a blocking technique but rather it places emphasis on mobility, agility, precision and speed in order to

face the situation. Nonetheless, we must create the strongest possible position in case some contact is unavoidable.

General spirit :

What is important here is not to break the movement into two, three or more separate phases but to ensure a continuous and flowing unified movement. The reception of the attack should only re-enforce the “*kaeshi waza*” where the attacker’s own power and movement are ‘returned upon him’.

There is definitely a more defensive character to this *Kata* but this does NOT imply that the movement should be a broken (1-2-3 attack, parry, riposte) rhythm. This movement should demonstrate a unity of movement/action so that it gives the feeling that the attack and the *Uke-nagashi* are all one. This concept may sometimes be called by varying terms: *Ki-awase*, *Ki no nagare*, *Sen no sen* or *Kôbô-ichi*. You must practice this *Kata* until you can feel that your cut is striking no later than the attacker’s cut **would have struck** had you not moved from your initial position.

36.





Details:

- The sword is drawn simultaneously with the lifting of the left knee and placing of the left foot just next to the right knee (3). This allows the weight of the body to be properly centered in relation to the skeletal and muscular potential so as to facilitate the next phase of standing up. The hips will be at a 45° angle re-enforcing the uke nagashi draw and placing them in the best possible direction for the following Kiba-dachi position.
- Do not linger (or put your full weight) on your right (rear) foot (5). Keep the weight predominantly on the left foot creating a transitory feeling in the kiba-dachi position that does not interrupt the flow of the whole kata.

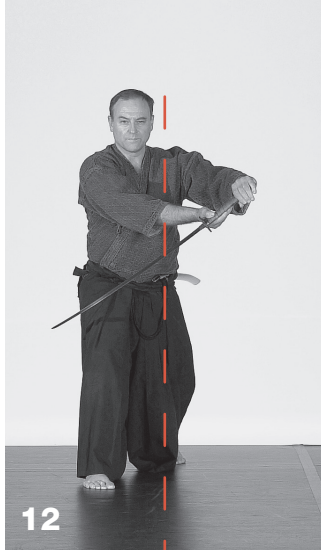


- When you are properly centered then slide the left foot back and assume gedan (11).

5 (profile)



- Make sure that you are correctly centered at the end of the Kesa cut (your feet should be joined, with the balance on the balls of the feet and a right angle between the knees) (8).
- Come back to the center in chudan by pivoting on the balls of your feet and not changing the bend in your knees (10) (your head should remain at the same height).



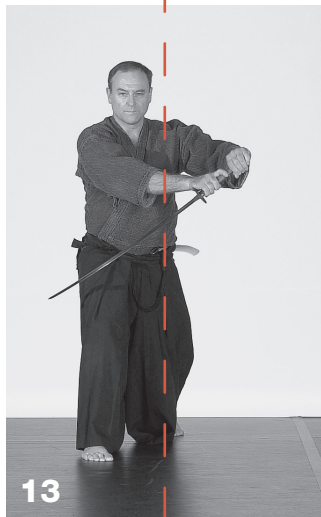
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- From illustration 21 to 22 you take a small step diagonally backwards. This takes place after the end of the *Ryû-tô* main movement. This step will take us back to the center-line position (standing) where we began the *Kata*. In this way it is also the beginning position for the next *Kata* – *Jun-tô*. This re-centering action is new and different from the re-positioning steps for the *Kata Sho-hat-tô* to *In-yô-shin-tai* because of the stepping out of the straight line movement during *Ryû-tô*.



22.

- The hands during this *Chi-buri* are no higher than a relaxed shoulder level (12).
- The point of your sword is just in front of the thigh at roughly one third to one half the way to the hip (14).
- The *Chi-buri* and *Nô-tô*, though significantly different from other *Kata* in the series, retain certain characteristics. In *Nô-tô* the blade is horizontal and thus only the right hand is reversed. Otherwise everything remains the same (15 to 20).
- The *Chi-buri* here is probably a highly stylised and simplified form that otherwise would require the use of a cloth for cleaning the blade before *Nô-tô* (See note on the *Chi-buri* of *Ryû-tô*, *Jun-tô* and *Gyaku-tô*, opposite). (see drawings).



NOTE concerning the *Chi-buri* movements in *Ryû-tô*, *Jun-tô* and *Gyaku-tô*

It is interesting to observe the *Chi-buri* movements in the three *Kata* – *Ryu-tô*, *Jun-tô* and *Gyaku-tô*. Very often these movements are taught with no further explanations other than the form in which they are performed. However, it is obvious that the aim of *Chi-buri* (removal of blood on the blade by a vigorous action) cannot be attained by the *Chi-buri* movement of these *Kata*.

It is often explained, in the case of *Gyaku-tô*, that the final upward stroke of the blade is destined to cut the throat artery of the dying opponent. Further, this *Kata*, if the above were the absolute explanation, would be the only movement in the Omori series that had no *Chi-buri* movement.

The *Chi-buri* in *Jun-tô* is very similar to that in *Ryu-tô* and it is sometimes explained that an assistant to the *Kai-shaku-nin* wipes the blade that is tendered to the side. These 3 *Chi-buri* are indeed somewhat paradoxical in the form in which they are performed.

As has already been mentioned, many movements in *Kata* form (in many schools) are preserved in a highly idealized format. The *Chi-buri* of these three *Kata* would appear much more coherent and logical if one assumes that the blade is actually wiped with a cloth during the *Chi-buri*. But it is not necessary for the practitioner to perform in detail all these actions. Thus the cloth and the actual wiping etc. may be simplified into the actions that the *Kata* illustrates with no significant difference to what is being taught through the *Kata*. These details would constitute an oral (*Ku-den*) aspect of the teaching.

Chi-buri
in *Jun-tô*



Chi-buri
in *Gyaku-tô*



Jun-tô



順 刀

Also used: *Kai-shaku-tô*

General situation:

The name *Jun-tô* comes from a very old root *Jun-shi* based in the custom of dying when one's lord died or "suicide by fidelity". This custom was very ancient and we find references back to the 7th century. Later, the practice became known as *Sep-puku* and various ramifications of the ritual came into being. To understand this phenomenon more thoroughly a cultural and philosophical study of life and history in Japan should be undertaken. *Jun-tô* implies the "sword movement involved in *Junshi*".

A *Ko-ryû* has its origins dating before the time of the Meiji Period. The proper procedure for a *Kai-shaku-nin* was, most certainly, something swordsmen needed to know and understand.

This *Kata* seems to divide the spirit of the first six *Kata* and the last six – whose situations are a little more defined.

General spirit:

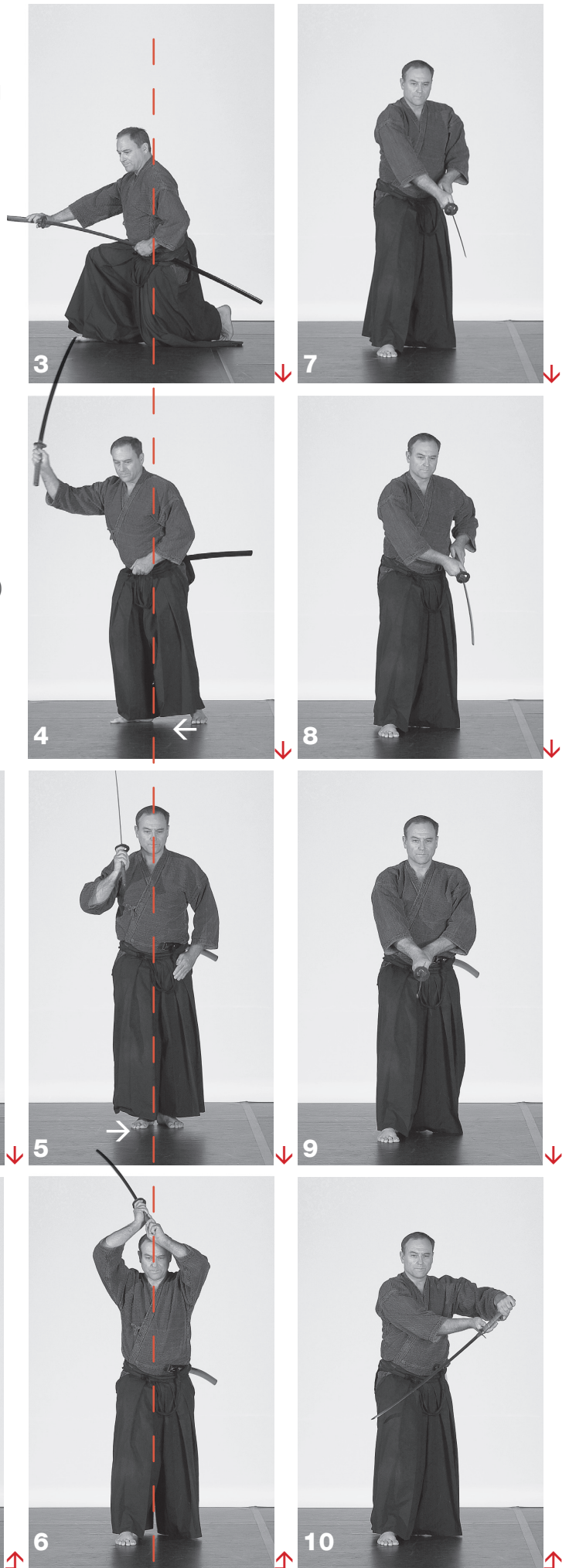
The *kai-shaku-nin* was the second who, usually an able swordsman, was designated to decapitate the principal. Thus *kai-shaku-tô* implies the "sword movement for a *Kai-shaku*".

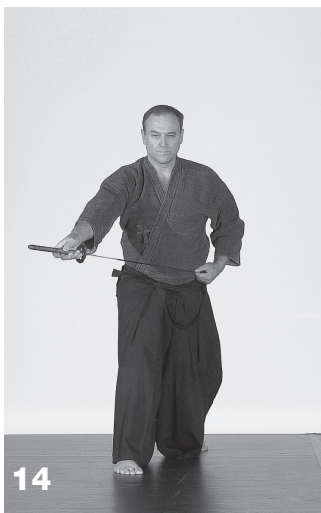
This *Kata* is the 7th in the Omori series. It is a telling reminder of the fact that this series is intimately connected to etiquette and forms that were destined for use 'indoors' to resolve situations that could provoke violent ramifications within a social nexus. In this *Kata* there is no enemy.

Details:

- This *Kata* should be done slowly and smoothly. There should be no sudden movements that would disturb the situation (the downward cut must demonstrate firmness and strength however).
- (See note on the *Chi-buri* of *Ryû-tô*, *Jun-tô* and *Gyaku-tô* on preceding page)
- There are many variations on this *Kata* and because of its character it is very difficult to say one is more correct than another.

- It was explained to me that etiquette and positions were changed according to the social rank of the principal. Also things were modified according to the reasons for which the principal was performing *Sep-puku*. Be assured that, as usual, there are many complex aspects involved and so this *Kata*, in my mind, should remain an expression of simplicity. It was most certainly a *Kata* that was dependent on direct teaching. I was explained that it was not always taught within the order (*Jun-jo*) of Ômori Ryû, but rather, was taught to the student later on.





19.



Gyakutô



逆刀

The name implies “Reversal Sword movement”.

In Musô Jikiden Eishin Ryû this *Kata* is called “*Tsuke-komi*” which means “pursuit”.

General situation :

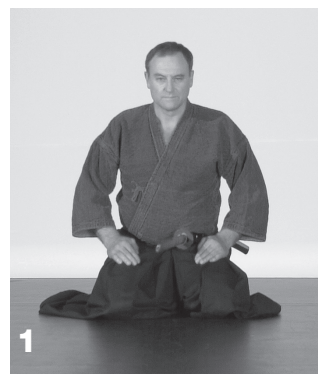
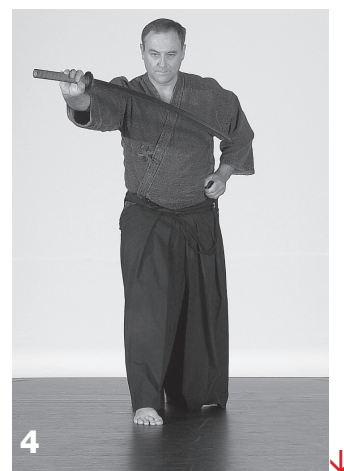
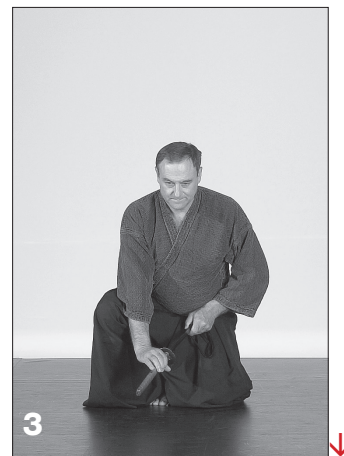
Once again, as in *Ryû-tô*, a one-handed blocking of a powerful *Kiri-otoshi* by the attacker does not seem a logical explanation here. The lesson taught in *Ryû-tô* should be applied here and the first action with *Nuki-tsuke* will be to step back enough for the attacker's sword to miss its target.

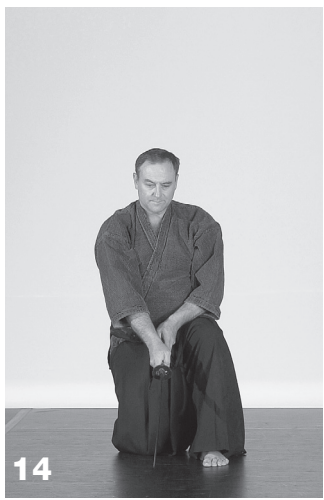
General spirit :

There is, at first sight, a definite ‘reversal’ of roles here : one is first in the position of being attacked and the initial *Nuki-tsuke* would seem to be an defensive/evasion movement that is immediately turned into an attacking role thereafter. However, as you practice this *Kata* you discover the possibility of another ‘reversal’ which is spiritually different. That is to say that after the lengthy *Zan-shin* in *Jô-dan no Kamae* you become a sort of *Kai-shaku-nin* to the defeated enemy. This is an aspect that is worth serious thought.

Details :

- On the initial *Nuki-tsuke* you move backwards just to create the precise *Ma-ai* where the attacker's cut passes in front (creating an unbalancing of his position) (4).
- The most difficult thing here is to perform a very continuous movement into the men attack followed by a vigorous pursuit of the *Kiri-oroshi*.
- (5) Make sure that your right hand is not in the middle of your body but, rather at about the vertical above your right





shoulder. Just as in the similar position in *Ryû-tô*, you cannot expect to have the power and stability here to block a full-power overhead cut. So the action of stepping back just beyond the attacker's *Ma-ai* is the important point and *Ryû-tô* has taught us this already. See the comments on *Ryû-tô*.

- As you lower slowly your blade from *Hidari-jô-dan* keep your *Me-tsuke* forward until the sword point is at about eye level. Then begin lowering your body and your *Me-tsuke* so that the movement completes itself in unison when your right knee comes to the ground. (11 to 14)
- There are some differences that are commonly taught concerning the *Gyaku-te* movement here. In most instances, it is taught that the sword is reversed and used to cut the adversary's throat with a

11 (profile)





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small, firm upwards slicing. Some teach an added thrust. And, in some cases, it is said to be NOT a cut, but rather, a position in which the blades is wiped clean while permitting *Zan-shin* and control of the situation. In other words, this would be the *Chi-buri* of this *Kata*. (See note on the *Chi-buri* of *Ryu-tô*, *Jun-tô* and *Gyaku-tô* on page 73)

- The *Nô-tô* as it is done in this *Kata* will be in preparation for the final *Nô-tô* movements in *Chû-den*.
- Be attentive to proper *Sei-chû-sen*.



24.



Seichûtô



勢中刀

The name *Sei-chû-tô* implies the sword movement that goes “straight to the center” or is “truly centered”.

In Musô Jikiden Eishin Ryû this *Kata* is called “*Tsuki-Kage*”. This is figurative and may be translated as “*Moon Shadow*”.

General situation :

The action is to the right and/or your opponent’s attack comes from the right. This movement is, in many respects, the opposite concept from *Ryû-tô*. Instead of evading opposition to the on-coming attack *Sei-chû-tô* turns to enter into a strong, well-centered (*Sei-chû*), preemptive cut to the opponents hands/forearms (or temple/head) as he is developing his overhead downward cut (*Kiri-oroshi*).

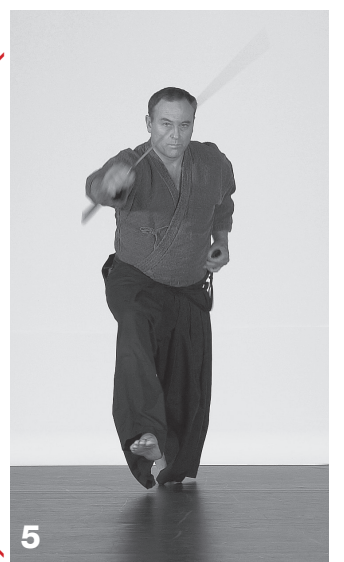
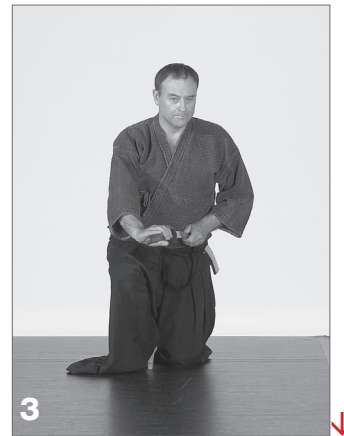
General spirit :

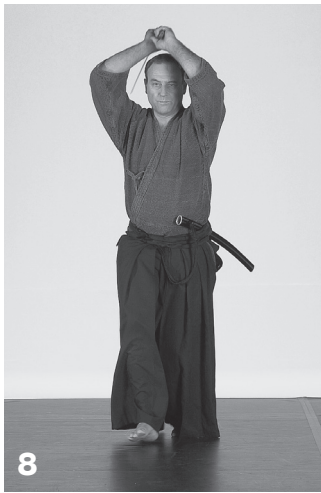
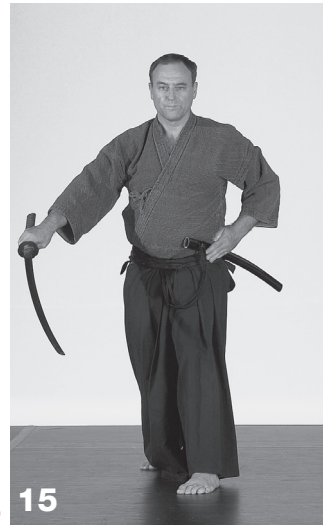
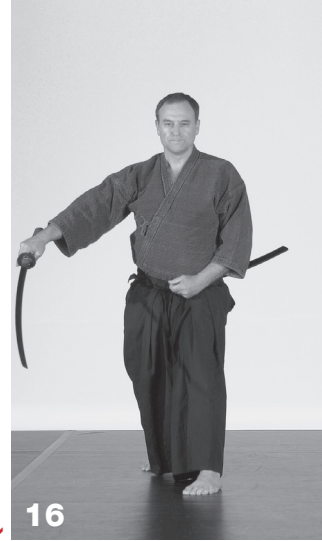
This movement must demonstrate a strong unity of purpose – well-centered, precise and filled with feeling of power (*Ko-kyû-ryoku*) both in body and mind (*Ki-Ken-Tai*).

Details :

- As in *U-tô* remember to turn with a firm position do *Nuki-tsuke* in a centered posture and not while turning. This is something that is best transmitted through personal teaching.

- The position of the blade at the end of the *Nuki-tsuke* could be the origin of the Musô Jikiden Eishin Ryû name. Figuratively it is very much like the dark crescent of the moon.





Kôrantô



Ceremony, Marionettes, all ceremonial and ritual performances, etc. The idea is for this to be something that belongs in one's everyday life.

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21.

虎乱刀

General situation :

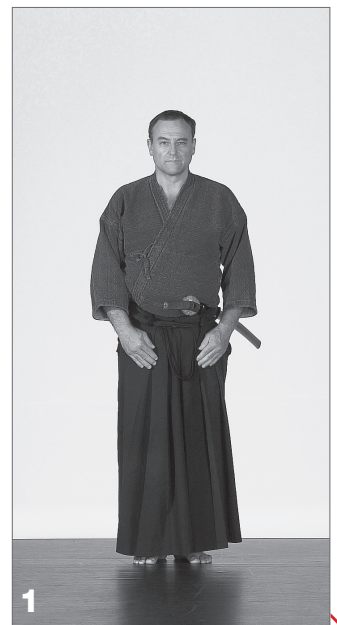
The situation is very non-specific. *Kô-ran-tô* is *Tachi-waza Sho-hat-tô*. Essentially it is a summary of all the fundamental actions that one needs to learn in this series performed in a standing position.

General spirit :

Different situations may be defined and many teachers have done so. However, overall, it must give a feeling of flowing and continuity.

Details :

- This is an excellent *Kata* with which to develop a keen sense of continuity.
- *Suri-ashi* is a key component in the correct performing of this movement. This is something that people think, at first glance, is easy, but, in reality, practitioners in all Japanese arts place great emphasis on learning *Suri-ashi* – Budô, Theatre, Tea



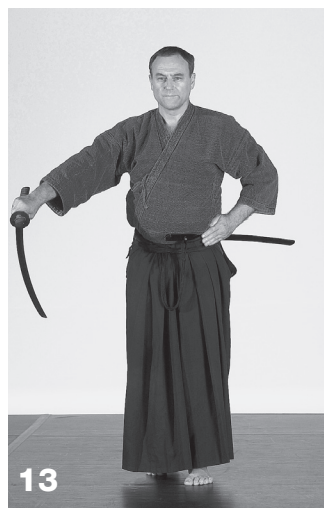
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- Because this *Kata* is entirely standing the foot change at the end of *Chi-buri* is shorter (roughly the width of your shoulders).



Inyôshintai gyakute



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21.



陰陽進退逆手

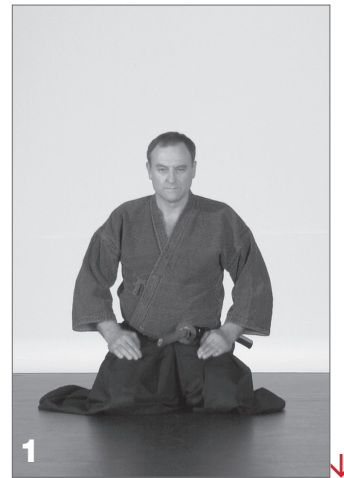
General situation :

This movement is the same basis as *In-yô-shin-tai* except that for the second *Nuki-tsuke* the hand is reversed and a downwards, blocking action is performed.

Although this movement is the eleventh in this series it was not always so. It would appear that Nakayama Hakudo was the architect of this *Jun-jo* and looked at closely it is a logical choice. Notwithstanding, it often is put at the end of the series.

In this Ômorï series much emphasis is put on properly assimilating the *Sho-hat-tô-kata*. Indeed, one has to perform six different variants of the kata (*In-yô-shin-tai* has two) before doing anything different from the initial horizontal *Nuki-tsuke* movement. If one considers that *In-yô-shin-tai-kaete* was taught as a complimentary alternative in the *In-yô-shin-tai-kata* then it becomes clear that the second technique

(taught at the same time as *In-yô-shin-tai*?) that the student learns (after a horizontal *Nuki-tsuke*) is a downward, blocking action. In both the *Chû-den kata* and the *Oku-den suwari-kata* (*Tora-is-soku* and *Sune-gakoi* respectively) we can see a subtle confirmation that this action was considered of high practical importance.



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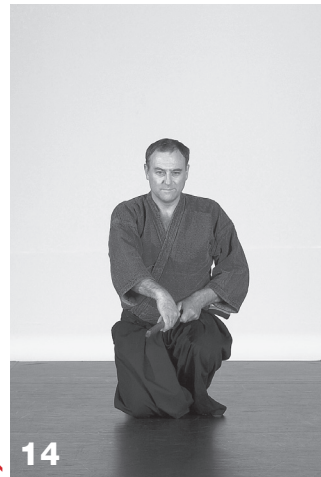
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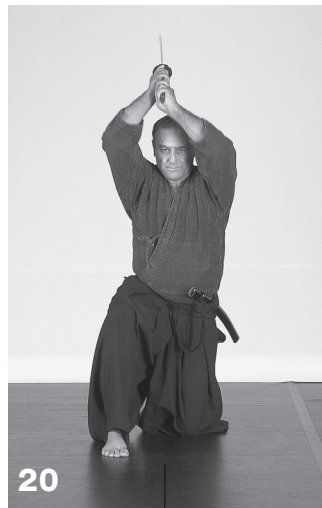
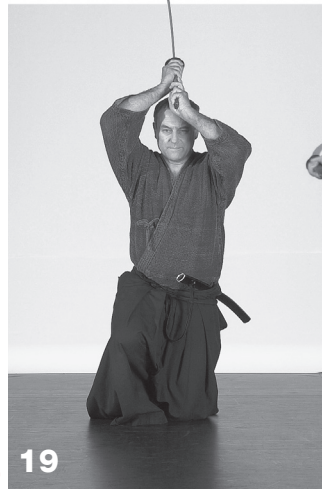
14

General spirit:

Much the same as *Sho-hat-tô*.

Details:

- The *Nuki-tsuke* is done just as in *Sho-hat-tô*. It is important that the leg and knee positions be precise (as they should have already been in *Sho-hat-tô*) so that the transition to the standing *Kiri-tsuke* is powerful and well-balanced.
- The time coordination for the first *kiri-tsuke* is the same as for *In-yô shin-tai*.
- Be attentive to maintaining the precise upper-body execution of the *kiri-tsuke*.
- The second *Nuki-tsuke* in this *Kata* will serve as an introduction to the the *Tora-is-soku kata* in the second series (*Chû-den*).
- Once again there are different variants taught in this blocking movement. Sometimes it is taught using the *Shinogi*. However, keep in mind that the structure of the *Nihon-tô* (as indeed bladed weapons in general) has its weakest resistance to shock on the *Shinogi*. Others teach the use of the *Ha* (edge). Keep in mind that preserving your life at the expense of your sword edge is certainly a more logical choice than preserving your sword at the expense of your life. Others teach the use of the *Mune* (back) for this block.
- Do NOT bob up and down with your body and head.

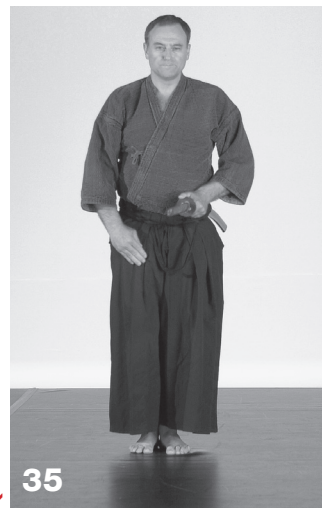




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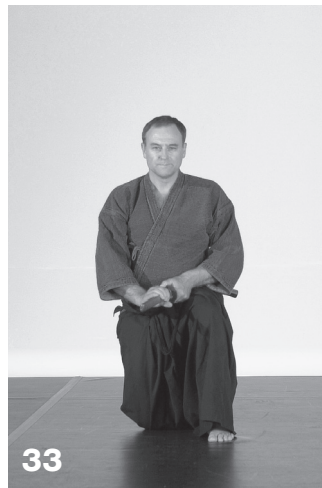
32



36.



29



33



30



34



17 (practical situation)

Battô



抜刀

The name implies "Drawing the sword".

This kata is also referred to as "Nuki-uchi".

General situation:

This, again, is a non-specific *Kata* and many situations may be applied.

General spirit:

This *Kata* would seem to be the perfect synthesis of the universal movement in sitting *I-ai*. It is noticeable that the shoden form will evolve into the *chû-den* form and, further, into the *Okuden* forms. This is very much like the student of *Sho-dô* (calligraphy) who must learn *Kai-sho*, *Gyô-sho* and *Sô-sho* in that order.

Details:

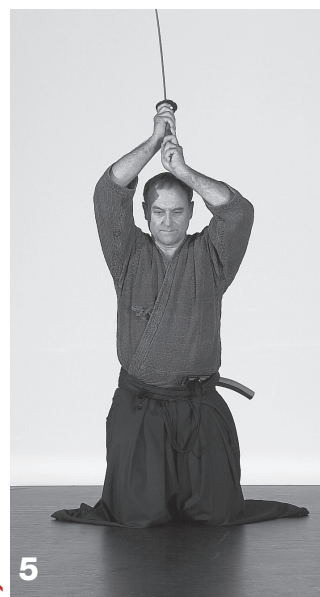
- Try to use your knees and feet in a triangular manner and make sure your balance is firmly centered in your lower abdomen.
- The whole *Kata* should be done in a continuous 1-2-3 movement. The phases should be clearly marked but not in a stopping manner.
- Do NOT bob up and down in the various phases of this movement. This is particularly difficult in the *Nô-tô*.
- The *Chi-buri* is, again, like the *Chi-buri* in the *Chû-den* series.



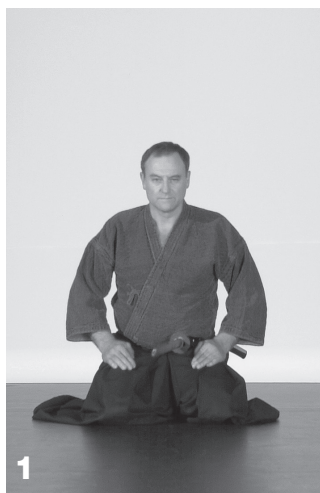
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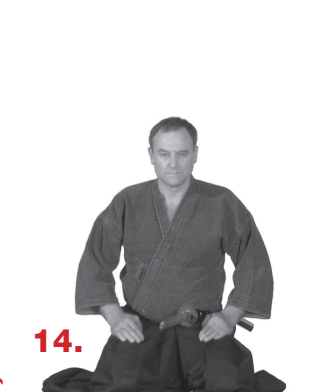
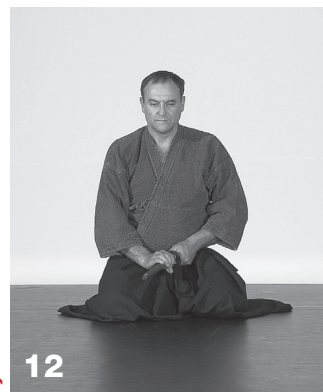
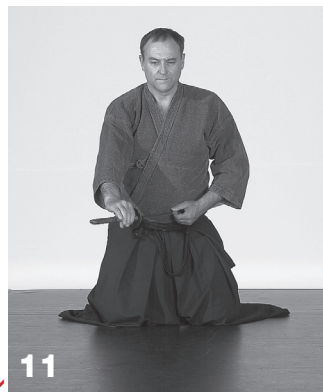
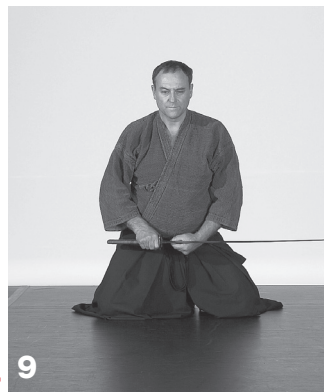
5



1



2



Kan-so, "Simplicity". Ending this chapter with this word written, admittedly, with characters which are fairly complicated, I am hoping to encourage trainees to work towards attaining it in their practice. Simplicity is one of the three fundamental elements that should be present in any Japanese art-form – the other two elements are elegance and power. Unlike the way we do most things in our daily lives, we should spend at least two years working to reduce or eliminate all unnecessary movements or habits – not only in a technical sense, but also, on a mental and emotional level.

Then, only, afterwards, should we concentrate on the next stage – elegance – and then, later on, the development of power. Another example of where we can find this notion of three vital elements in the structure of an art-form is in **Nô** theater. Here we find the concept of **Jo** (introduction or opening), **Ha** (appearance of the main character) **Kyû** ("Finale" with a faster rhythm). The great actor and author of numerous **Nô** plays, Zeami, born in Japan in 1365, says that in each of these stages we find again the three stages contained in every stage. But this can only be expressed correctly once we have mastered each stage separately.

簡素

Hasegawa Eishin Ryû

長谷川英信流

Hasegawa Eishin Ryû is the second series of movements in the Musô Shinden Ryû curriculum. It is called *Chû-den* – the character “*Chû*” means “middle” and the character “*Den*” signifies “teaching or initiation”. There are ten movements in all and each corresponds to a different situation. Since the sitting position in these *Kata* is called *Tate-hiza* this series is also referred to as: *Tate-hiza-no-bu*.

This series comes down from the seventh *Sô-ke* Hasegawa Chikara-no-Suke Hidenobu (Eishin). He studied Shinmusô Hayashizaki Ryû in Edo under Manno Danuemon Nobusada, the sixth *Sô-ke*, during the Kyoho period (1716-1735). He was reputed to be an exceptionally gifted swordsman. It is said that he transformed many techniques, and that he devised the style, where techniques were performed with the cutting-edge upwards in the *Obi*. Given that the sword was commonly carried

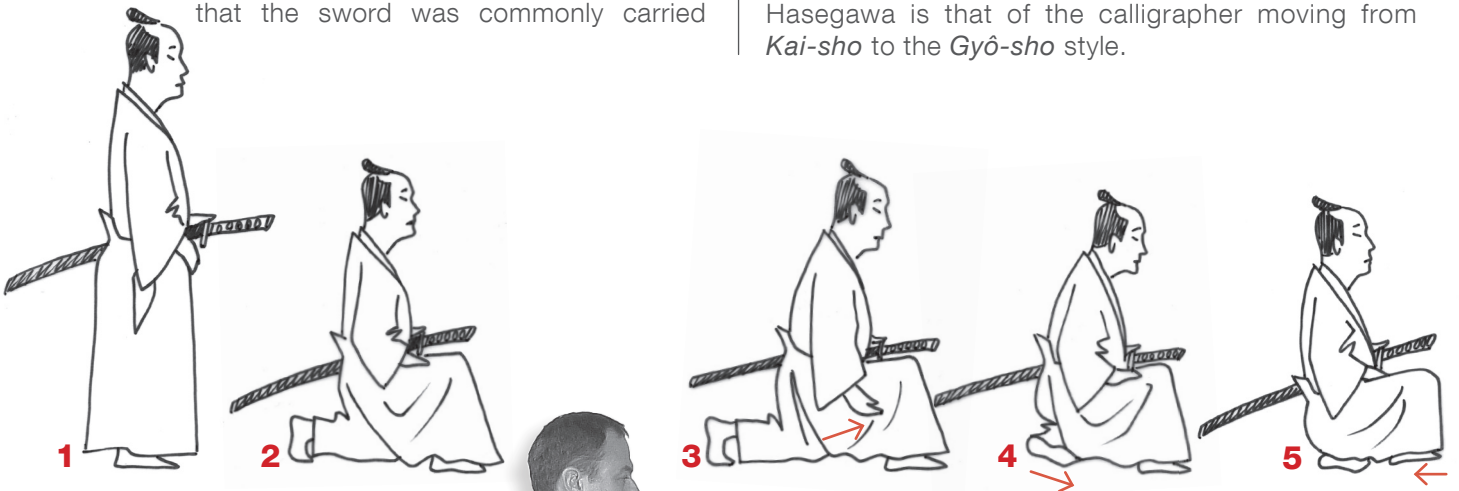


Chû-den

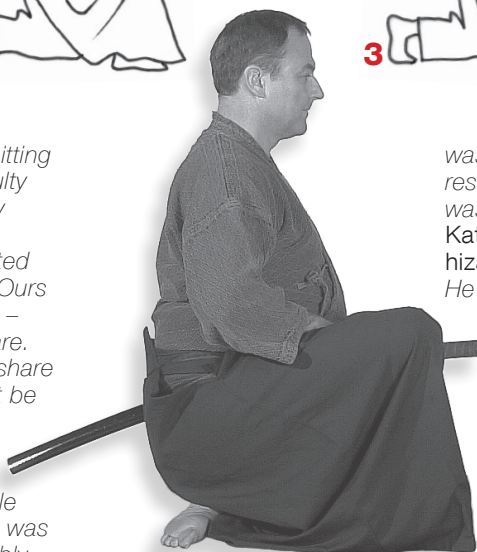
edge-upward in the belt since the mid-Muromachi period it would seem a late development for a school of *I-ai*. I would rather think that he evolved his own series in *Tate-hiza* with the sword (*Dai-tô*), edge upwards, for inclusion in the lineage of the Hayashizaki Jinsuke Shigenobu school. He subsequently took his style back to the province of Tosa and called it Eishin Ryû.

This series is more flowing than the first series – Ômorî Ryû. However, one should be careful to maintain precision with each movement and not allow these *Kata* to become overly fluid at the expense of good, well-defined execution.

The overall feeling should be one of natural elegance. There are numerous parallels with calligraphy in *I-ai* and the best example for the transition to Hasegawa is that of the calligrapher moving from *Kai-sho* to the *Gyô-sho* style.



Everyone who first tries sitting in this position has difficulty (and pains) and inevitably questions why and how anyone would have created such a hellish position. “Ours is not to question why...” – things are the way they are. However, I would like to share some points which might be food for thought. This position was said to be adopted when one was wearing armor. With a little further questioning later I was explained that this probably did not mean the full battlefield outfit but rather a situation where parts of the armor were taken off (ie. helmet, *Men-po*, sleeves) and a battlefield conference



Tate-hiza

was taking place. Thus the weight (less) and movement restriction (less) would allow a seated position from which it was possible to retain the capacity for movements as in the *Kata*. Otake Risuke Sensei pointed out to me once that *Tate-hiza* is closely related to the *I-ai-goshi* that Katori Ryû uses. He said he couldn't speak for *Tate-hiza* but he reminded that *Sei-za*, as a sitting posture, was reserved for indoors (on *tatami*) only; it would not be used outdoors and was useless when wearing armor of any sort. Thus *I-ai-goshi* was the practical way to sit. Later, another Japanese teacher explained to me that *Tate-hiza* was a sitting position that one adopted when sitting on a small portable stool that was available for battlefield type conferences. This has since been forgotten but the sitting posture continued on in practice without the stool creating the ground-level *Tate-hiza* that we use. He also pointed out that the back leg movement as in *Tora-issoku*, *Ina-zuma*, etc. would have moved the seat out of the way during the *Nuki-tsuke*. More in-depth historical research needs to be done and, then again, we may never get the real answers. We will continue training in *Tate-hiza* though.

Yokogumo



横雲

The name implies “The cloud off to the side or in the distance”.

Some see it as a “cloud bank”.

General situation :

As with many different styles and schools, the opening *Kata* in a series is very often based on the fundamental elements that will be used in the following *Kata* in the series. Not surprisingly, these are quite “*Sho-hat-tô*-like”.

You will sometimes see this *Kata* performed moving forward on the *Nuki-tsuke* (as in *Sho-hat-tô*). There is much to be learnt from being able to perform both.

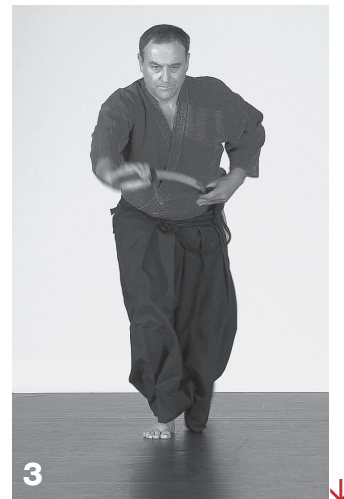
General spirit :

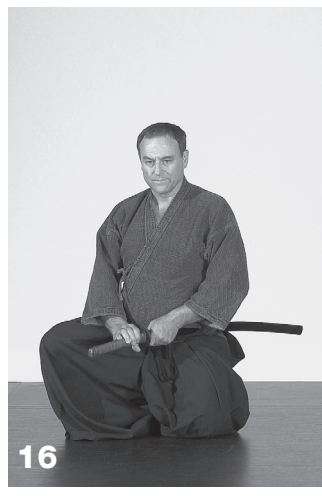
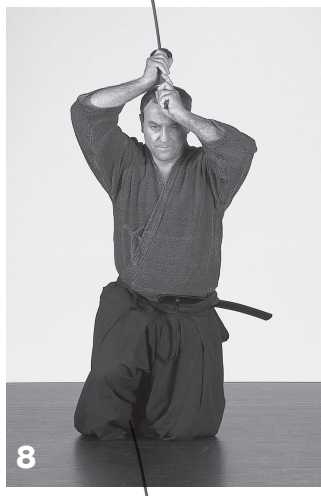
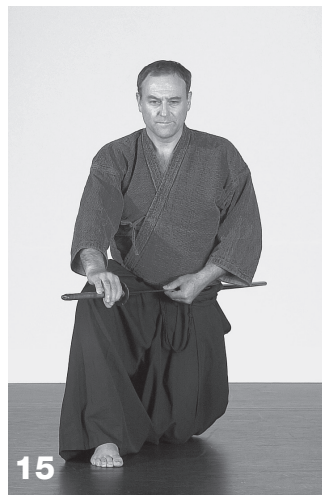
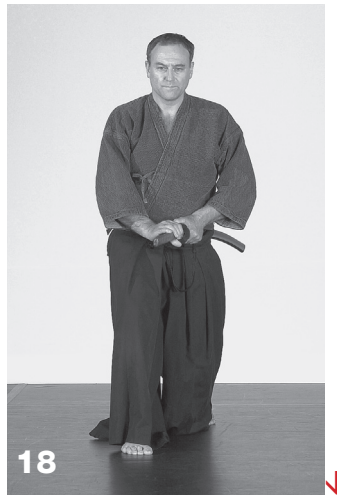
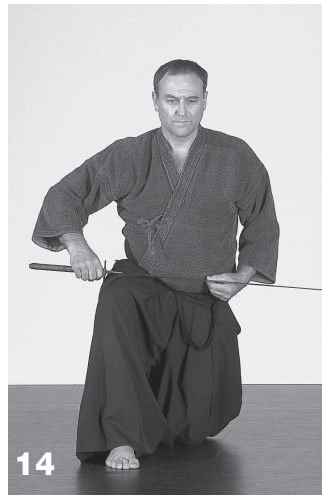
The non-specificity of the situation will give this *Kata* a close resemblance to the spirit of *Sho-hat-tô*.

Details :

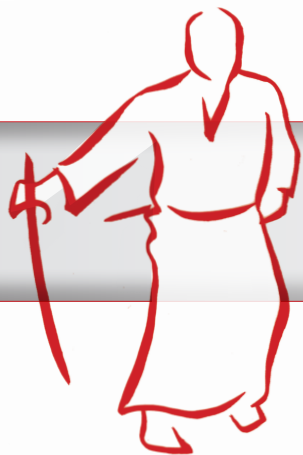
- One of the most difficult things to do well in this series is to maintain a correct *Sei-chû-sen* throughout the dynamic execution of *Nuki-tsuke*. The most common error being bending the body forward to initiate the draw.
- At the end of the draw the body should be well-balanced, show proper vertical centering and have a relatively low profile.

- The descent to the kneeling position at the beginning of *Kiri-tsuke* should be progressive and the head should be seen to move forward and downward with no “bobbing” or up and down movement.
- From the end of the *Nuki-tsuke* throughout the *Kiri-tsuke* movement everything should demonstrate a dynamic flow. But the rhythm should show each phase clearly defined with no feeling of haste.





Toraissoku



虎
一
足

The name implies "The Step of the Tiger".

General situation :

In this movement you are called upon to block a low cut towards your person, presumably a *Nuki-tsuke*.

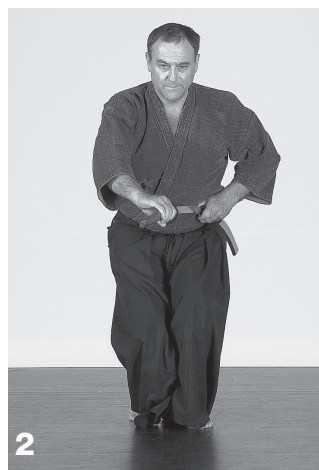
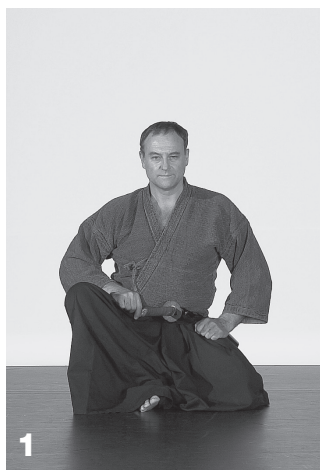
In the order, this *Kata* comes second in the series – as its closely related cousin does in *Okuden suwari-waza*. It is also the same action that is found in *In-yô shin-tai-kaete*. This should be a hint indicating its possible practical importance. It might indicate that this blocking movement might have been the second most useful movement to master.

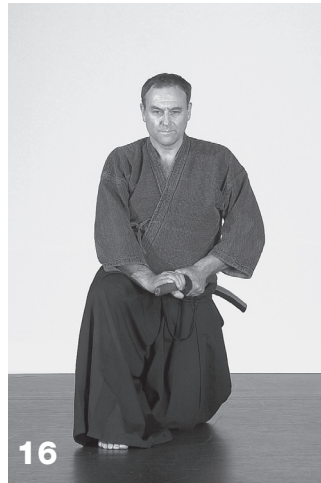
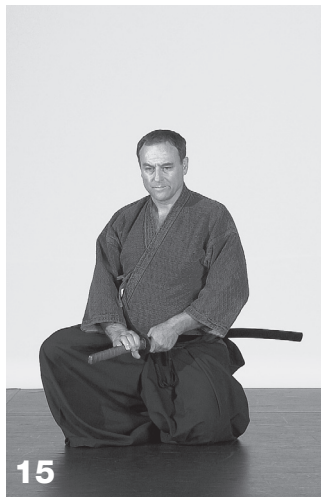
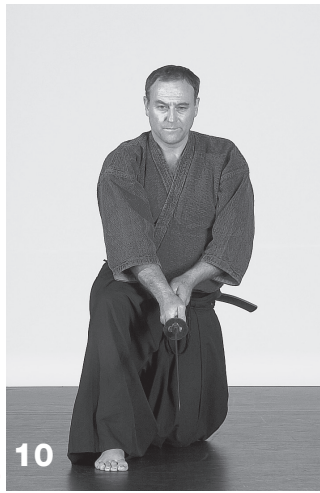
General spirit :

This *kata* seems to express an initial defensive movement but, then again, a change in the situation could conceivably make it offensive in character.

Details :

- Very often students are taught to block with the *Shinogi*. However, this is the weakest point in blade construction so it would be very surprising indeed if this was the way it was done combatively. See comment for *In-yô-shin-tai-kaete*.
- The step to the rear should be well-defined and 'crisp' not lingering or stopping.





Inazuma



稲妻

The name implies "Lightening".

General situation :

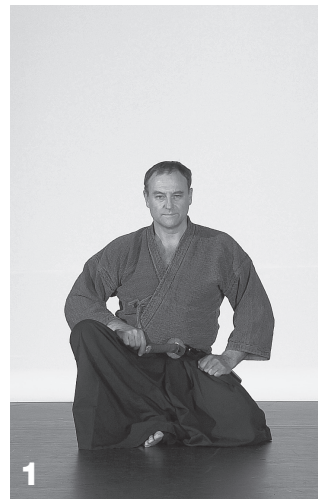
It would seem very much the same principle as we find in *Sei-chu-tô*. It is simply done in a straight line towards the front.

General spirit :

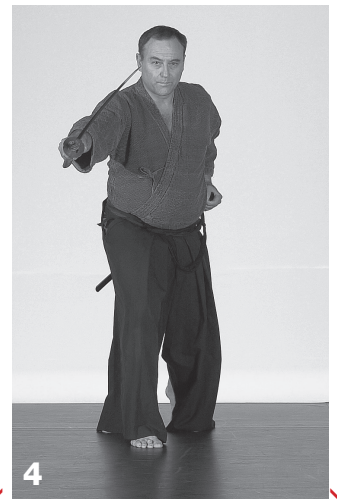
This *Kata* seems to express an initial defensive movement but, then again, a change in the situation could make it offensive in character.

Details :

- As in all of these *Kata* in *Chû-den* it is important not to begin by bending the upper body forward. Build up the leg muscles necessary to do this keeping the upper body straight (*Sei-chû-sen*).
- Given that the blade is already above eye-level at a 45° angle in front do not drop the point downwards when moving from the final position in *Nuki-tsuke* to the *Furi-kaburi*.
- The step to the rear should be well-defined and 'crisp' not lingering or stopping.



1



4



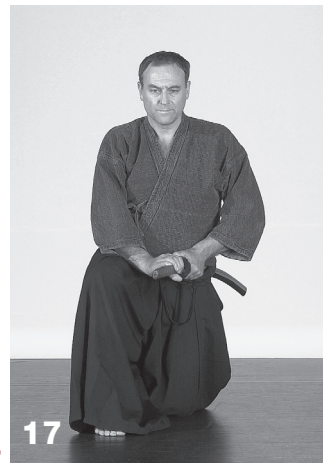
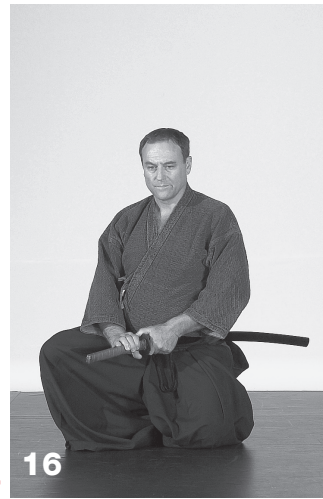
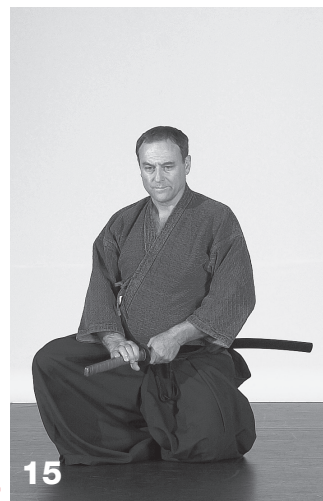
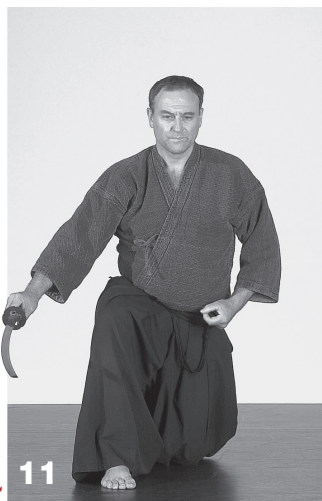
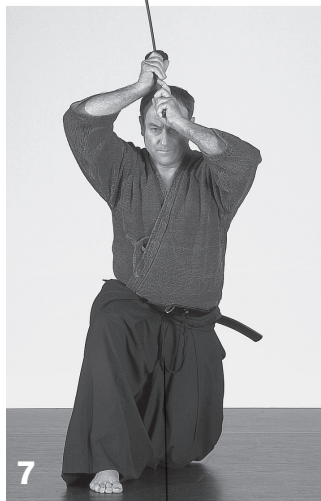
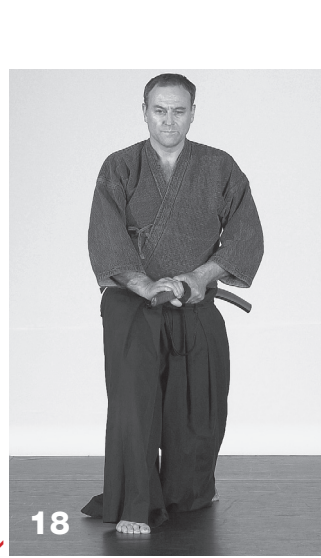
2



3



6



Ukigumo



浮雲

The name implies "Floating Cloud".

General situation :

When first learning this *Kata* it seems quite complicated. It is important to visualize the situation when performing it. This is the first *Kata* in the series that has a more closely defined situation. Your adversary, who is to your right, attempts to seize, with his left hand, the *Tsuka* of your sword. This would be to prevent or hamper your use of the weapon.

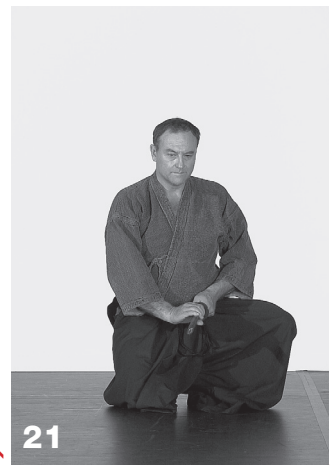
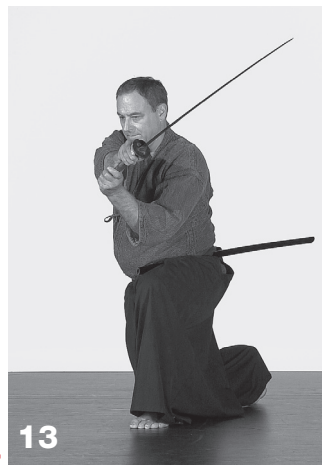
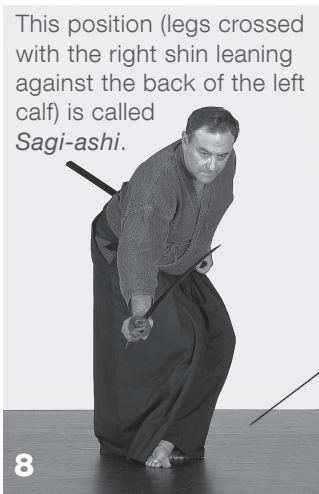
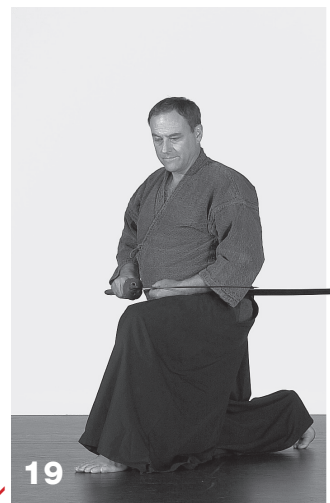
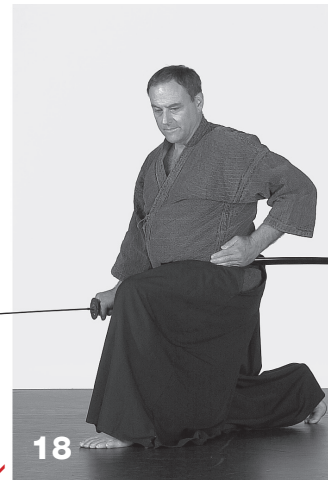
General spirit :

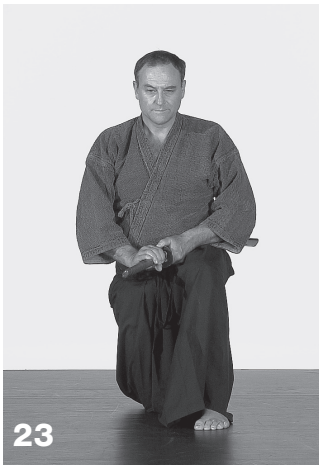
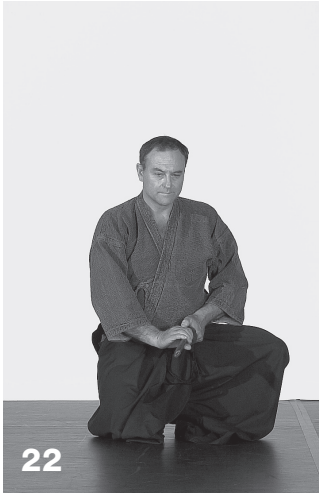
The first action that you do is to avoid the adversary seizing your *Tsuka*. This is followed by a *Tsuka-ate* to the back of his head. This could be seen as a preliminary non-lethal response. This could prove itself sufficient to diffuse the situation.

Details :

- Be careful to maintain *Sei-chû-sen* throughout the movement. This *Kata* suffers considerably when one is out of alignment.
- Keeping all of the movement in front of oneself is also an important point. Its very easy here to perform actions off-center.







Situation (1 to 5)



Oroshi (Yamashita Oroshi)



嵐

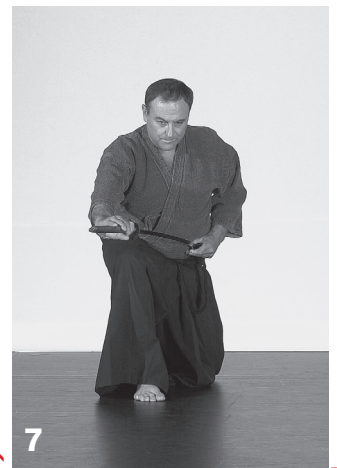
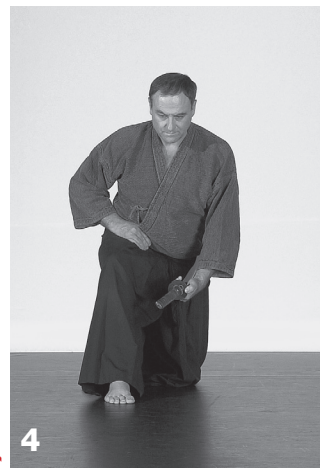
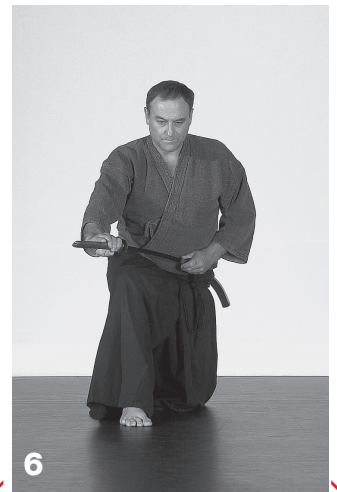
The name comes from a particular type of rain storm that occurs in Japan. It builds up at the top of a mountain and descends in a particularly rapid and violent manner. This name (and that of the other *Kata*) is a good example of figurative use of a name. This was often the case so that it contained meaning only to those who knew the technique itself.

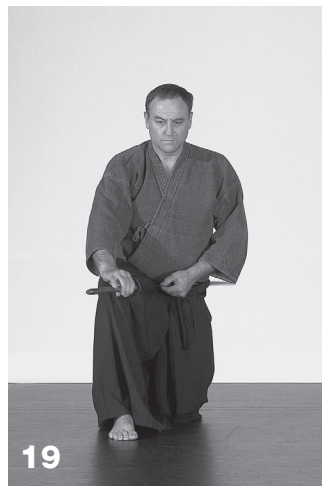
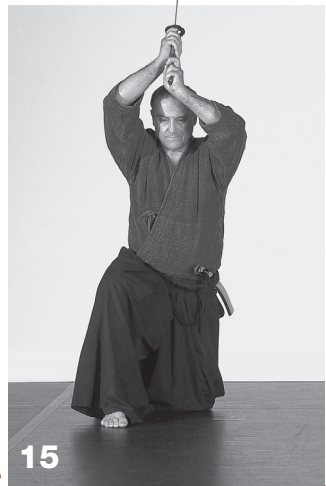
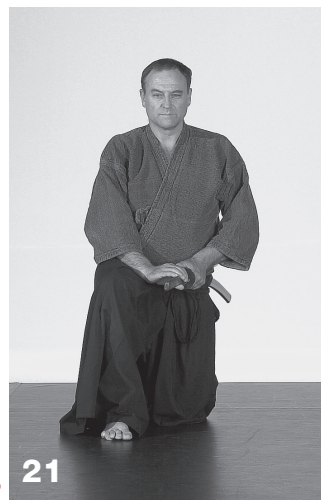
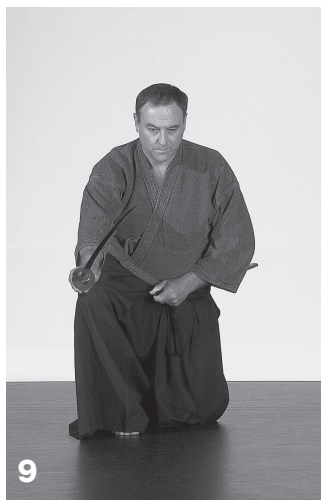
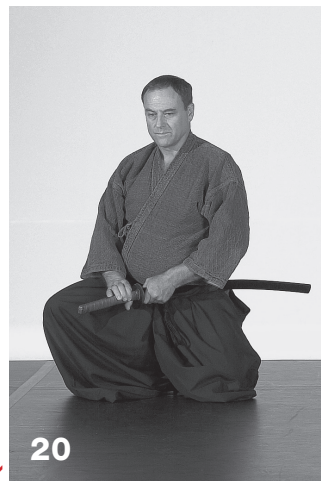
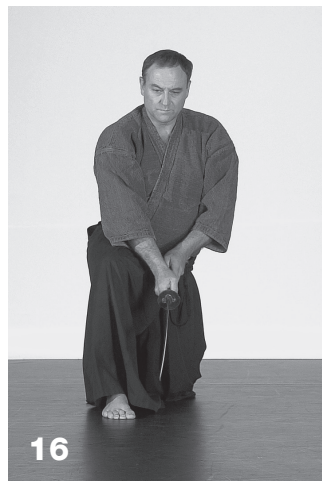
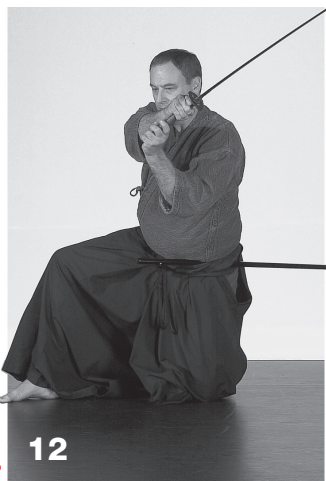
General situation :

The situation here is a more aggressive response than in the preceding *Uki-gumo*. Your adversary on the right attempts to draw his sword. You turn to your right and place a *Tsuka-ate* (*Kote-uchi*) action to his hands or wrist.

Details :

- The first *Tsuka-ate* should be done centered and with a full-body movement.





Situation (3 to 11)

In photos 8, 9 and 10, when your blade is supposed to be in contact with the adversary's body, do not move the blade, but rather, your body movement will allow your hand to move to its position on the *Mune*.



Iwanami



岩
浪

The name implies "Wave of rocks".

General situation:

Your adversary is to your left. Either he attempts an offensive action or, simply, you initiate a movement where you drop behind while drawing your sword to perform a *Tsuki* action to his kidney area.

General spirit:

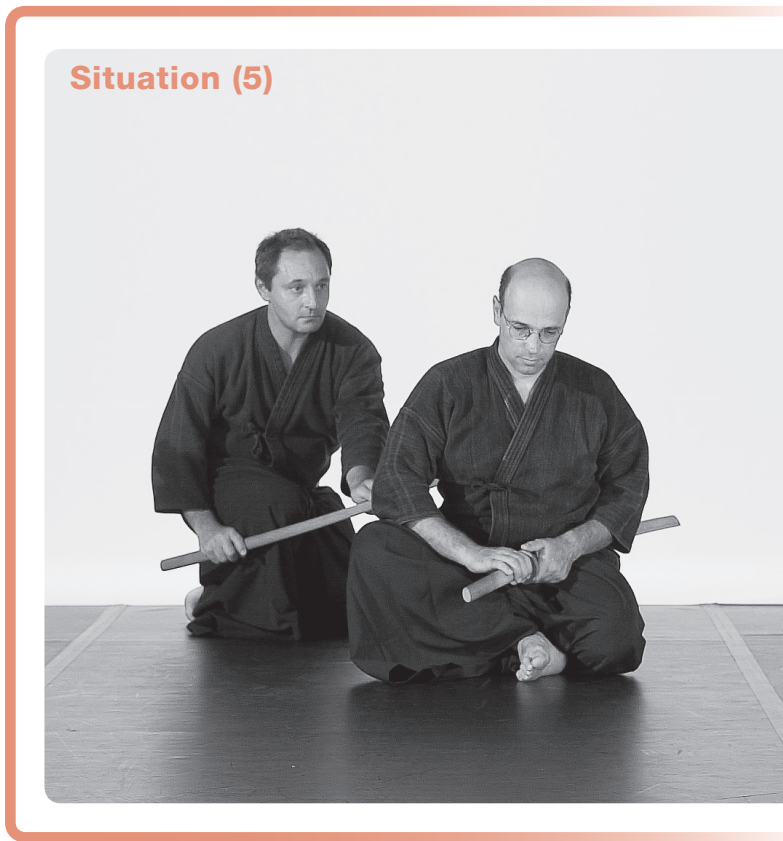
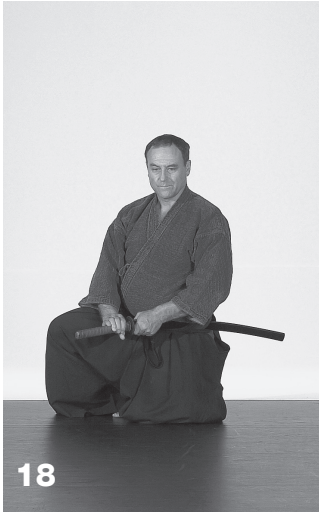
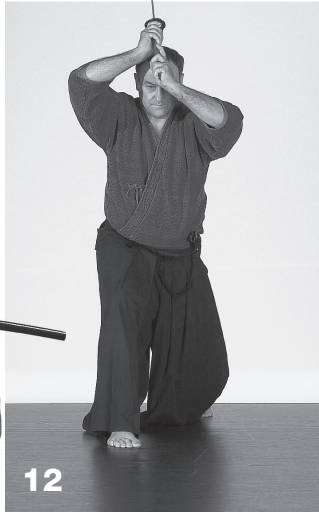
This movement can demonstrate a fully offensive action sliding to the rear of the adversary.

Details:

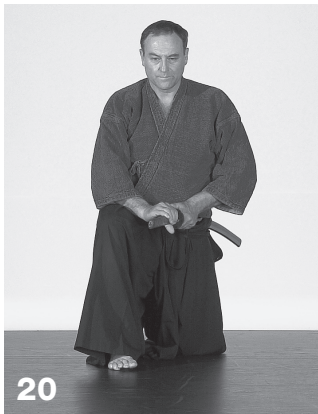
- It is not necessary to be directly behind the adversary in the first action. You rather slide behind to the point that you are in his "blind spot". Here, you would

further be able to control his right hand movement.

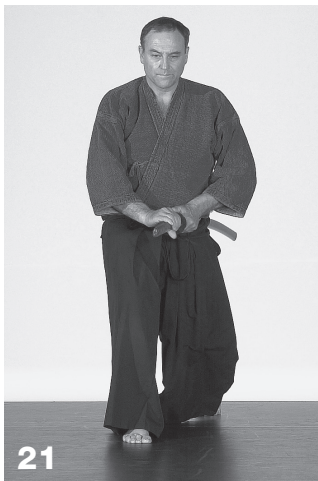




Urokogaeshi



20



21



22



23.



鱗
返

General situation :

This *Kata*, and the following *Nami-kaeshi*, are just like *Sa-tô* and *Atari-tô* of the Ômorî series.

General spirit :

This movement is done with the same spirit as *Yoko-gumo*.

Details :

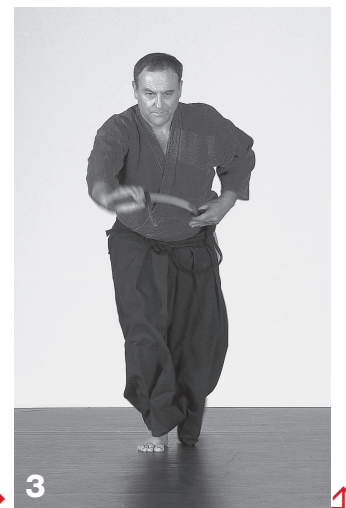
- Make sure to maintain your *Sei-chû-sen* in this movement. Try to develop the power in your legs to stand straight upwards.
- It is important to carefully study how to keep a correct alignment of the knees. You can incur serious injury if you twist around with your body weight on the knee. The rear foot can be a valuable asset in turning correctly.



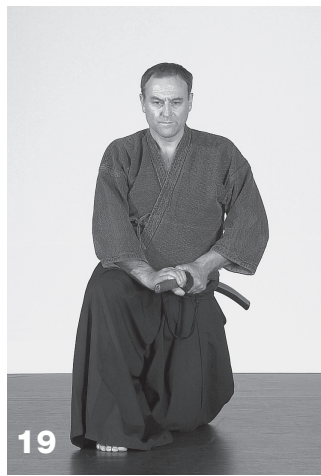
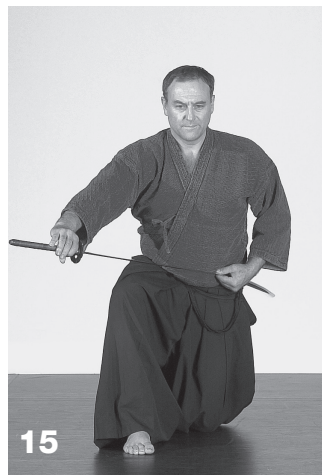
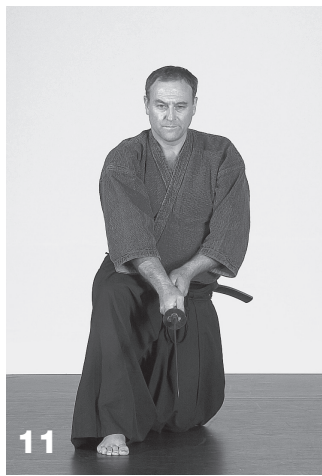
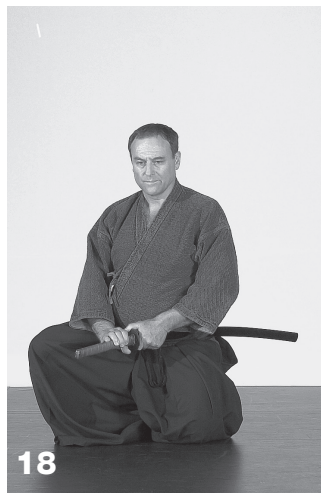
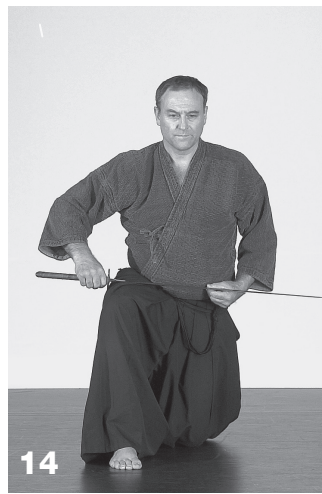
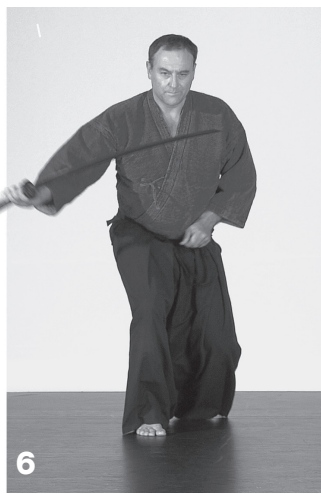
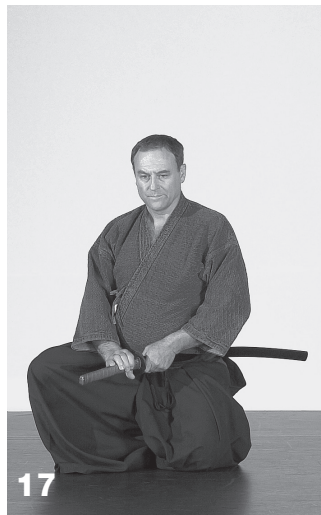
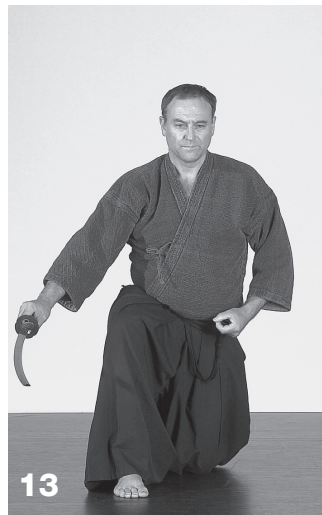
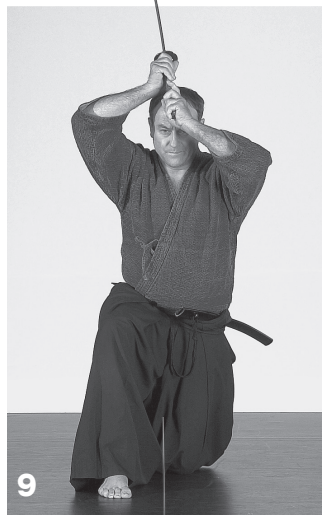
1



2



3



Namigaeshi



20



21



22



23.



浪返

General situation :

The necessity to initiate an action to the rear.

General spirit :

The name implies "The wave breaks" or "turns over".

This movement is done with the same spirit as *Yoko-gumo*.

Details :

- Make sure to maintain your *Sei-chû-sen* in this movement. Try to develop the power in your legs to stand straight upwards.
- As in the previous *Kata* learn to correctly use your rear foot to aid in turning.



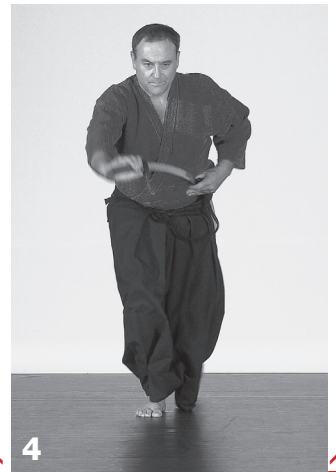
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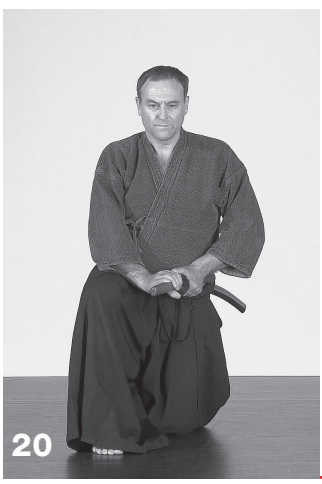
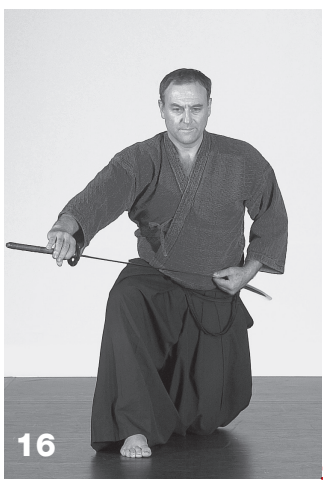
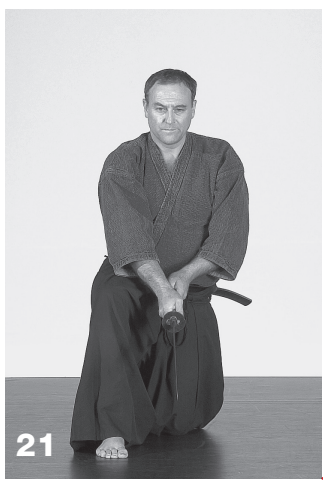
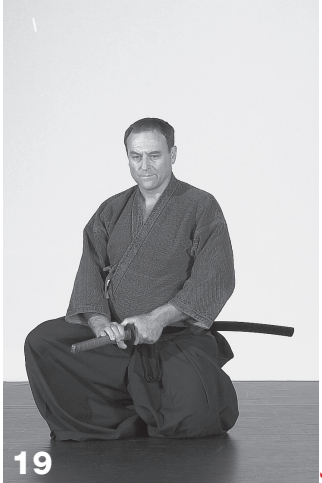
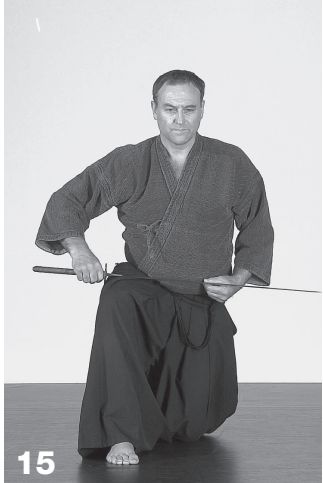
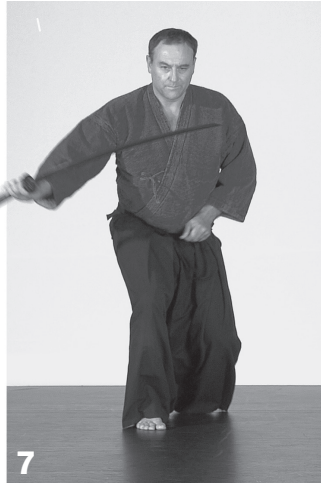
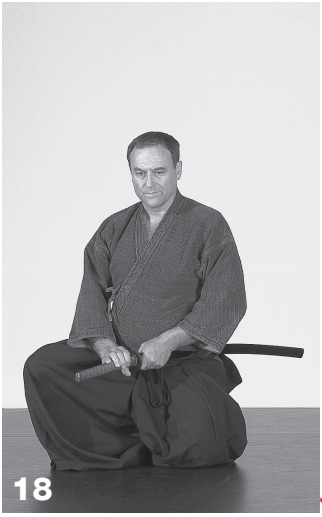
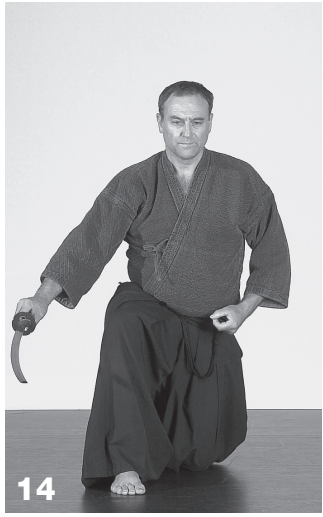
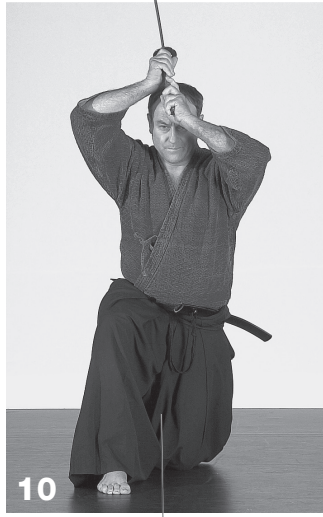
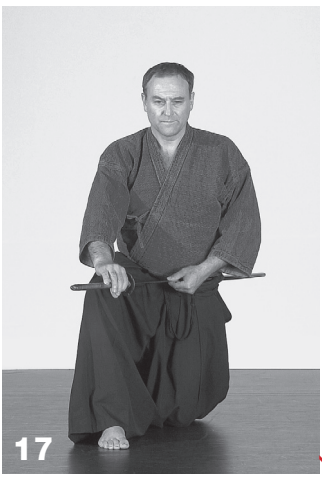
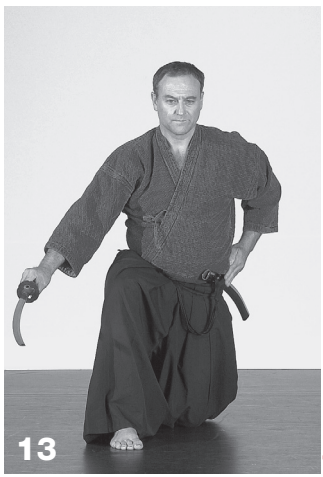
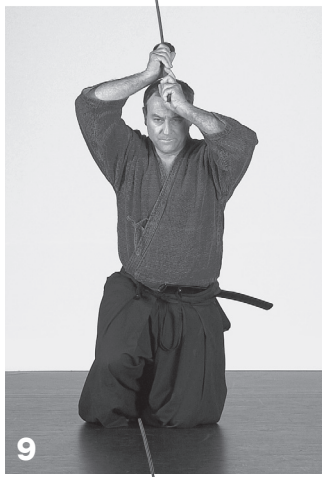
3



2



4



Takiotoshi



滝落

General situation :

Again this situation is more defined. Your adversary attempts to handicap your movement and use of your sword by seizing the *Saya* from behind. Your initial action to the rear is a *Tsuka-ate* to the adversary's head.

General spirit :

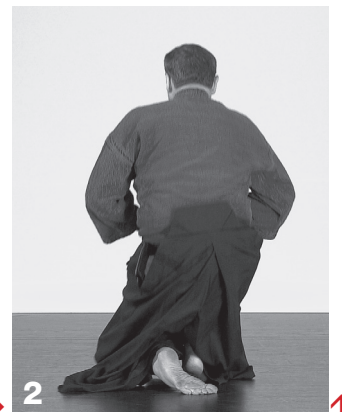
This *Kata* appears somewhat theatrical sometimes. This should not be the case, a sober execution will always bring out the elegance and beauty of this *Kata*.

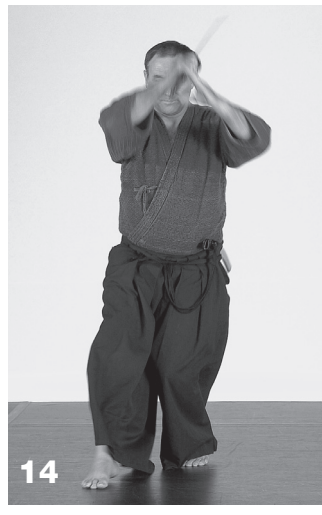
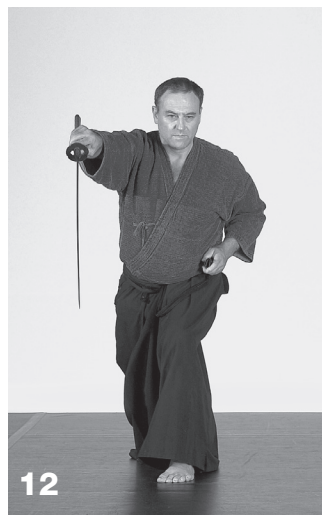
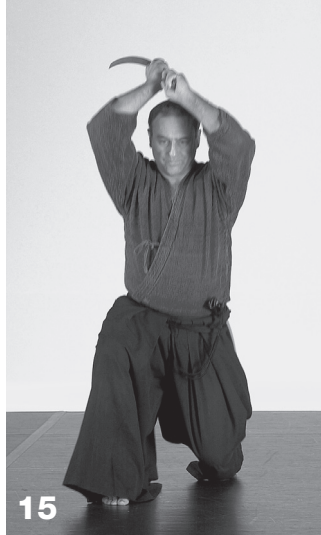
However, when certain important technical elements are slightly exaggerated it is so they may be more visible (for learning purposes).

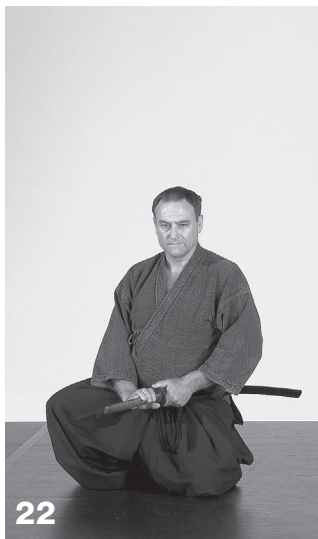
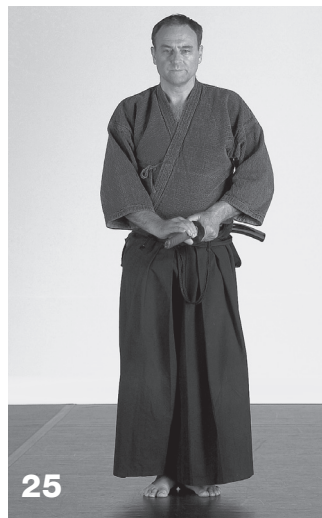
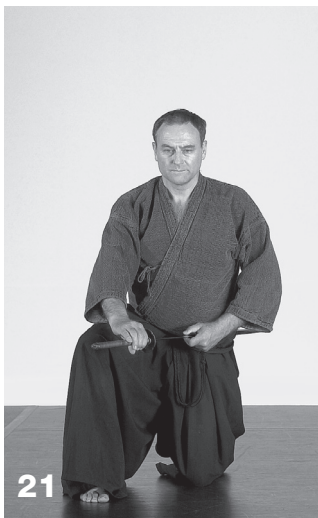
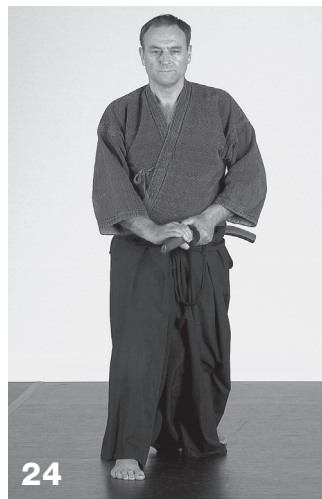
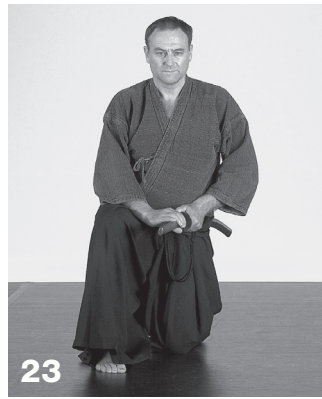
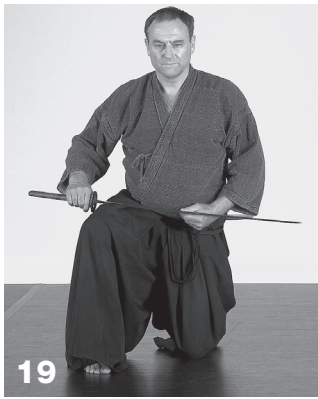
In Japan a waterfall (always changing and always there) is a symbol of the "permanent impermanence" of the universe – very much the symbol of *Fudô-myôo* or *Fudô-shin*.

Details :

- There is a very special procedure to follow when standing up in the first action. This is not possible to show in photographs here so you must be attentive to learn it from a qualified teacher. If you wish to experience the difficulty of the situation ask someone to firmly hold your *Saya* from the rear in a non-cooperative spirit.
- Make sure that the hips are turned back to the center of the movement when executing the final *Tsuki*.







Situation (2 to 12)



Nukiuchi



抜打

The name implies “the strike upon drawing”

General situation:

This, again, is a non-specific *Kata* and many situations may be applied.

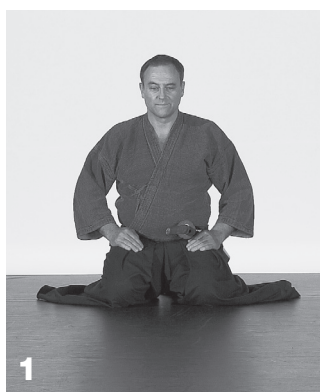
General spirit:

This *Kata* would seem to be the perfect synthesis of the universal movement in sitting *lai*. The *Chû-den* form here has a more

continuous, flowing movement to it. This is very much like the *Gyô-sho* style of writing compared to the *Kai-sho* of *Sho-den*.

Details:

- Try to use your knees and feet in a triangular manner and make sure your balance is firmly centered in your lower abdomen.
- The whole *Kata* should be done in a continuous 1-2 movement without stopping in the *Furi-kaburi* position. The phases should still be clearly marked.
- Do NOT bob up and down in the various phases of this movement. This is particularly difficult in the *Nô-tô*.





7



10



13



8



11



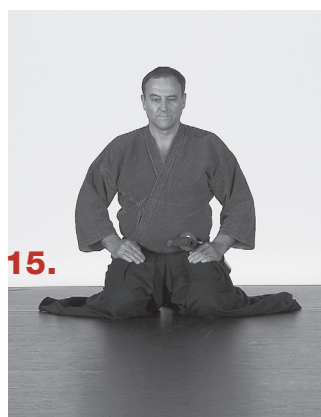
14



9



12



15.

Yû-ga

↓ The concept of 'simple elegance' here is related to a cultural view widely accepted in Japan as an important element in things. That is to say, a thing (or things) should be both useful/practical AND beautiful/elegant at the same time. This is applied not only to what is considered 'art' but also to everyday objects – even very simple things. By extension this also applies to people, behavior, situations, function and so on. ↓
 ↓ Something that is purely functional and efficient may do what it is designed to do but possess no beauty nor elegance. It is bringing these two qualities together harmoniously that imparts a special/higher quality. The calligrapher strives to attain this as he moves from Kai-sho to Gyô-sho – moving from a precise, detailed and practical form to a more dynamic, living form which retains, nonetheless, all the elements of the Ki-hon. This is a very important step in the learning process.

優雅

Okuden Suwari iai

奥信生居合

Shoden, Chûden and Okuden – Here are two ways of seeing the concept of *Oku-den* differently from what we might expect. Usually we are taught that one begins with *Sho-den*, then works to the next level – *Chû-den* and finally you are allowed to enter into the study of *Oku-den*. Taking things here on apparent face value, one thus assumes that this represents an upward progression from “beginner stuff” to “advanced stuff” – very much as we are taught to see things in our younger school days. This is the usual way of understanding “*Sho, Chû, Oku*”.

But this idea has always bothered me somewhat. First of all I find it difficult to think that a professional warrior like the samurai or *Bu-shi* would spend time with learning things that were not really useful to him and directly applicable according to the requirements of his profession. Thus I have always felt that this is not meant to “grade” the techniques in some sort of order of difficulty or combat effectiveness. If the circumstances correspond correctly to the movement it is what will be effective.

Admittedly, as an educational concept within a more modern *Dô* system, it might be more reasonable, however, to see the *Sho-den, Chû-den, Oku-den* order as having a meaning within the progression of a curriculum. This is not quite the same as the simplistic vision of



Oku-den

“beginner stuff” to “advanced stuff”.

On the other hand, it is to be noted that, in terms of the historical creation of the series of *Kata*, we move from the most recent towards the oldest. Perhaps, given the high respect that Japanese culture pays to the concept of “older and younger” (*Sempai-Kôhai*), it is reasonable that “*Sho, Chû, Oku*” might have this implication.

Okuden Suwari-waza

This set of *Kata* could very well be a parallel set of movements taken from *Oku-den Tachi-waza* and may possibly be, once again, an adaptation by Hasegawa Eishin. It is performed from *Tate-hiza* and most of the movements find their corresponding form among the *Kata* of *Tachi-waza* – the following series. The overall feeling

in correctly executing these *Kata* adds an important element of “power” to the earlier concepts of simplicity and elegance. However, the exact meaning of having “power” in a movement can best be taught by someone who has mastered it. Do not make the mistake of thinking it means simply being strong or hard or faster.



Mitsuzuka Takeshi Sensei, student of Nakayama Hakudo Sensei.

Kasumi



霞

The name implies "Mist".

The cutting process found throughout Okuden Suwari waza:

In the movements of *Okuden* the cutting process is done somewhat differently from *Shoden* and *Chûden*. This distinction is sometimes missed. Often you will see experienced, long-time practitioners use this method of moving-within-the-cut very freely at all levels. However, I was always reminded that this form of moving was an excellent progressive educational element within the progression of the curriculum.

In *Kasumi* we meet this for the first time and it constitutes a major difference that must be assimilated into our body movement.

These elements are of prime importance in this series and are best learned through a teacher.

General situation:

There are 3 strong cuts to the front but, as with *Shohat-tô*, there is not a specifically defined situation.

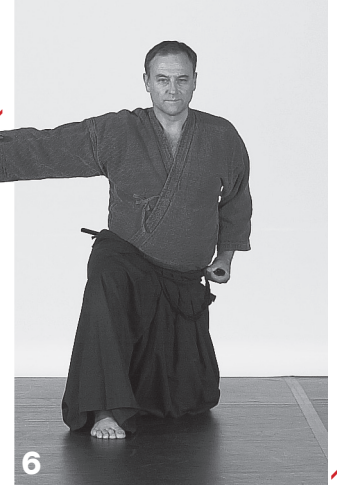
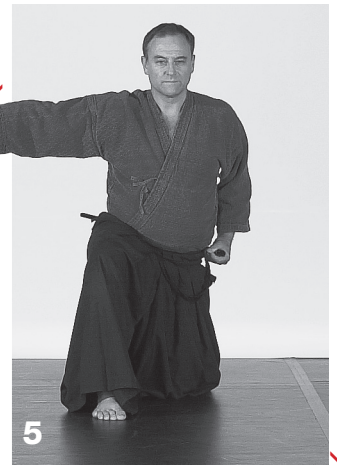
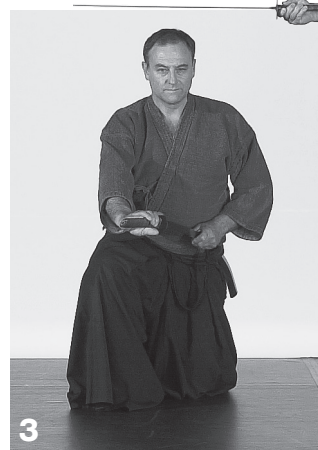
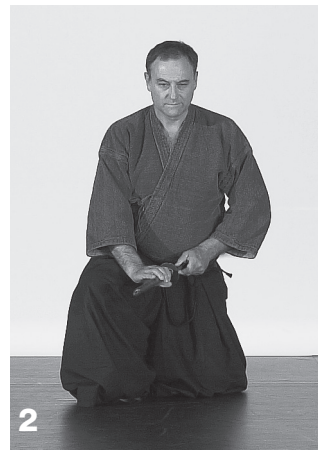
General spirit:

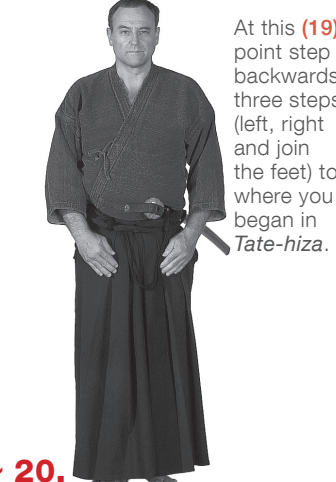
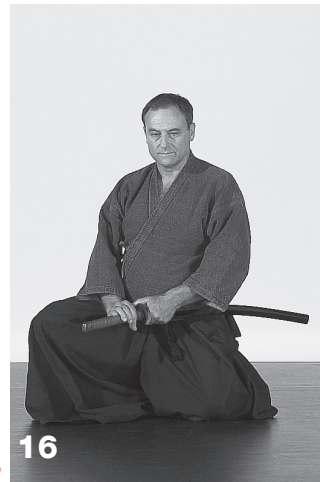
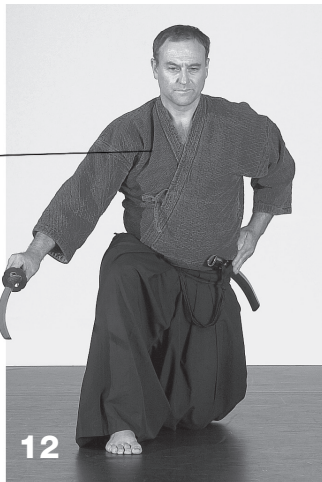
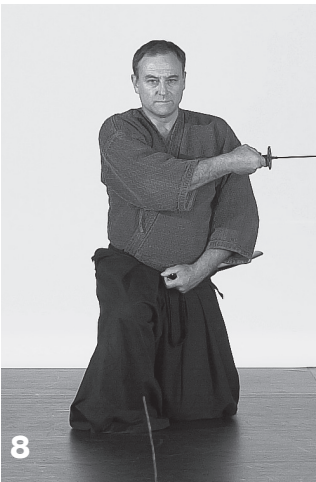
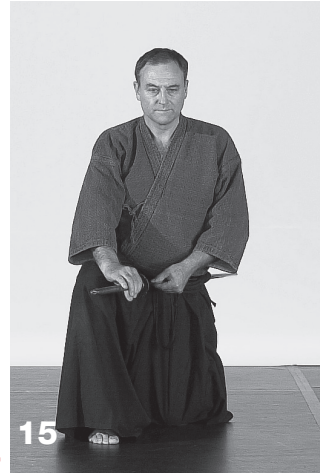
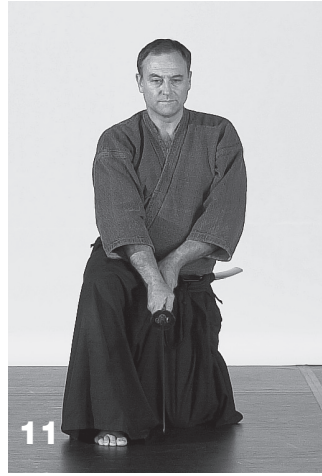
In this series a strong feeling is displayed during the execution of the *Kata*. Be careful to keep it balanced with the elements of simplicity (Ômori Ryû) and elegance (Hasegawa Eishin Ryû).

Details:

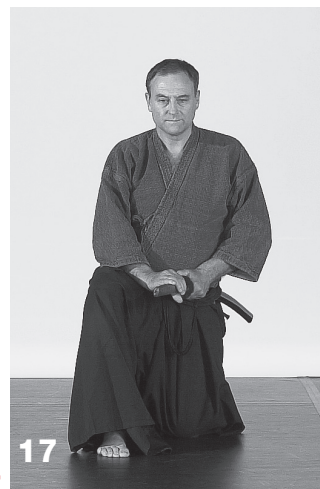
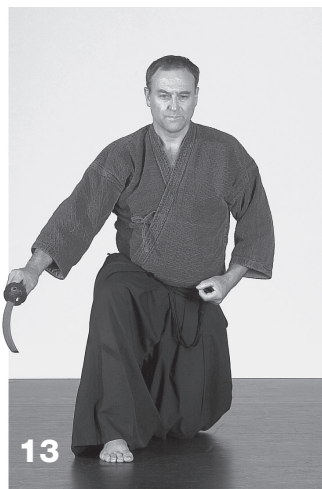
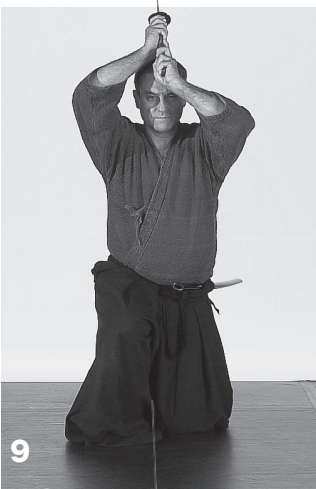
- *Kasumi* is not only the word for mist as we would see it on a damp early morning but it is also an anatomical word which designates the temple-side of the eyes.
- The *Nuki-tsuke* in this *Kata* is followed by a reversal of the hand and the movement of the *Furikaburi* is made as a second horizontal cut before doing the *Kiri-tsuke*. However, in the rhythm of the *Kata* the second horizontal cut should be placed with the *Kiri-tsuke* and not the initial *Nuki-tsuke* (NOT 1,2 and 3, but rather 1 and 2,3).
- Note that the the hand makes a clear and precise movement rotating over (*Te no gaeshi*) to make sure the *Hasuji* is properly in place before initiating the following horizontal cut (5 and 6). This requires special attention.

- In photos 6, 7 and 8 the second horizontal cut is made (after assuring correct *Hasuji*) accompanied by a sliding forward





At this (19) point step backwards three steps (left, right and join the feet) to where you began in *Tate-hiza*.



of the left knee and foot. Make sure that your body position does not bend forward. This usually results from bad bio-mechanical execution where you are really “pulling” the left foot forward instead of “pushing” with the foot to move forward. During this manoeuvre the *Saya* is also brought to the center of the body by the left hand.

- In photos 9 and 10 you must reach forward in the step with your right foot a little farther than you are used to doing in *Sho-den* and *Chû-den*. In this manner, you will slide forward a half-step on your left knee during the downward cutting motion of *Kiri-oroshi*. This can be seen as a sort of *Nusumi-ashi* where extra distance is acquired subtly within another action.

Sune gakoi



腫
圍

The name implies “Shielding the tibia”.

General situation:

In this movement you are called upon to block a low cut towards your person, presumably a *Nuki-tsuke*.

In the order this *Kata* comes (once again) second in the series – as its closely related cousin does in Hasegawa Eishin Ryû *Waza*. You have been doing this blocking movement since learning *In-yô shin-tai gyaku-te*. By now you should have had time to think of the implications.

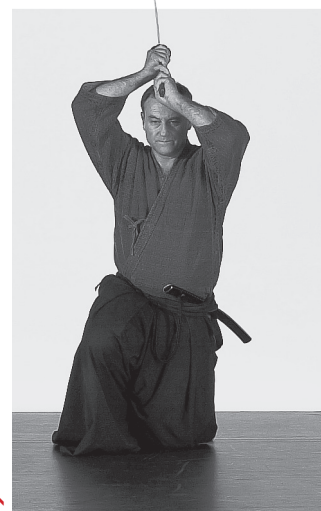
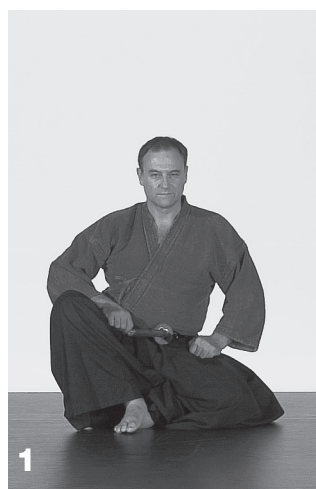
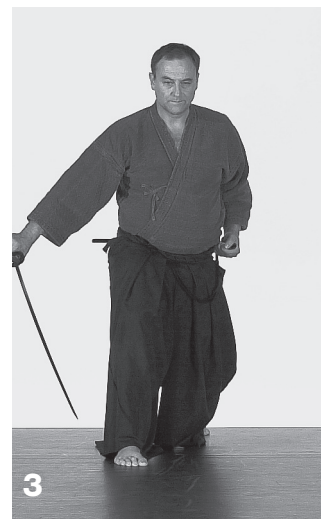
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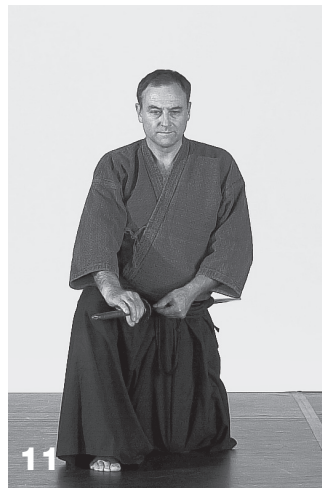
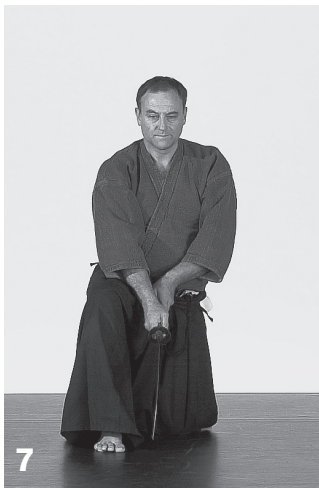
- Given that *Oku-den* is reputed to be of earlier origin than either Omori Ryû or Hasegawa Eishin Ryû, this *Kata* probably originally inspired the form incorporated into *Tora-i-soku* and, later, into *In-yo-shin-tai-gyaku-te*. This is most likely a hint that a practitioner should be aware of. Could it be considered that this would indicate that this ‘*Kakoi*’ movement is second in importance, from a practical stand-point, to the more offensive sword drawing (*Nuki-*

tsuke) found in so many of the other *Kata* of the Ryû?

- See comment for *In-yo shin-tai gyaku-te*.

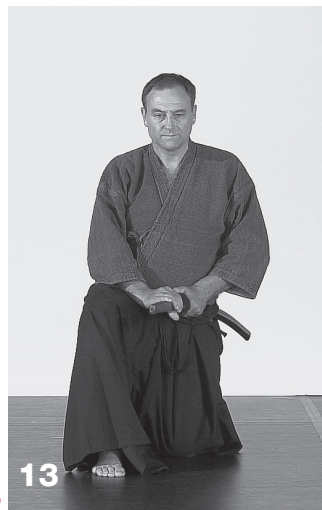
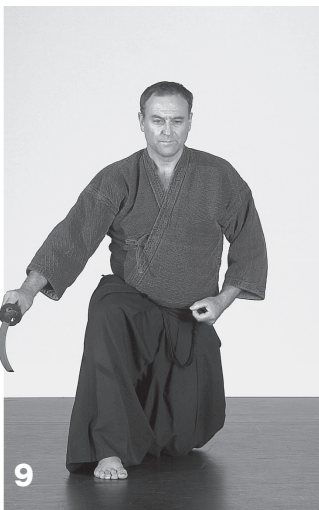
This gesture could also be an offensive, downward cut to a target such as an opponent’s wrist or leg.





• During the *Kiri-oroshi* movement the foot movement is the same as in *Kasumi*.

Throughout all of **Okuden Suwari Waza** this will be standard procedure.



Tozume



刀詰

General situation:

Because of the *To-* as first character of the name this *Kata* is seen as advancing (through a door) to attack adversaries on the right and the left side of the egress.

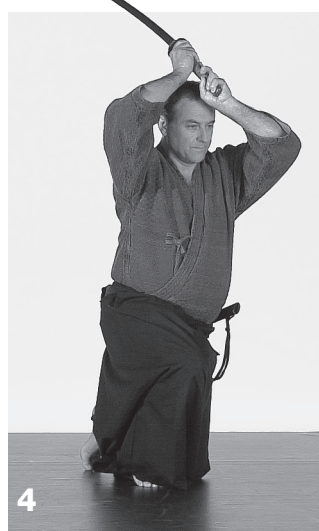
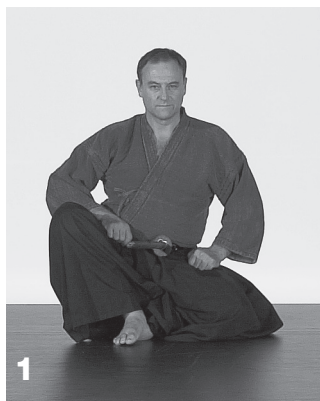
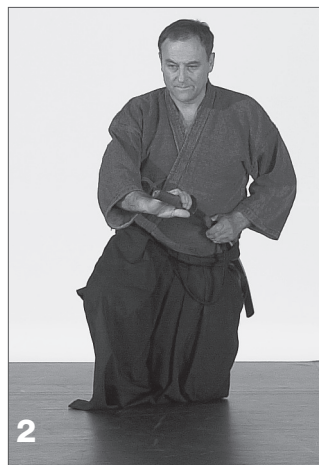
General spirit:

The name implies "Hemmed-in or pinned at the door".

A decisive spirit should be demonstrated in this movement.

Details:

- Between this movement and *Towaki*, the next, there exists some confusion. Not in the technical execution of the *Kata* but rather in their respective names. However, I have chosen to use the generally designated name for each of these movements.



Towaki



General situation :

The choice of attacking directions is left then right – complimentary to *To-zume*.

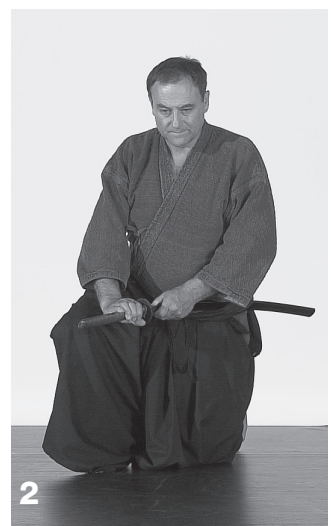
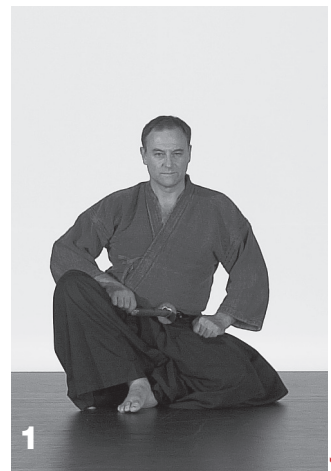
General spirit :

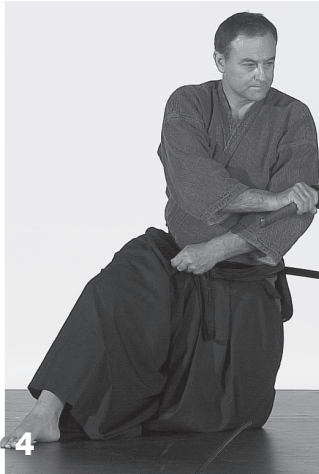
As in *To-zume*.

The name implies “Beside the door (egress)”.



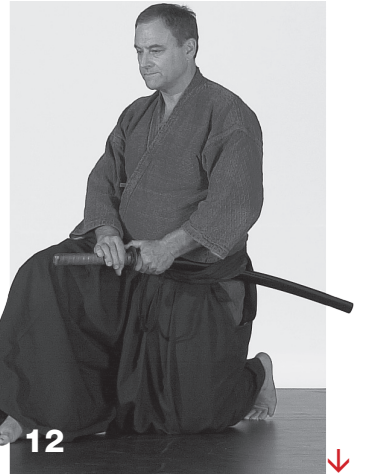
- At this point, turn towards the front once more and step back three steps (left, right and join the left foot to the right). You should be back in the place where you started in *Tate-hiza*.





Details:

- These two Kata, *To-zume* and *To-waki* should remind us of the first two Kata of *Oku-den Tachi-waza*.



- After you stand up (13) step backwards three steps (left, right and the left foot joins the right) in such a way that you are again back where the movement started.



Shihôgiri



14



四方切

we owe our existence. Without one or the other we would not exist. We should be thankful for this.

General situation :

This is a practice for working in all directions. Four directions are the fundamental actions you need to know.

Bear in mind that the spirit of *Shi-hô-giri* is really just the continuous execution of two *Zen-gô-giri* movements in two different, chosen directions.



1



15.

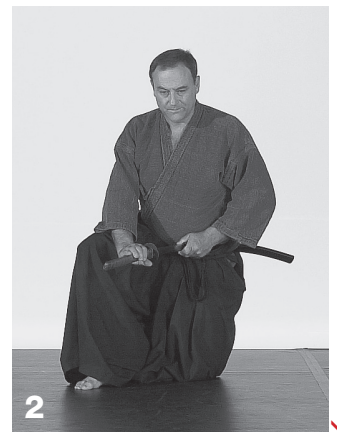
The name implies "Four directions cut, All directions cut".

General spirit :

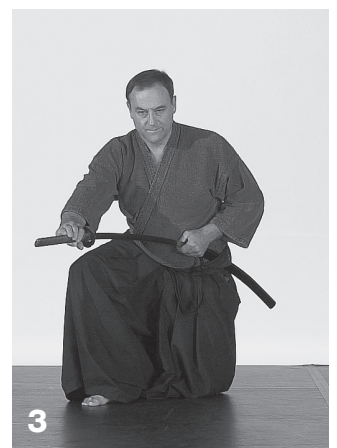
Shi-hô – Four directions is quite an important spiritual concept. Shirata Rinjiro Sensei once explained to me the following:

The four directions represent four dimensions of the universe. When we exercise cutting in the four directions we should be conscious of these four dimensions and give thanks to each for making our existence possible. The first is the Universe itself. The second direction is the earth upon which we live – This is *Ten-Chi*.

The third direction is Humanity and the fourth represents our parents and ancestors. It is thanks to each of these essential elements that



2

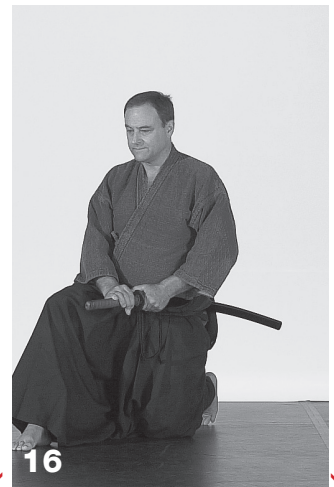


3

Details:

- The word *Shi-hô* which literally means four directions is used in the name of many techniques in the various *Bu-dô*. It should be kept in mind that it implies 'all directions' become possible when four directions are mastered.

- Generally there is a basic order to the cuts. However, the applied technique would obviously have to be prepared to create the order according to the situation. This is probably why the basic order may vary from teacher to teacher. The *Hi-den* here is probably that the student should be competent in all the combinations/directions of the four cuts.



Tanashita



棚
下

The name implies
"Beneath the
overhang".

General situation :

Other than the initial situation of sliding out from underneath a low overhanging obstacle there is not a specific definition of situation. It basically is telling us "here's the way to slide out from a low-ceiling position".

General spirit :

Once again this *Kata* demonstrates competence of action even when there are limiting circumstances.

Details :

- Do not straighten up until you have moved forward (from under the overhanging obstacle).



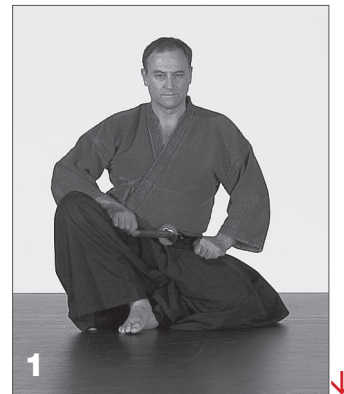
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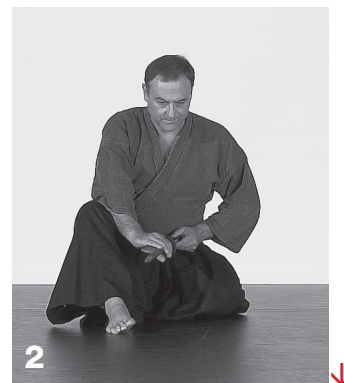
19



20.



1



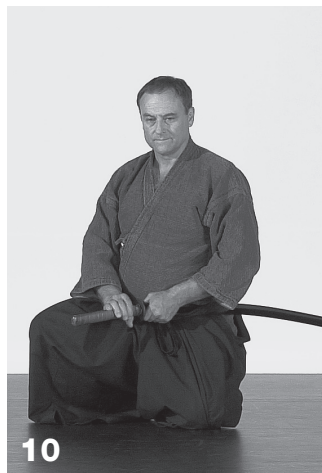
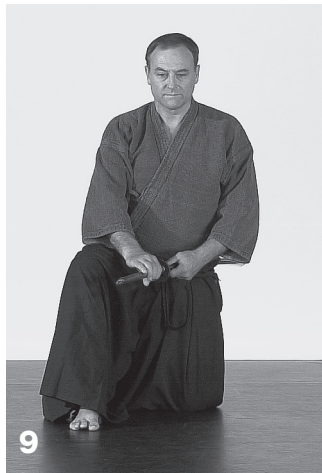
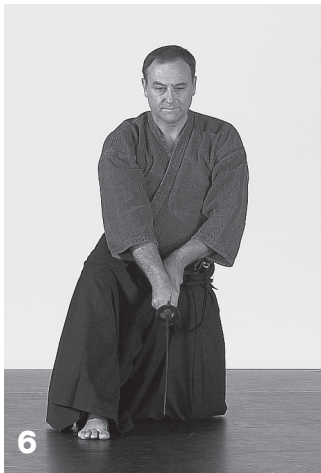
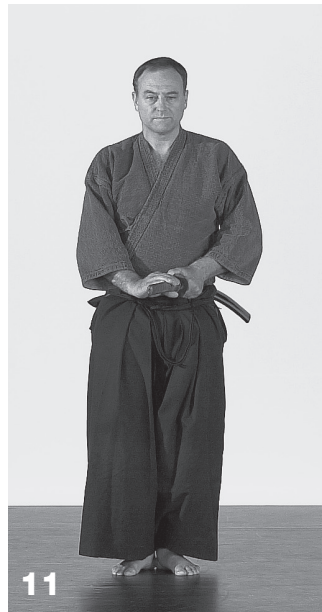
2



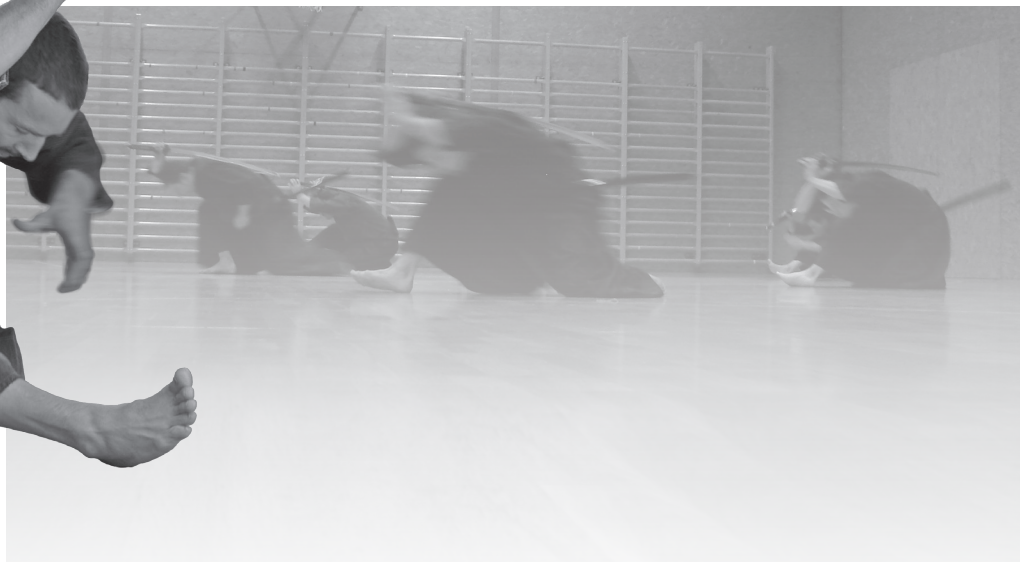
3



4



Training in *Oku-den Suwari-lai* at the Shung-Do-Kwan, Geneva, Switzerland, winter 2009. (Left, Dominique Falquet performing *Tana-shita*).



Ryôzume



羽詰

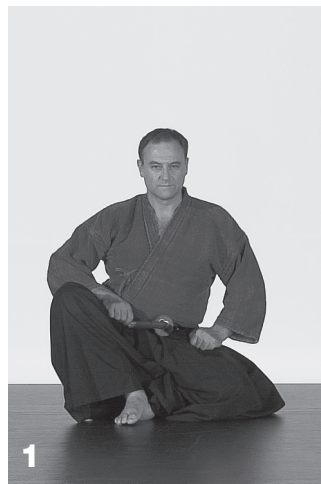
General situation :

The *Kata* definitely creates the feeling of working in a narrow corridor or something of the sort.

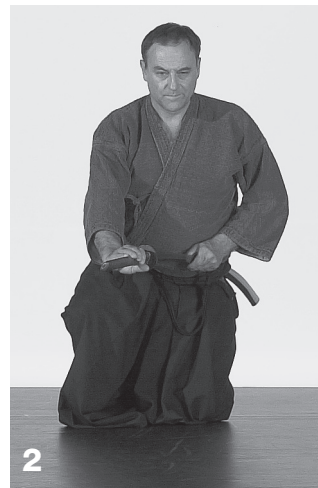
General spirit :

When watching this movement one should definitely get the impression that the action is taking place in a narrow space. Therefore, one learns to perform the *Kata* in such a manner as to illustrate competence within the confines created in your mind. It teaches us that apparent limitations need not be handicaps if we learn to adopt ourselves correctly to the circumstances.

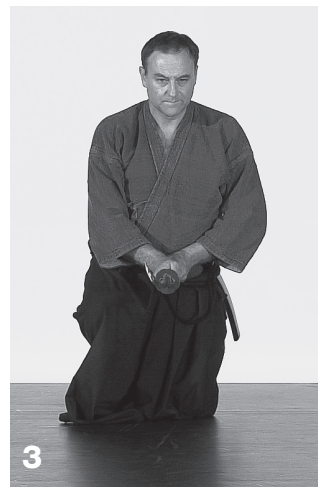
The name implies "Double pin, Hemmed-in on both sides".



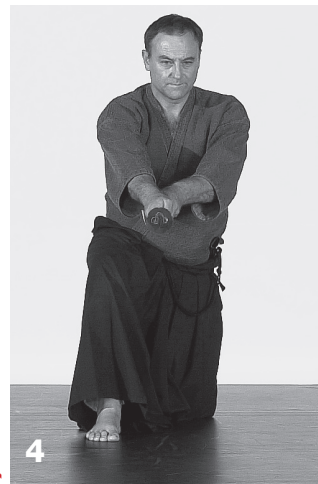
1



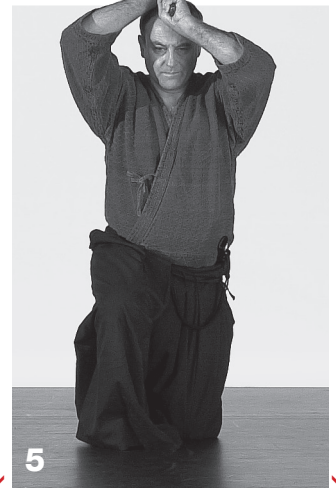
2



3



4

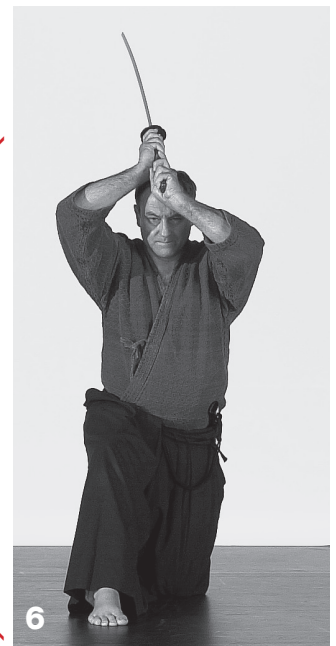


5



Details :

- Don't forget to move "within the cut" (7) as usual in this series, but also within the *Tsuki* (4).



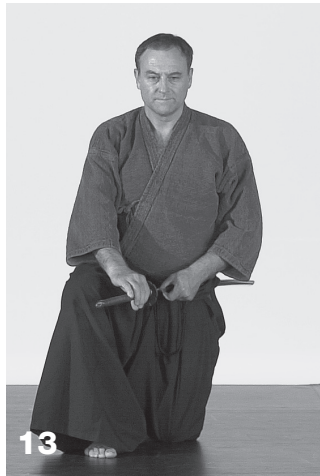
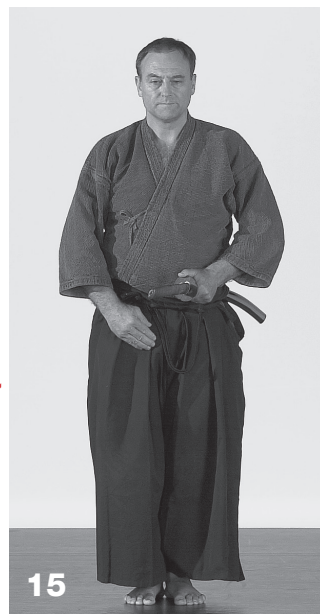
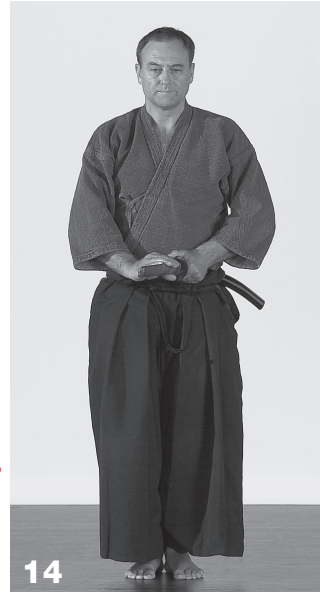
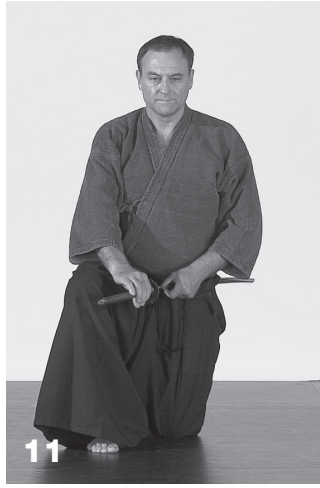
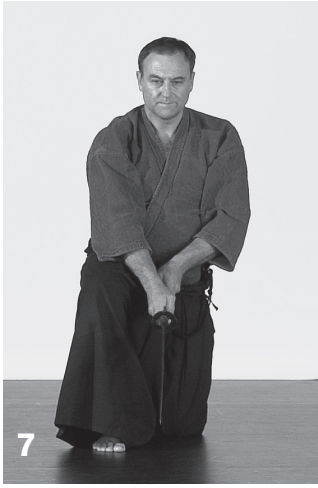
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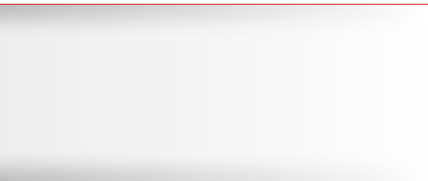
Torabashiri



The name implies
"The Tiger's
charge".



Back to the initial place.



General situation:

Here there is no specific situation that is defined. It is an interesting study of a 'mobile *Sho-hattô*' type movement.

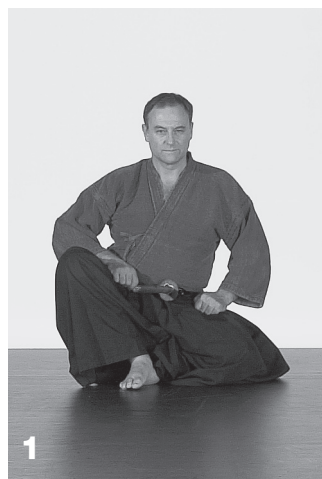
General spirit:

Translating the feeling implied by the name is not an easy thing to accomplish. In watching many performances of this *Kata* I have often gotten the feeling that the "charge of the pussy-cat" would be a more appropriate name.

The *Suri-ashi* steps, the rhythm and the body position must be carefully studied to create the correct feeling to this *Kata*.

Details:

- In my mind, this is one of the most difficult *Kata* to perform properly. The steps require a firm understanding of *Suri-ashi* and can only be acquired through personal teaching.



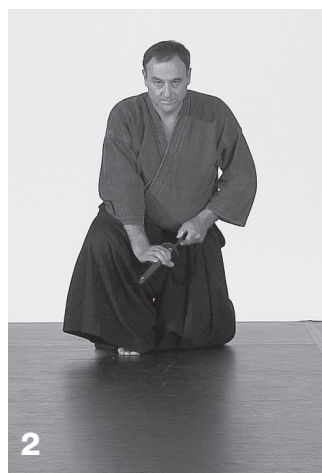
1



5



9



2



6



10



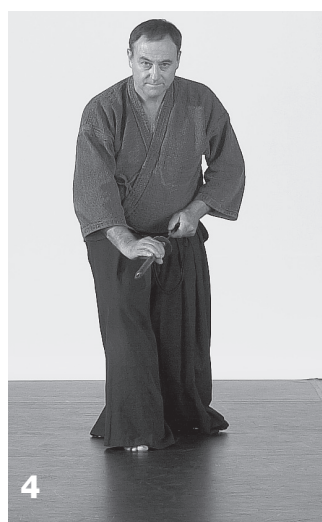
3



7



11



4

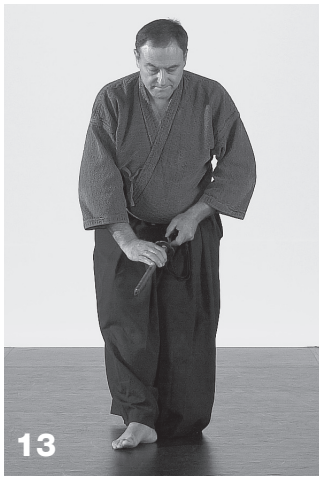


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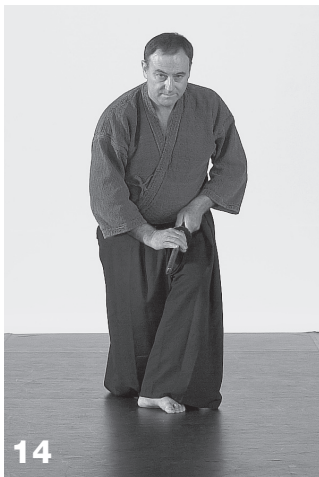


12





13



14



15



16

Alternate:

This Kata is seen done in two ways. 1 to 20 is a shorter form. A longer form is to follow through to step 15, and then draw the sword once more and follow through steps **A** to **G**, and then 17 to 20 (thus performing a final Yoko-gumo movement).



D



A



E



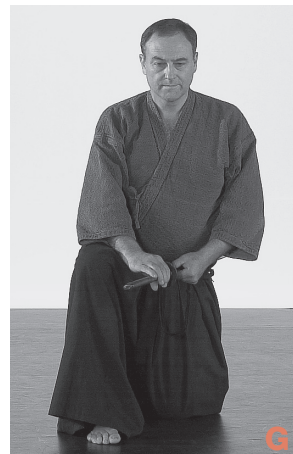
B



F

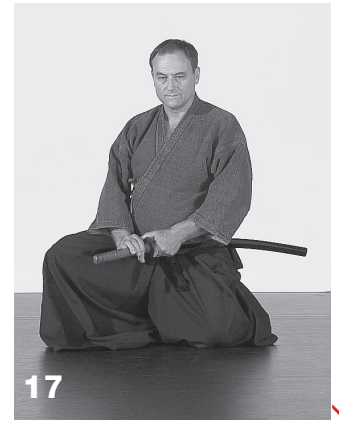


C

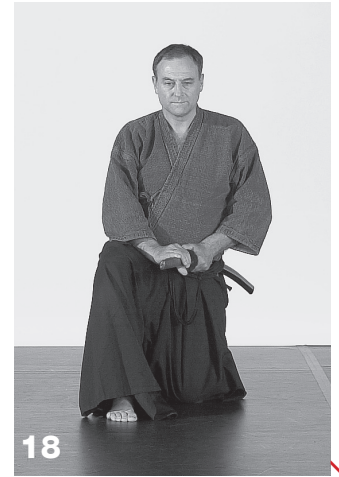


G

From here continue with step 17.



17



18



19



20.

Okuden Tachi iai

奥伝立居合

The *Oku-den* movements are said to be the original bones of Hayashizaki Jinsuke Shigenobu's teachings. It is thought that they were originally conceived for use with the *Tachi* and were later modified for the *Katana* by Hasegawa Eishin. It may also be observed that the *Uchi-gatana* had come into wide acceptance by the end of the 16th century so it would not be impossible for these *Kata* to have been conceived for the sword worn upwards in the *Katana* fashion.

This is a possibility that no one, probably, will ever be able to confirm 100%. But, assuming that they are the oldest of the *Kata* of the school, we might also presume that the manner in which they are performed today is not the same as the manner in the first half of the 17th century; more so if they were later modified by Hasegawa Eishin. Times change and along with them practical necessities are no longer the same. However, taking the situations illustrated in the *Tachi-i-ai* series we can see that these *Kata* deal with a dif-

ferent context than we find in the preceding *Omori* or *Hasegawa Ryû*. Let's look at some differences that we see in *Tachi-i-ai Oku-den*.

Firstly, they are standing. This implies that these movements were conceived for practical situations outside of the house or castle environment. Donn Draeger always considered that "battlefield use" was one of the *sine qua non* for acceptance of a technique within what would be defined as a "*Bu-jutsu*".

Secondly, they are not primarily concerned with a situation involving etiquette, but rather with more realistic situations where the defensive elements are considerably less emphasized than the offensive.

Thirdly, they almost exclusively deal with situations that take into account multiple adversaries (two or more) and have practical military context.



Yukizure



The name implies “Accompanying” or “Escorting”.

General situation :

I have been taught more than one situation for the majority of the *Kata* in *Okuden*. It seems to me that the names themselves can generally be seen in several different ways and situations.

The situation here with *Yuki-zure* is most often illustrated where the person doing the movement is walking with someone on either side of him. He lets them take an extra step in front so he can draw and attack to the right (6) and then to the left (11). The right foot leads in both the right and left cuts. However, it will sometimes be seen to be done with first the right foot for the initial right-sided cut but using a left (foot) step forward for the cut to the left (variation). The two cuts are performed on the forward diagonals.

Other situations are interpreted differently : i.e. with adversaries being more widely separated making the angle between the two cuts 180°.

Sometimes it is also taught that the two adversaries are walking towards you.



General spirit :

Suri-ashi is a very important point to pay attention to in these *Kata*. It is necessary to be exceedingly precise in a flowing movement which demonstrates good strength of position and firm movement from the hips.



Details:

- Be aware of making well extended movements. Do not sacrifice movement extension for speed and power. It is important to have all three elements well-balanced in the whole series.

- The *Chi-buri* movement should be done in a 'decisive' manner.
- The *Nô-tô* movement is done (as in *Oku-den Suwari-waza*) with greater speed than in the first two series. However, be careful not

Variation (9 to 12)





15



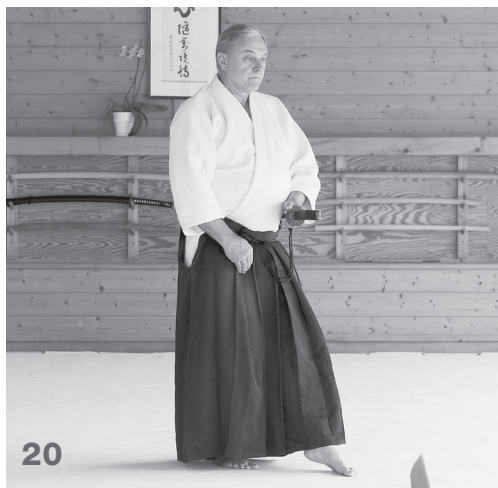
19



23.



16



20

→

to overdo this – the whole movement must have a smooth and natural execution. Remember that the logical emphasis in *I-ai*, practically speaking, was on a fast movement for the draw but putting the sword away could be done at one's speed of choice. When observing, for example, the *I-ai* of the Tenshinshoden Katori Shinto Ryû (among others) one can feel very strongly this factor.



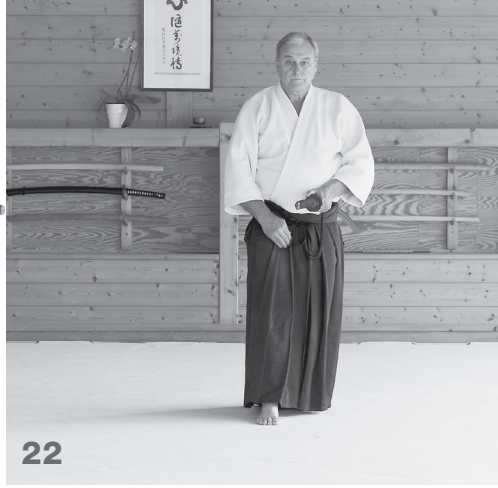
17



21



18



22



Tsuredachi



The name implies
 “Those Accompanying”
 or “Companions”.

General situation:

Yuki-zure and this movement, *Tsure-dachi*, are the standing versions related to *Suwari-Oku To-zume* and *To-waki*. Technically, it is true they are very close. However, the difference in the names may indicate a different conception in the situations. As with *Yuki-zure* I have seen this *Kata* shown as applied to varied situations – one of which includes a body-check to one of the adversaries prior to *Nuki-tsuke* (this being also the case with *Yuki-zure*).



1



2



5



3



6



4



7



General spirit:

Once again, proper walking is essential here and one must achieve an integrated, flowing and strong movement overall.

Details:

• There are three manners that one may be shown for performing the initial *Nuki-waza*: *Ushiro-tsuki*. See 'variations' opposite

a) The first is a short *Tsuki* in which the body is not rotated and the center remains on the initial line of attack. With this short

and direct type of *Tsuki* the edge of the blade will be upwards.

b) The second is a rotation of the hip plus *Tsuki* with a farther reach. With this larger and more extended type of *Tsuki* the edge of the blade will rotate with the hip movement towards the outside.



8



11



9



12



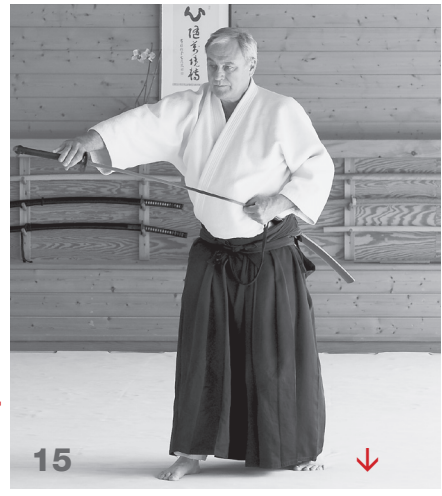
14



10



13



15

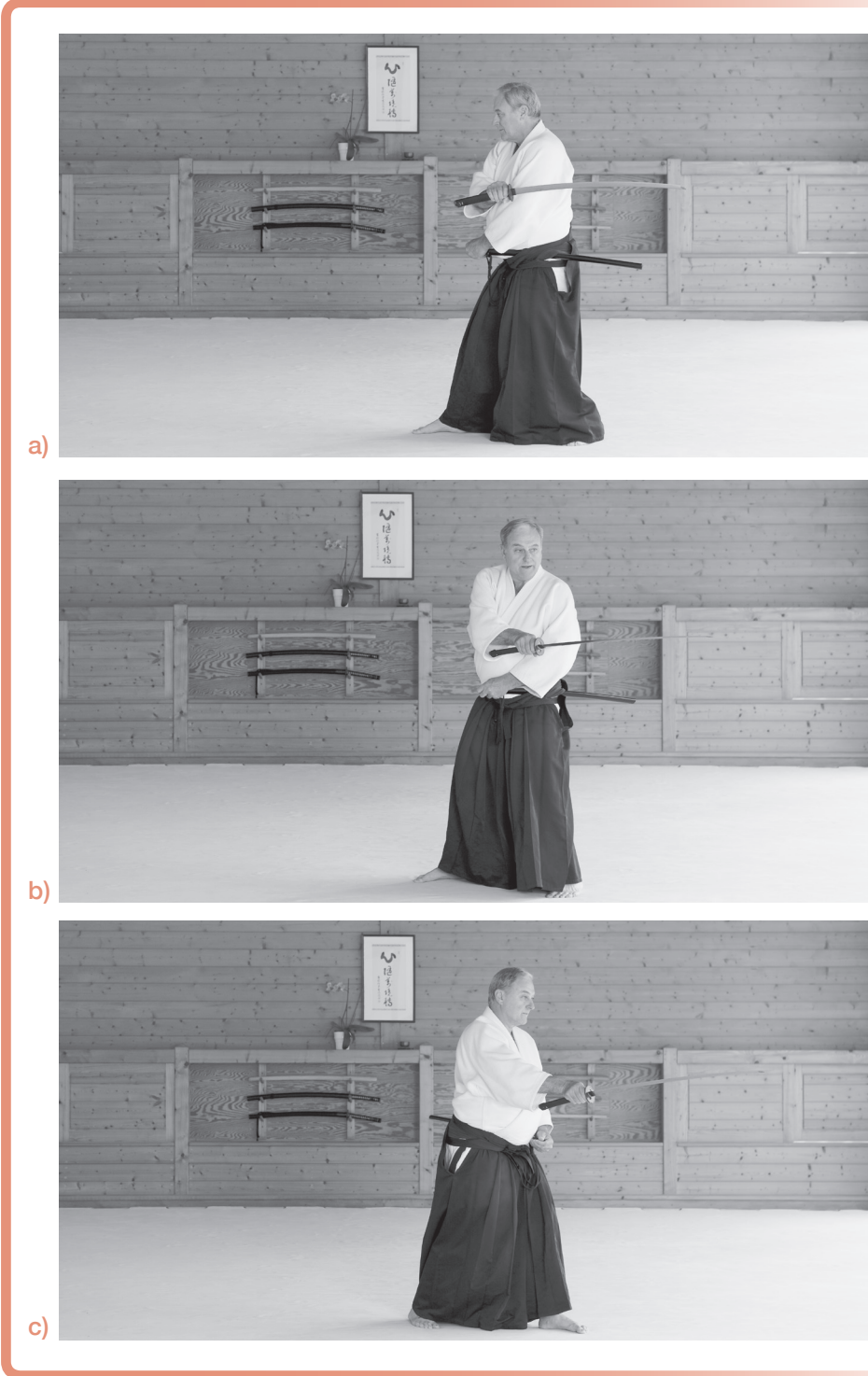
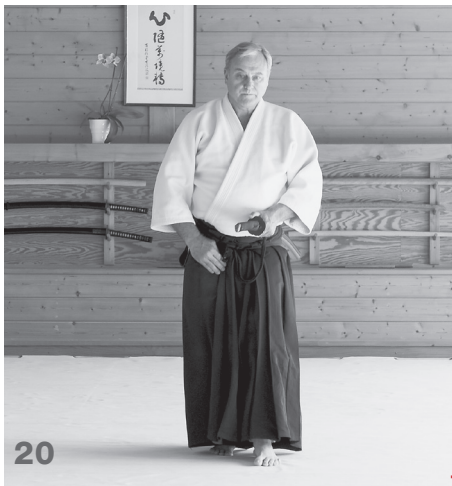
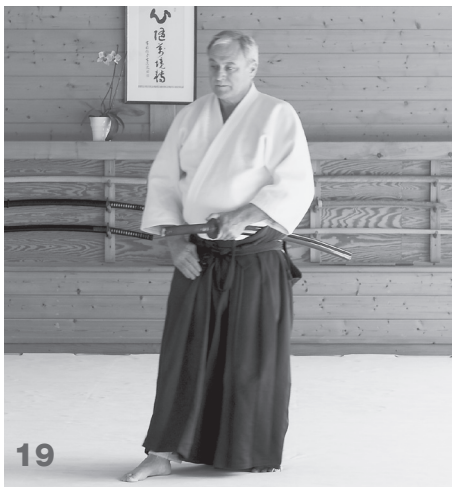
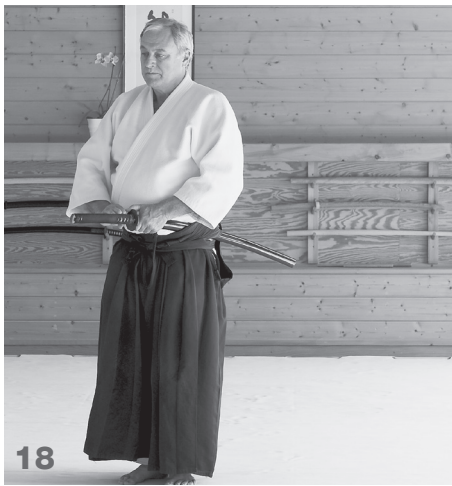


16





Variations (5 to 7)



c) The third is a full rotation of the body/hips (using *Mawari-ashi*) with the center facing to the rear. The *Tsuki* here is a full-body movement and so the edge of the blade will rotate with this movement to a final position towards the ground.

The illustration (7) here is done with the second option which remains the more common way of performing this action.

Somakuri



惣掬

The name implies "All around".

General situation :

The situation here is less evident than in the preceding *Kata*. The five cuts taught in this movement are perhaps to illustrate what are considered the most practical ones – keeping in mind that a cut is also the defining of a target. Thus this is a more universal situation much like *Shiho-giri* in *Suwari-waza*.

General spirit :

It is interesting to see that here one draws the sword and assumes a guard posture (4 to 6) – this is the only *Kata* having this characteristic (*Mon-iri* retains the sword in its scabbard).



2



5



3



6



1



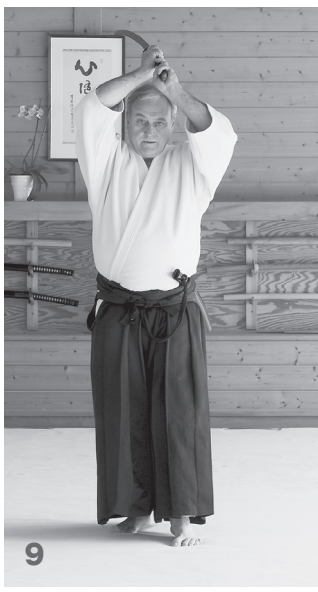
4



7



8



9



10

put too much power and/or too much speed into the *Kata*. (By “too much” I mean too much for the level of experience that the practitioner possesses).

• The key point is to get a balanced coordination of the *Ashi-sabaki* (steps), the *Tai-sabaki* (body movement) and the cutting movements.

• Probably the most important point to be aware of is the control of one’s center and hip movements – keep an overall straight line forward.



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18

Details:

• This *Kata* is not easy to do well. Most times the five cuts are not done in a smooth, blended manner. They turn out, rather, as five jerky cuts one after the other. This is usually due to trying to



Sodome



惣 柄

General situation :

The situation that is most commonly explained for this *Kata* is that one is descending steps (on a traditional-type bridge) and dealing with or making successive attacks.

Also, it is said to be used when descending a sharply inclined terrain.

Another situation that is evoked for this *Kata* is moving quietly, back to a wall, and attacking successive adversaries posted along the wall.

General spirit :

There is a lot of stealth and control that can be felt in this *Kata* when done correctly.

The name implies "Everything Stops".

I have also heard this name as referring to "Stopping the Spear".
(Different *Kan-ji* 槍留め)



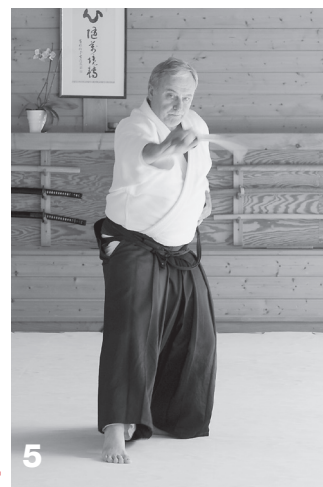
2



(4) Profile



3



5



1



4



6

(6) Profile



Details:

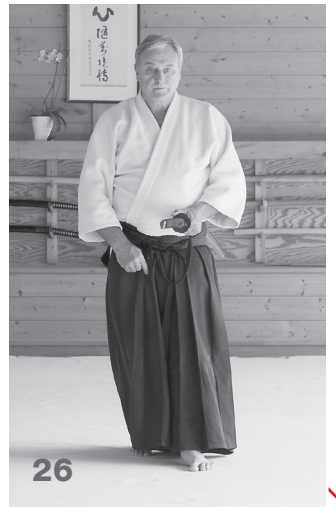
- Though this *Kata* is often seen performed where the *Nôtô* is done during the step (*Ayumi* or *Rop-pô-ashi*) with the left foot (4, 9 and 14), it is not altogether sure that this execution does not interfere with good balance and power.



Try doing this movement on a steep, rough, incline and you can see for yourself that better footing and balance is obtained by performing the *Nôtô* independently (before the left *Rop-pô-ashi*), then performing the two steps smoothly one after the other, the *Nuki-tsuke* being done simultaneously with the right step. This way full attention can be kept upon the steps and your balance – this *Kata* is most often taught in this manner.

- Make sure to bring your center to the front, after the last *Nuki-tsuke* (16), as you do the *Chi-buri* movement.





Shinobu



信
受

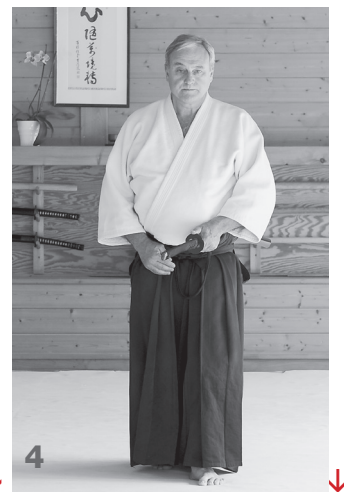
General situation :

An adversary is seeking you out in the darkness. Your movement must deceive him into attacking in the wrong place.

General spirit :

The name implies "Discretion", "invisibility", "Stealthy".

Shinobu is not only a fitting name technically but also a spiritual concept that many practitioners today should delve into and try to understand. Pascal Krieger and myself were once speaking with a famous Japanese swordsmith (Ono Kanemasa) from Seki. In the course of the conversation we asked him what his overriding inner aim was. He answered immediately



that he wished always to be guided by the concept of "*Shinobu*" in his life. Both Pascal and myself were deeply impressed by this statement.

Details :

- It is interesting to note that the name '*Shinobu*' is the same character that is used in '*Nin*' of "*Ninjutsu*". The more formal way of speaking

of that discipline is : *Shinobi-jutsu*.

- I have been shown this *Kata* in a number of variations all of which accomplish the aim of the movement logically. I have illustrated it here the way I have seen it done the most.
- Soft and stealthy steps and silent action are totally in keeping with the spirit of this *Kata*.



6



9



11



14



7



10



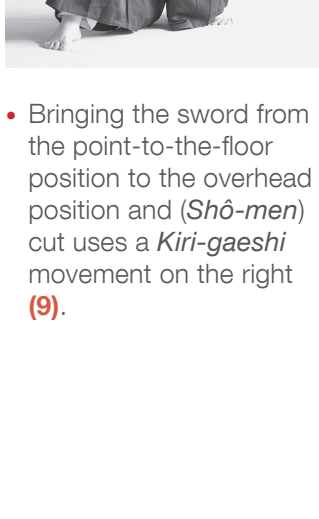
12



15



8



13



16

• Bringing the sword from the point-to-the-floor position to the overhead position and (*Shô-men*) cut uses a *Kiri-gaeshi* movement on the right (9).

• In illustration (8) the tip of the sword (*ki-saki*) is tapped (gently) on the floor (or tatami) to lure the adversary into believing this is your true location (in the dark – remember!). Generally, one is taught to make three small taps.



(8) Profile



17.

Yukichigai



ゆき
ぎ

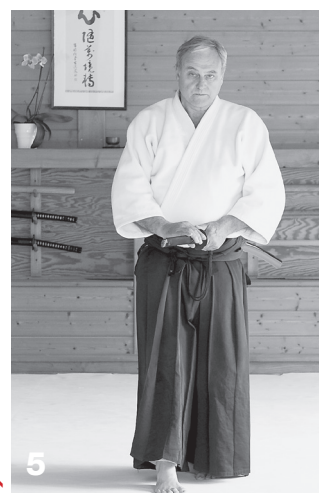
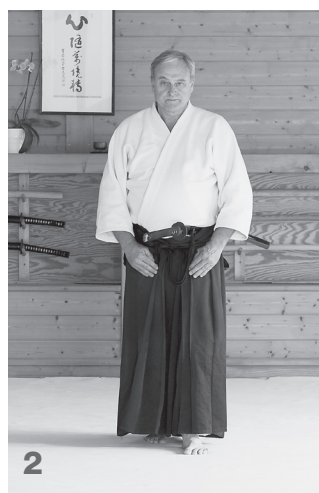
The name implies "Opposite Direction", "Passing By", "Wrong Direction".

General situation :

Fundamentally, the situation here is *Zen-gô-giri*. An adversary in front and an adversary behind, Quite logically the man behind (who represents the greatest danger) is dispatched first.

This movement, in spite of its apparent simplicity, seems to be one that is done differently by many people. I have pointed out some of the differences in execution you might see according to your teacher and his style but *Yuki-chigai* is one movement where you can expect to see varied interpretations.

The situation is most often understood as walking in single file with adversaries back and front. It is also taught as crossing or passing two adversaries, stepping in between them and dispatching them back and front – this form often has a *Tsuka-ate* movement included as an initial attack. The *Tsuka-ate* action also makes sense in other situations. A common way of doing this *Kata* is just like *Yuki zure* with an initial *Tsuka-ate* and a full pivot on the *Tsuki* movement. It is also seen done in variations both with the turn to the left and to the right.



In my own view the differences in execution of the *Kata* are often (not in all cases!) a sign of the great wealth contained in the overall practice of a *Ryû*. We should always try to learn as much as possible about all these aspects but, ultimately, we must adopt either the form that your teacher imparts to you or that form which is harmonious in relation to the principles evident in all



the other forms of the series and of the school you are practicing. Whatever you do, do not get into "correct form wars".

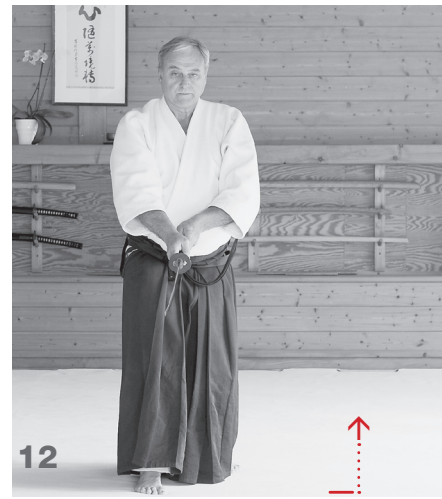
General spirit:

The spirit of this movement is that of *Shi-hō-giri* which is really just the continuous execution of two *Zen-gō-giri* movements in two different, chosen directions.

10

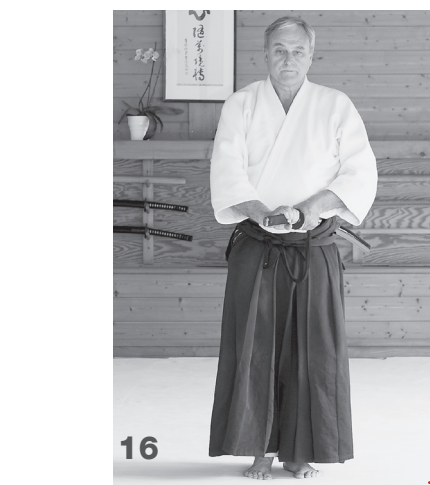
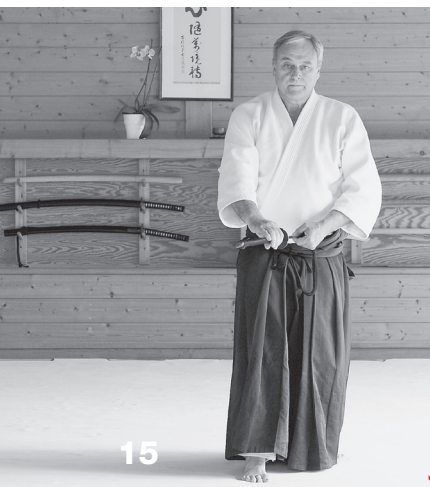
Details:

- When pivoting around press downwards with the *Tsuka* to facilitate turning between the adversaries.



(5 to 12) Profile





Sode Surigaeshi



袖
摺
返

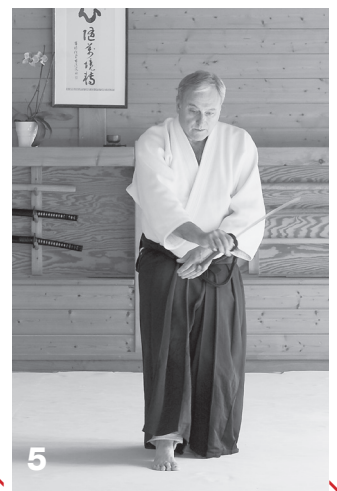
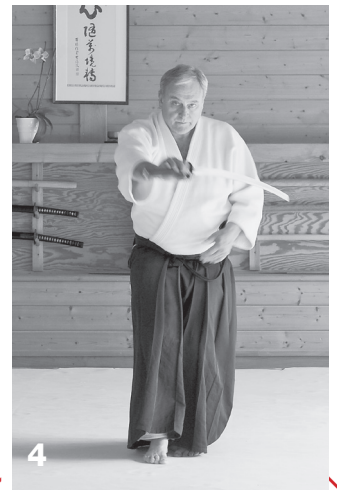
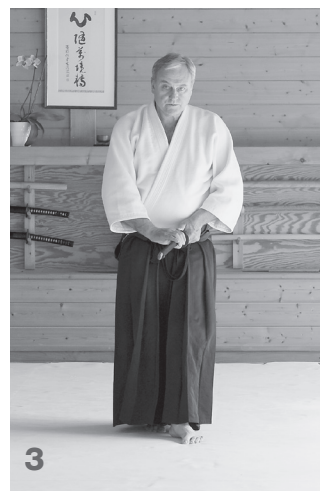
General situation :

This is a rather unique situation. You have to pass through a crowd of (innocent) by-standers to engage your adversary. It can also be seen as a group of your own allies. In any case, your aim is to penetrate through the multitude and not cause any harm to any one of them (even, ultimately, you might be protecting them).

The name implies
"Brushing Sleeves".

General spirit :

I would be inclined to feel the spirit of this *Kata* resembles in many ways *Tora-bashiri*.

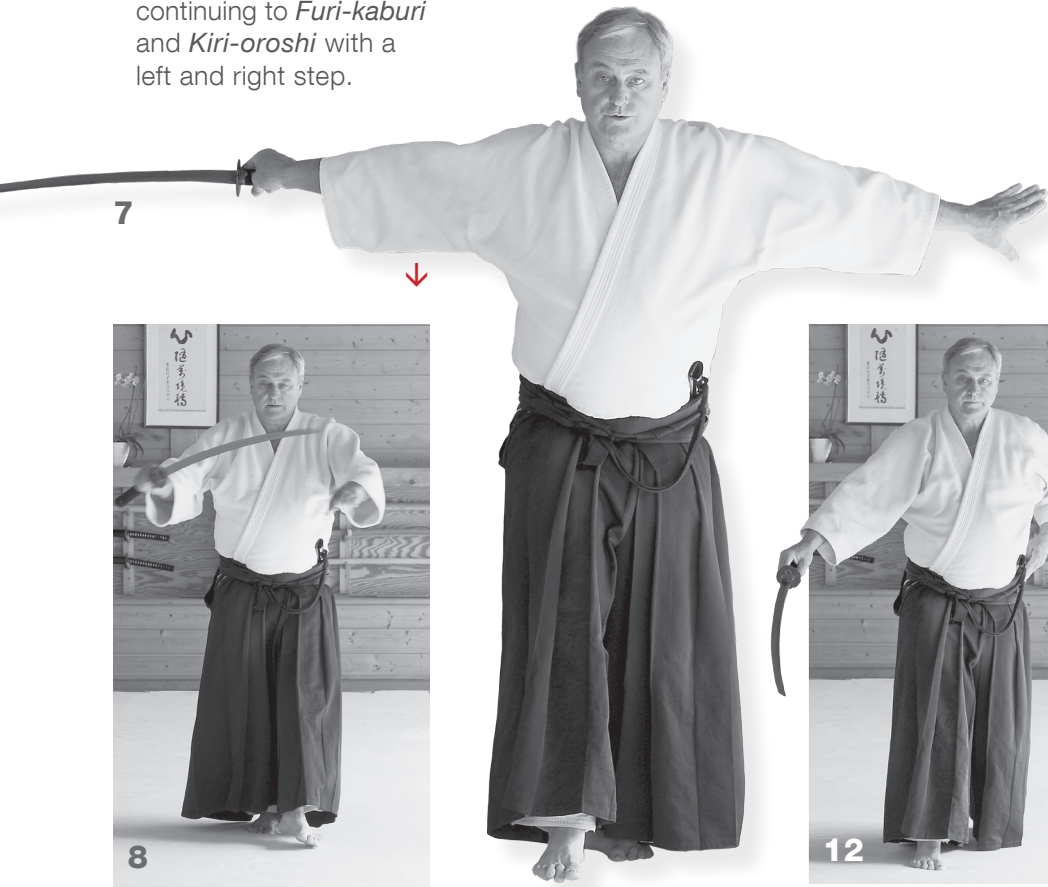


Details :

- The steps are difficult to coordinate. However many initial steps you take draw your sword and have it in place at your (left) side with when you join the right foot to the left foot. Then begin your action by stepping forward with the left foot. Pushing aside the crowd with a right step and



continuing to *Furi-kaburi* and *Kiri-oroshi* with a left and right step.



7



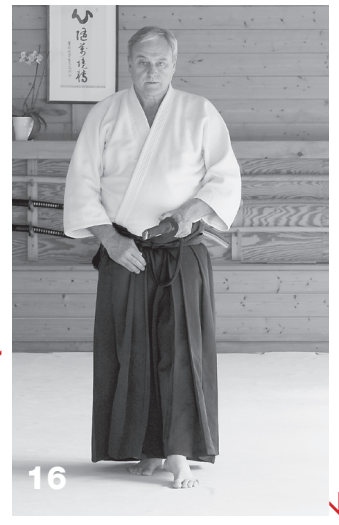
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12



15



16



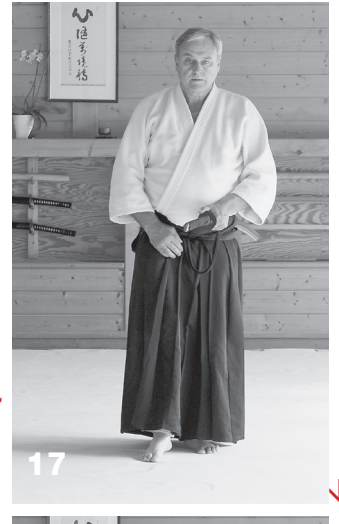
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10



13



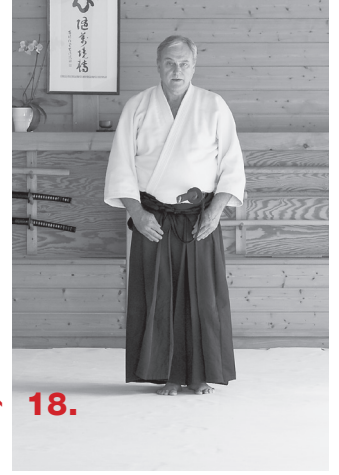
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11

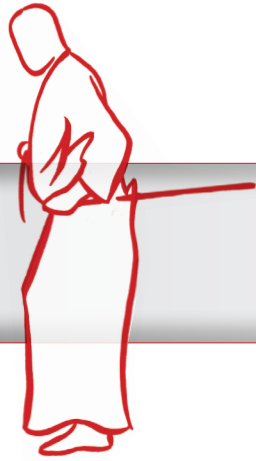


14



18.

Moniri (Monnyû)



The name implies
"Entering through
the Gate".

General situation :

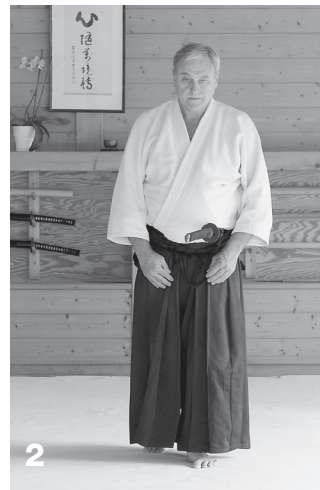
Standing in a gate and attacking back and forth through the gate. It is assumed that the gate has a lintel and thus, the situation presents logistical considerations.

General spirit :

That of *Zen-gô-giri* as in *Yuki-chigai*.

Details :

- Assume a position within the gate with a door post at your back.

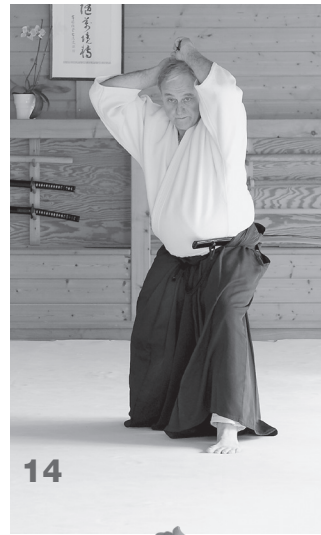




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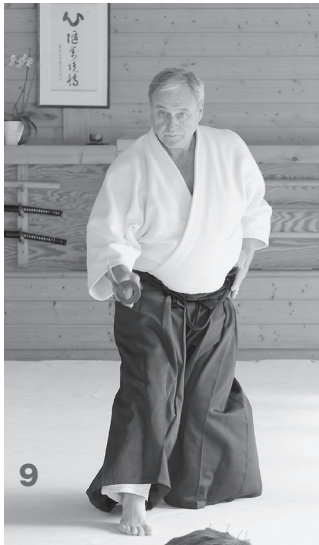
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9



17



13

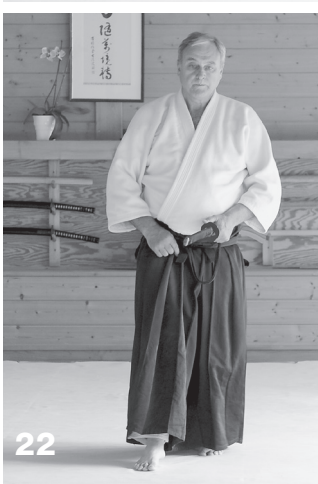


18



19

- Lower the *Ki-saki* behind your back so as to overcome the obstacle presented by the overhead beam (lintel).
- Do *Kiri-oroshi* when you have cleared the obstacle and do the same for the final passage and cut.



Kabezoe



壁
際

The name implies
“Hemmed in by Walls”
“Against Walls”.

General situation :

The situations that have been described to me for this kata vary somewhat, but, each one is logical.

- a) Most often it is considered that one is in a narrow corridor or hallway.
- b) One has one's back to a wall.
- c) One is cutting over the top of a small wall.
(Possibly higher for someone on the other side!?).

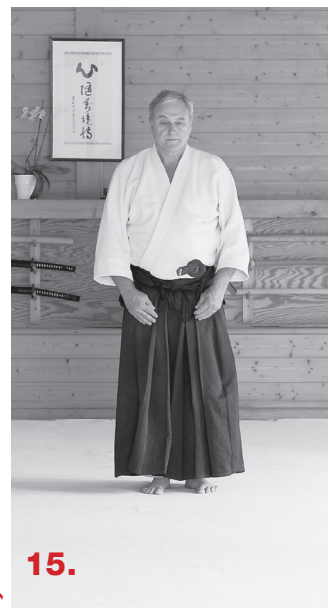
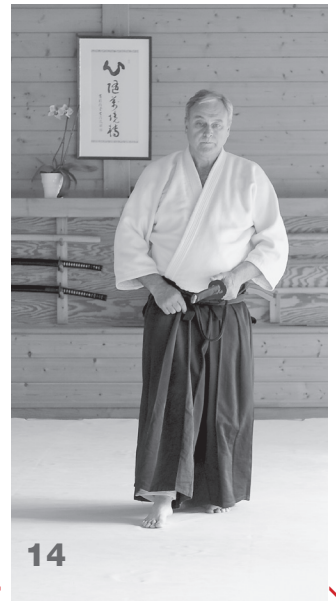
General spirit :

This *Kata* has the feeling of *Nuki-uchi*.



Details :

- Balance is difficult to maintain. Step forward with the right foot while doing an *Uke-nagashi*-like draw and join the right foot to the left as you do *Kiri-oroshi* rising up onto the balls of your feet in the process.



- Lower your heels as you complete the (vertical) *Nô-tô* movement.

Uke Nagashi



受
流

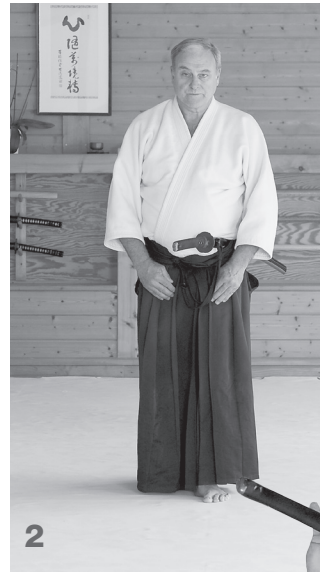
The name implies
"Receiving and Flowing"
"Flowing Parry".

General situation :

This is very much in the spirit of Ômori Ryû-tô, of course, but, *Tachi-waza*.

General spirit :

This movement should demonstrate a unity of movement/action so that it gives the feeling that the attack and the *Uke-nagashi* are all one. This concept may sometimes be called by varying terms: *Ki-awase*, *Ki-no-nagare*, *Sen-no-sen* or *kôbô-ichi*. You must practice this *Kata* until you can feel that your cut is striking no later



than the attacker's cut would have struck had you not moved from your initial position.



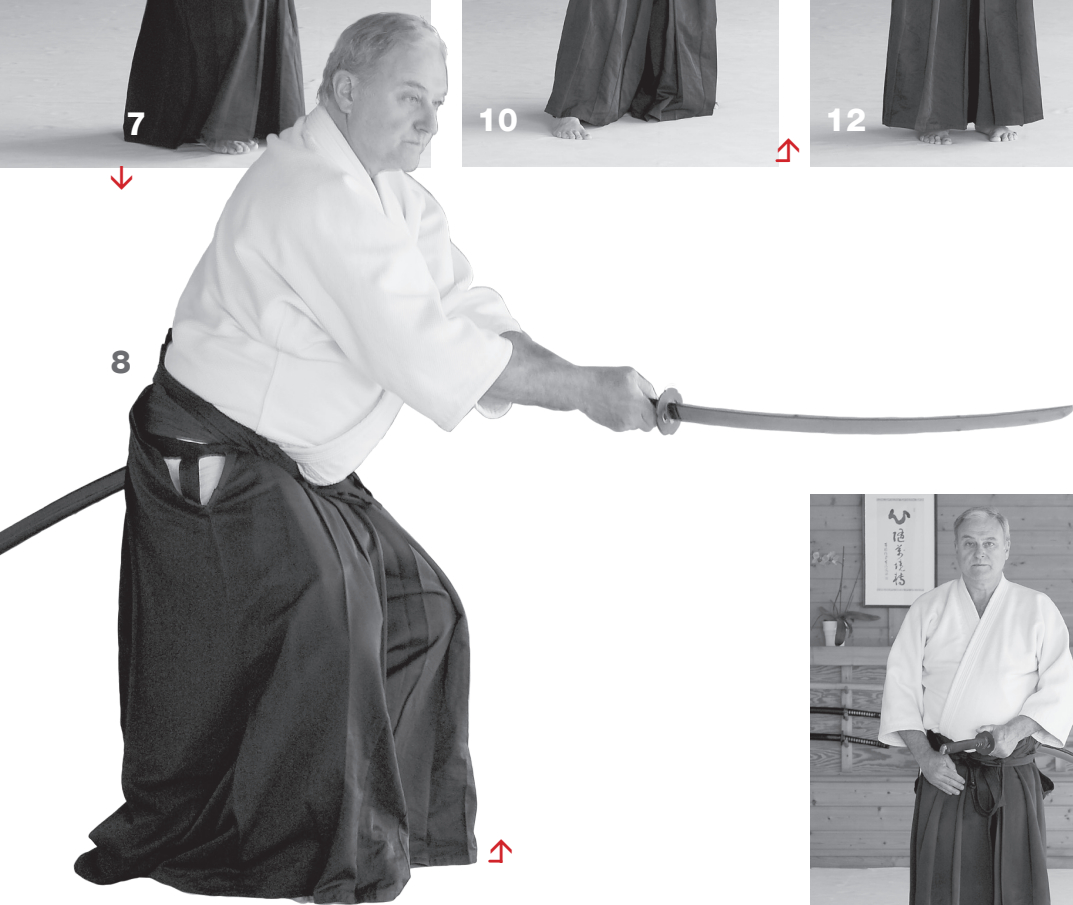
1



3



5



Itomagoi



Itomagoi

The name implies "Farewell Visit".

"Itomagoi (sono) Ichi" or "Itomagoi Ip-pon-me";

"Itomagoi (sono) Ni" or "Itomagoi ni-hon-me";

"Itomagoi (sono) San" or "Itomagoi San-bon-me".

General spirit:

It would seem rather evident that these movements are done in an offensive manner so an adversary may be caught unawares. But for various reasons many teachers prefer to see them in a defensive light where the practitioner needs to react to an attack trying to catch him unawares.

General situation:

There are three different movements to this one Kata. It is a question of timing: the first variation is done in the early part of the bow, the second is done with both hands on the floor and the third is done when fully bowing. These are called respectively:



1 Ipponme



2 Ipponme



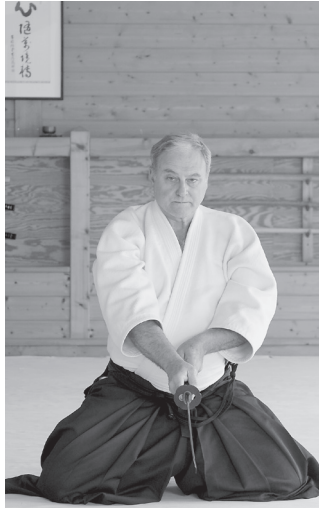
Position at the start for the three variations.

Details:

- Practise these *Kata* with great care. It is very easy to cut your own left arm in the process. Proper *Saya-biki* is important.



3 Ipponme



6 Ipponme



3 Nihonme



4 Nihonme

Continued overleaf from point 7



4 Ipponme



1 Nihonme



5 Ipponme



2 Nihonme





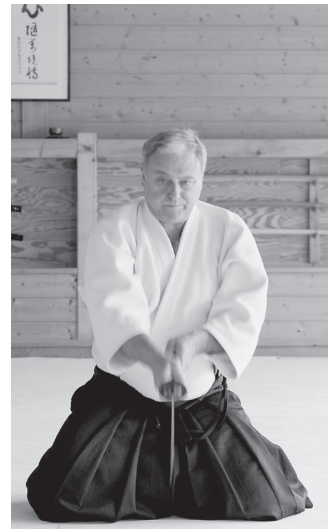
5 Nihonme



2 Sanbonme



5 Sanbonme



6 Sanbonme

Continued overleaf from point 7



6 Nihonme



3 Sanbonme

Continued overleaf from point 7



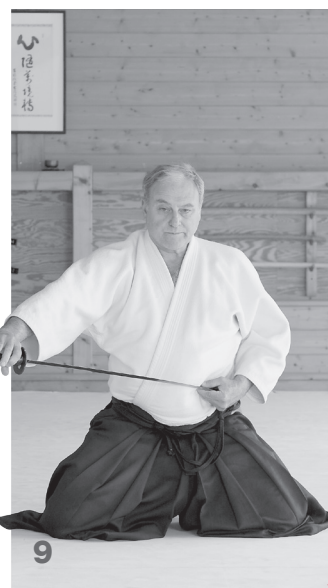
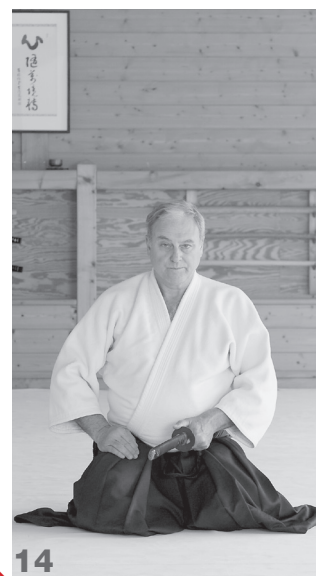
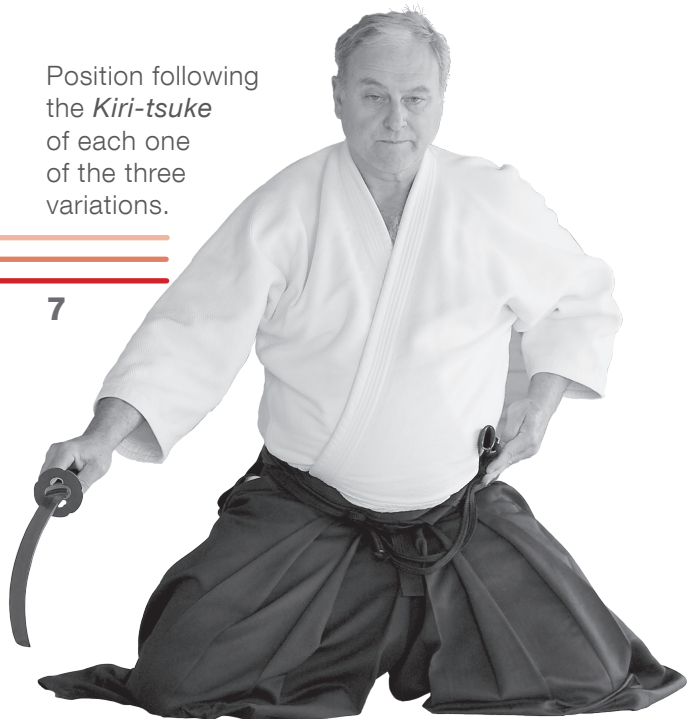
1 Sanbonme



4 Sanbonme



Position following the *Kiri-tsuke* of each one of the three variations.





Shin-riki, "Power". Though it is taught that this last series possesses a feeling of greater freedom, it is the same as the freedom seen in the "Sôsho" level of calligraphy. Without the long and careful training in "Kaisho" and "Gyôsho" first,

this 'freedom' would be a 'weak, untrained chaos'. When the student has correctly followed the Way then this stage becomes filled

with inherent beauty and power. Not the strength seen in a strong, tense, short-lived, muscular movement, but rather, the tranquil power that one can feel upon looking on the movement of an Ocean (Pacific, Atlantic, etc.).

The impression of true strength is omnipresent and one cannot help feeling that a huge and powerful wave exists everywhere, and at any moment, within.

神力

Tameshigiri/Suemonogiri

Test cutting with a Japanese sword is an impressive experience both to those who are watching and to he who is cutting. Without a doubt cutting with a live-blade constitutes probably the most spectacular act of practicing swordsmanship. And, as with so many things that are spectacular, awesome and impressive, this exercise is also subject to greater mis-understanding, misuse and abuse. It is said that an important part of the art of the sword is learning that it is important to be as concerned about cutting one's own ego as the adversary.

When cutting with a sword, two elements may be subject to judgement: there is the blade and its quality, on the one side, and then, there is the skill of the person performing the cutting. When examining the quality of the blade it was usually the cutting capacity that was examined. But sometimes the quality of the forging process was tested, in which case, it often meant to the destruction of the blade. This last case is certainly not of interest within the framework of the practice of *I-ai* and *Ken*.

The original and fundamental aim in test cutting was to judge as correctly and as objectively as possible the cutting qualities of a given blade. It was taken as a given that if the smith had a good reputation he knew his job well enough to forge the blade well and properly. So this was not the issue. This type of testing was called '*Tameshi-giri*'. It was not considered a method to practice, test or improve the cutter's skills. So there existed expert 'cutter/testers' called upon for testing. Thus, in this manner, there was an attempt to 'standardize' at least one of the variables – the person cutting. Assuming his skill is incontestably high, every time he tests a blade he is able to offer a reasonably objective AND comparative assessment of the practical qualities of a blade. It was very common that these test cutters were from families of specialists whose reputations were well-known in this field. They developed their own styles of test-cutting (among others – human bodies) for the sole purpose of evaluating the qualities of the blades they tested. Their results were sometimes inscribed on the tangs (*Naka-go*) of the blades and the more famous the tester was (as a tester) the more his findings were desirable. So these men were a class of professional sword testers. It is, of course, true that every sword owner could and would wish to formulate his own assessment of a blade, particularly since his own life depended on his sword but

試
斬
り

Tameshigiri

this would be done in the same manner as the professional testing.

When performing *Tameshi-giri* the criteria would be based on the conditions that would be met with in practical usage. This varied in each historical period and was also largely responsible for changes in the way the swords were forged. Obviously, if a sword was mainly for ceremonial purposes and the emphasis was more on beauty than practicality the smiths would conform to the circumstances. Likewise, if there was a period of warfare (such as during the Sengoku Jidai) the smiths would concentrate on making more numerous and stronger battle weapons. In each of these cases the criteria for testing the sword would be different. When armor was often the norm in combat a sword test might include testing it on a helmet bowl to prove it strong enough and sharp enough to penetrate the helmet and/or armor plate. If the primary concern was cutting the unprotected human body then prisoners or corpses could be used to test the blades. Other targets would be constructed from straw and bamboo to represent the consistency of an



arm, a shoulder, a leg or the trunk of a body and so on in order to evaluate correctly the quality of a blade. This type of test cutting clearly has nothing to do with a method by which practitioners examine or evaluate themselves while cutting or learning to cut.

There exists, of course, this last type of practice which involves testing the person who is doing the cutting and not testing the sword. This is called more correctly "*Suemono-giri*" which means "cutting objects stood-up" or "cutting fixed targets". This practice is a useful tool for learning proper technique for cutting with the sword as well as developing a healthy respect for the impressive capacities of the *Nippon-to*. The principal target is made of bundles of straw tightly wrapped and soaked in water. The final consistency is said to reproduce the the resistance that would be met in cutting a body. Bamboo is also a target of choice but it should be remembered that the outside layer and the knots in the bamboo can be very hard and, therefore, may cause damage to a blade. Some bamboo, notably that which grows in Japan, has a relatively thin wall which allows one to cut rather sizeable pieces. However, there are other types of bamboo which have quite thick walls (the hole in the middle may only be the diameter of a finger for an external diameter of, say, 7 cm. Cutting this type of bamboo can cause damage to a blade. Sometimes the bamboo has straw wrapped around it giving the target a hard center (like a bone). The lesser experienced students begin by learning about the construction of *Maki-wara* or targets.

Please note: It is not a good idea (or logical) to cut tree branches, swamp grass, corn stalks etc. The Japanese sword should not be confused with a 'weed-whacker' even if its owner has perhaps a greater proclivity for this activity than for swordsmanship. Moreover, many plants have corrosive sap which damages the surface of the steel.

The Etiquette for Tameshigiri

When we do a session for the study of cutting it is very important to maintain a serious atmosphere throughout. It has been my experience that this is so often not the case. First of all may I say that this practice must have nothing to do with a spectacle or show – at most, cutting may be done within the context of the spirit of an *Em-bu*. The same etiquette that is used in the *Dô-jô* and during *I-ai* practice should also be maintained in the cutting session. (see photos on page 167)

Safety is also an important issue. It is useful to have a table upon which the sword/swords may be placed. And a cleaning and oiling kit should be to hand. Before starting any practice it is imperative to examine

the handle, scabbard and *Me-kugi* of the sword to make sure they are in good condition and have no weaknesses. The *Me-kugi* is all that holds the blade in the handle (*tsuka*) and, needless to say, if it breaks the naked blade may fly off with great force and possibly tragic consequences. Please note in the photographs

where any on-lookers should stand - at a distance and never anywhere to the front of the cutter.

It is also useful to have someone whose responsibility is taking care of the targets. He will erect the target and place it correctly for the type of cut to be made. He will also take away the cut pieces once the cut(s) has ended and the practitioner signals to him he has finished. During this time it is possible for the cutter to remain totally concentrated on his practice.

The following series of photographs (page 167) will, I hope, illustrate the spirit of a test-cutting practice. The most important element to cultivate will be composure of the cutter's mind and body. He must learn to be completely 'present' in his practice. In order to promote this any on-lookers should also maintain respectable behavior. Talking should be kept to a strict minimum – commentary is never much of a necessity...

The aim is not to show off to others how good one is – it is to better understand the correct mechanics involved in cutting and to learn to develop the technical aspects of a properly executed cut – power, muscular application, *Ha-suji*, relaxation, flexibility, etc. Anything that is required during the performing of a *Kata* may be incorporated into test-cutting.

In the beginning it is best to practice the different directions (i.e. *Happô-giri*) from a straight-forward standing position with a fixed *Ma-ai*. Then, with more experience, the same cuts may be done with a step(s) incorporated (variable *Ma-ai*).

Afterwards, two different cuts may be practiced together and then three and so on. The next step is perhaps a moving approach from a greater distance followed by different directions (which will require two or more targets).

Later, when one has a solid basis in cutting it is possible to practice cuts from *Nuki-uchi* (drawing the sword and cutting at the same time).

However, keep in mind that if you use targets like wet straw the blade will have residual water on it so it is not advisable to perform *Nô-tô* afterwards. The wetness in the scabbard will cause the wood to swell and the blade to rust. Thus it is advisable to clean the blade before returning it to its scabbard.



Suemonogiri

How to Organize a Cutting Session

There are some very good habits to develop when doing a cutting session. I will be straight-forward and succinct here in describing the procedure that is used by the EIF/FEI.

In order to 'run' the session the following persons should be delegated :

- a) A higher ranking teacher is designated as what we can call : the "Field-Marshal". His job is to be always available and attentive to the proceedings, organize what to do and when. And everyone must listen and follow his directives. He is the overall 'master of ceremonies' and directs how everything is to be done. He is not (necessarily) the teacher (who remains available for helping and showing the students about cutting) nor does he take part in the cutting itself. Should he do so he will wait until the end and then delegate someone else to his job and then take his turn as a student. He must assure all safety procedures and keep an eye on everything going on around him. He must particularly make sure that everybody is standing behind and at a safe distance from the person cutting. Before the session begins he will have the responsibility to carefully inspect the swords that will be used so as to make sure they are in good order and, in particular, that the *Me-kugi* are in place correctly and in perfect condition.
- b) The Teacher will second the "Field-Marshal" and yet remain free to observe, help and correct students.
- c) Someone (knowledgeable about sword blades) should be at a table where he will receive the swords after cutting. He will clean and dry them as well as re-oil them. In this manner, the blades may be replaced into the *Saya* with no risk of damage. This person will also check the condition of the blade after the cut and make sure that everything is alright.
- d) There should be one or two 'Target Stewards'. Their job is to make sure the targets are fixed into place correctly and to remove the cut targets afterwards. They might have to construct different targets according to the particular cut that the student wishes to practice. They function under the orders of the "F-M".

How to proceed :

- 1) All swords are placed on the table for inspection. Once this is finished students may take back their sword and prepare for the training.
- 2) The "F-M" will open the session (*Rei-shiki* and bowing). He will debrief students on the overall procedure and direct participants where to stand while awaiting their turn.
- 3) The first participant is chosen. He advances towards the target area (the teacher may give him council or demonstrate what he is expected to do).

The student will announce to both the "F-M" and the teacher what he plans to do. He will take time to compose himself before slowly drawing his sword in preparation to cut. Breathing is important.

- 4) The cut.
- 5) There is now the necessity to maintain *Zan-shin* – proper concentration after the cut usually accompanied by adopting a *Kamae*.
- 6) The student may listen to the teachers council afterwards and, when dismissed, he can take his sword to the cleaning table.
- 7) The session will be terminated by the "F-M" and the teacher – *Rei-shiki* and bow etc.



This is the general manner to proceed with a cutting session. Obviously, it is not possible to describe all eventualities and their etiquette – the students' level is a factor as is the theme of study. However, this short description gives a good idea of how to conduct a cutting session.

There is one further point that should be observed. It is good practice to have the following readily to hand during a cutting session :

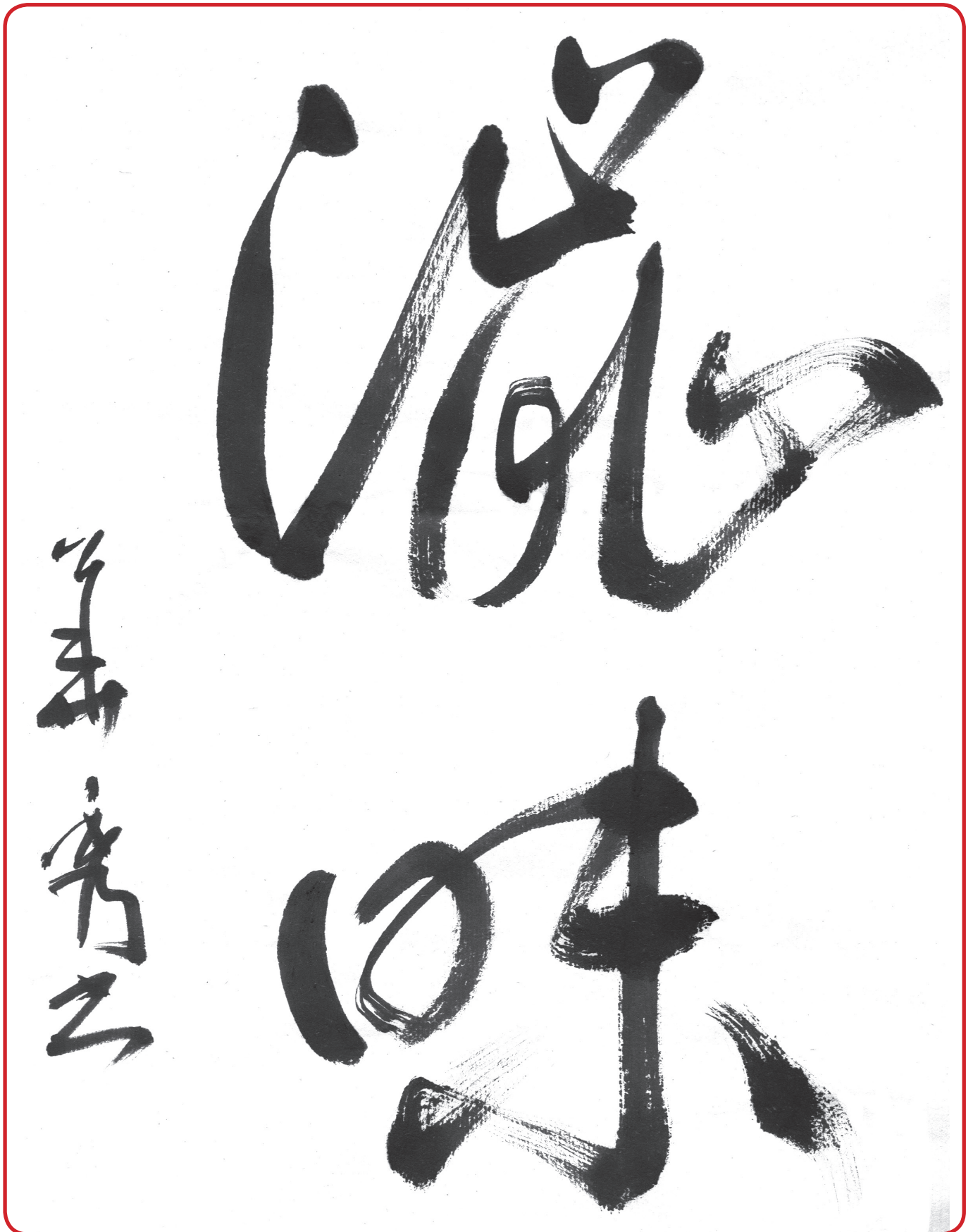
- 1) a fully equipped first-aid kit ;
- 2) a means of contacting the emergency services (telephone, cell phone, etc.) ;
- 3) the F-M should determine if anybody present is a doctor or qualified medical professional and/ or a qualified first-aid/rescue person.

How to Organize a Cutting Session



Shibumi: Refinement underlying common-place appearances;
Understanding rather than knowledge;
Modesty without pudency; A spiritual tranquility that is not passive;
Authority without domination.

Calligraphy by Saitô Isoji, (*Kashû*, his calligraphy name), President of Tôka Shoin Institute



Commentary by Pascal Krieger

At the end of the summer of 1978, I was just starting my *I-ai* class in the Shung-Do-Kwan Dojo in Geneva, Switzerland when a handsome young man with a bushy head of hair and sporting a hefty mustache arrived, looking strangely serious, asking me politely, in good french but with an indefinable accent, if it would be possible to participate in the class? “Not a problem”, I answer, always being happy to see a new student interested in learning japanese swordsmanship. “Have you already some practical experience?”. “Some...” he answers as he sits down in *Sei-za* next to a beginner, last, at the far end of the line. During the class I keep my eye on him to see how he manages. His confidence and his precision take me aback as they show him to be a far shot from a novice. The style of his practice is slightly different from ours but he fits in harmoniously. I do my best to find something to correct in his practice if not simply to make him feel that, as a conscientious teacher, I take an interest in my new students – as teachers should. He immediately adopts and incorporates any corrections I proffer. At the following class, I cannot but help noticing that he knows all of the series of *kata* that we practice and so I ask him to please sit to my left, in second place, in the bowing line-up. At the third class I realize that his *I-ai* is better than my own and, so, I put him on my right at the head of the line... It was soon apparent that Malcolm Tiki Shewan had a lot of things that we could learn. I therefore asked if he would give the class. And so it remains to this day whenever he visits that we welcome him with joy. I would add that there were that day a couple of ‘faithful’ students whose feathers were ruffled – today they no longer practice *I-ai* – so perhaps this way was not their main interest?

There followed a long period during which I could, in my turn, offer my thanks for his help and advice with *I-ai* by teaching him the practice of Shintô Musô Ryû Jôdô and, when he made the ‘mistake’ of developing an interest in the groundwork (*Newaza*) of Judo (my favorite aspect of the discipline). My many thanks came in the form of strangle holds, joint-locks, suffocating pins – folding him up and unfolding him again, time after time and in all directions.

The years that followed proved to me what wonderful luck it was that Tiki came into my life as a *Bu-dô-ka*. His trust brought me to understand the world of *Ai-ki-dô* and its thanks to his efforts traveling about Europe doing *Ai-ki-dô* seminars in the 80's that Shintô Musô Ryû Jô became so widely disseminated. Every year in May, for 30 years, the combined-discipline seminar (*I-ai*, *Jô* & *Ai-ki-dô*) at the Iles de Lérins (near Cannes, France) was, for me, a magic moment allowing me to promote, not only, the practice of *Jô* but to deepen my understanding of *Bu-dô* because of the sharing of concepts from the different arts (*Ai-ki*, *I-ai*, *Jô*, Calligraphy and japanese culture) in which we were insatiably interested. As time went by,



Tiki and I did many «multiple-discipline» seminars and little by little we developed a true *Is-shin-Den-shin* relationship.

When Tiki asked me if I would be willing to take part in the production of this book I hesitated slightly as I had not yet retired and the awareness of the hundreds of hours of personal work would be required. Notwithstanding, I succumbed to the highly interesting subjects of discussion, the excel-

lent meals, the vintage malts & clouds of Latakia that interlaced the exchanges and he managed to convince me that the only person who could achieve this work had to possess simultaneously the following qualities: (Tiki) – «He has to be a graphic designer and typographer, he needs to be fluent in english, he must have an extensive experience in *I-ai*, in *Bu-dô*, the japanese language is obligatory, he must be able to draw (art-work) AND he needs to be able to do japanese calligraphy...! Well, I looked all around about me and I finally accepted.

The page layout for this book has been a real ‘adventure’ for me – a creative delight at each page. Technical problems have been numerous but resolving them, one by one, has been a small but satisfying victory each time. But I must say that this was accomplished because of the great freedom that Tiki offered for it was thus possible to express myself as I wished in those fields which I held dear and in which I was most familiar. The search for excellence that Tiki projected was a strong motivation. And, frankly, I have never come across a book as complete and detailed on the subject of the practice of the japanese sword.

Of course, things were not always easy for the graphic-designer/typographer (retired now) – my favorite author, taking great pleasure in reminding me of our former Judo training sessions, had me ‘folding and unfolding’ my page layout ‘time after time and in all directions’. Sometimes he ‘strangled’ me with self-contradiction by asking to replace a short text somewhere with what had now become a much longer and detailed text. At other time, he ‘suffocated’ me numerous requests to re-adjust or render more precise this or that passage.... A delayed but cruel act of vengeance...!

Tiki and myself are very different from one another. These differences, instead of creating oppositions, have always been a source of enrichment for each of us. Our ‘multi-discipline’ seminars, juxtaposing the approaches of the different traditions of *Bu-dô*, have always profited from this synergy which our friendship generated.

I like and admire in Tiki the spirit of “*Shibu-mi*” and you will better understand the meaning of this word, hard to define, by observing well this exceptional individual.

Pascal Krieger, April 2011

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Okonaeba,
satoru.

What I do,
I understand



Mireba,
oboeru.

What I see,
I remember



Kikoeba,
wasureru.

What I hear,
I forget

行 視 聞
悟 憶 忘

A Confucius saying
(to be read from right)

Glossary

In this glossary I will only include lesser known words. It is obvious that words like ‘*Katana*’ or ‘*Kata*’ or ‘*Keikogi*’ are well known and I assume the practitioner is familiar with them. If a common word has a less common usage, it will be included here. Also when a word is clearly defined within the text of the book, I will not include it here.

A

<i>Ai</i>	合い	Harmonize
<i>Ai-nuke</i>	相抜け	Mutual escape
<i>Ai-uchi</i>	相打ち	Mutual strike
<i>Aka</i>	赤	Red
<i>Aka-go</i>	赤子	(Akago no kokoro) the mind or spirit of a child (no relation with “infantile”)
<i>Ashi</i>	足	The foot, the leg
<i>Ashi-sabaki</i>	足裁き	Foot movement
<i>Ayumi-ashi</i>	歩み足	Cross stepping, usually as in normal walking

B

<i>Ba-jô Kem-pô</i>	馬上剣法	Swordsmanship on horseback
<i>Batsu</i>	抜	see ‘nuku’
<i>Bat-tô</i>	抜刀	Drawing the sword
<i>Bat-tô-jutsu</i>	抜刀術	Alternative name for <i>lai-jutsu</i>
<i>Biwa</i>	枇杷	Loquat
<i>Bô</i>	棒	Staff
<i>Bok-ken</i>	木剣	A wooden replica of a sword and a weapon in its own right
<i>Boku</i>	木	Wood, wooden
<i>Boku-tô</i>	木刀	A wooden replica of a sword and a weapon in its own right
<i>Bu</i>	分	A Japanese measurement of 3.030mm
<i>Bu</i>	武	Martial
<i>Bu-dô</i>	武道	Martial way
<i>Bu-gei</i>	武芸	Military art
<i>Bu-jutsu</i>	武術	Martial art

<i>Bun-kai</i>	分解	Breaking apart into composite elements for study and analysis
<i>Bu-shi</i>	武士	Name given to the ancient Japanese soldiers from traditional warrior families

C

<i>Chaku-gan</i>	着眼	Alternative expression for “Metsuke”
<i>Chi</i>	智	Wisdom
<i>Chi</i>	地	Earth
<i>Chi-burui</i>	血振るい	Original classical pronunciation for “Chiburi”. This is the movement of shaking the blood from the sword after a cut. Found in the majority of <i>laidô</i> systems, it may be largely symbolic. It does not provide sufficient cleaning in real combat after striking a human target. see “Chinugui”
<i>Chi-gatana</i>	血刀	Refers to a bloodstained blade
<i>Chi-nugui</i>	血ぬぐい	The only way to truly clean a blade is to wipe it with a piece of cloth or paper (<i>Washi</i>). This is called <i>Chi-nugui</i> ; literally, “wiping off the blood.” Only then can the sword be returned to the scabbard without consequential damage to the blade from the acid and moisture in the blood
<i>Choku</i>	直	Straight, direct
<i>Chû</i>	忠	Loyalty
<i>Chû</i>	中	Center, middle

<i>Chû-den</i>	中伝	Middle transmission
<i>Chu-yô</i>	中庸	Balanced state of Yin and Yang

D

<i>Dai-shô</i>	大小	Two swords worn thrust in the <i>obi</i> around the waist. (big and small)
<i>Dai-tô</i>	大刀	Long sword
<i>Dan</i>	段	Grade, degree
<i>Den</i>	伝	Transmission, teaching
<i>Dô</i>	道	The way
<i>Dô-jô</i>	道場	Literally 'Hall of the Way', training hall (see "Keikoba")

E

<i>Embu</i>	演武	Performance for an averted and knowledgeable public
<i>En-zan</i>	遠山	Mountain in a distance ("Enzan no Metsuke" to look as though looking at a mountain in the distance)

F

<i>Fuchi</i>	縁	Decorative piece at the base of the sword handle
<i>Fukuro-shinai</i>	袋しない	Bamboo replica of a sword covered in leather. Literally – a <i>Shinai</i> in a bag. Used in many classical schools of swordsmanship for practice (ie. Shinkage Ryû, Maniwa Nen Ryû)
<i>Fuku-shiki</i>	腹式	<i>Fukushiki Kokyû</i> – breathing properly from the abdomen
<i>Furi-kaburi</i>	振り被り	Raising the sword into a <i>Jôdan</i> position during a cut.

G

<i>Gai</i>	外	Exterior, outside, outdoor
<i>Gashi</i>	檜	see 'kashi'
<i>Gata</i>	形	see 'kata'
<i>Gatana</i>	刀	see 'katana'

<i>Ge</i>	下	Low, down
<i>Gei-ko</i>	稽古	see 'keiko'
<i>Gen-dai</i>	現代	Actual, present, current epoque

<i>Gi</i>	義	Justice
<i>Giri (Kiri)</i>	切り軌り	Cut ('K' becomes 'G' when it is not heading the word)

<i>Go-dô</i>	互同	<i>Godô-geiko</i> – joint training (without the presence of a formal teacher), by mutual consent, ie. two or more <i>Dôjô</i> ...
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<i>Go-kaku</i>	互角	<i>Go-kaku-geiko</i> – working with someone of your own level, between equals
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<i>Gun</i>	軍	Army, military
<i>Gun-tô</i>	軍刀	Sword destined for use in the military.

<i>Gyaku</i>	逆	Reverse
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H

<i>Ha</i>	刃	Blade
<i>Ha-baki</i>	刃ばき	Collar at the base of a blade (in front of the <i>Tsuba</i>) that keeps the sword sealed in the scabbard and mechanically transmits forces to the <i>Tsuka</i>

<i>Ha-biki</i>	刃引き	Blunt steel sword for practice. (see <i>Mugito</i>)
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<i>Hai-tô-rei</i>	廃刀令	The Sword Abolishment Edict, It was issued by the government of Japan on March 28, 1876. It prohibited people, with the exception of the military and law enforcement officials, from carrying weapons in public. Violators would have their swords confiscated
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<i>Hakama</i>	袴	Men formal divided skirt, women's pleated skirt
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<i>Ha-mon</i>	刃文	Character of the cutting edge, temper line
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<i>Han-shi</i>	範士	Main teacher
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<i>Han-za</i>	半座	Half-seated posture
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<i>Has-sô</i>	八相	All possibilities, all directions
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<i>Ha-suji</i>	刃筋	The cutting trajectory, line of cut (<i>Suji</i> : Line, reason, logic)
<i>Hat (hatsu)</i>	発	Departure, discharge, emanation, originate in ('su' is dropped when followed by another <i>Kanji</i>)
<i>Hei</i>	兵	Soldier, private troops, army
<i>Hen-ka</i>	変化	Variation. (<i>Henka-waza</i>) technical variations that actually change the character of a technique
<i>Hi-bu-ki</i>	秘武器	Hidden weapons
<i>Hidari</i>	左	Left
<i>Hi-den</i>	秘伝	Secret teachings of a system. see ' <i>kakushi-waza</i> '
<i>Hiki-tate</i>	引き立て	(<i>Hikitate-geiko</i>) More advanced practitioner works with a less experienced student to help him progress
<i>Hitori-geiko</i>	一人稽古	Practice alone. (see also <i>Tandoku</i>)
<i>Hiza</i>	膝	Knee
<i>Hô</i>	法	Law, rule, principle
<i>Hô</i>	方	Direction
<i>Hon</i>	本	Main, principal, basic. (also: a book)
<i>Hon-shin</i>	本心	Original mind.

I

<i>I</i>	居	Existing
<i>I-ai-goshi</i>	居合い腰	Squatting on the left rear foot with the right knee raised in front (variable according to school)
<i>I-ai-nuki</i>	居合い抜き	Alternative name for <i>lai-jutsu</i>
<i>I-ai-tô</i>	居合い刀	Generally meaning an unsharpened, non-steel practice blade. This may also simply indicate a sword used for the practice of <i>lai</i>
<i>Ichi-mon-ji</i>	一文字	Movement that is parallel to the ground. ie. <i>Yoko Ichi Monji</i> = <i>Yoko Guruma</i> (literally: the figure 1)
<i>Ik-kyô</i>	一教	First principle
<i>In-kyoku</i>	陰巨く	State of Yin

<i>In no ugoki</i>	陰の動き	Evolving towards a <i>Yin</i> state
<i>In-yô</i>	陰陽	Yin-Yang
<i>Iri-mi</i>	入り身	Enter the body
<i>I-shiki-suwari</i>	意識座り	Similar position to <i>Tatehiza</i> but with the right knee placed down on the ground
<i>Isshin</i>	一心	One mind
<i>Iuju-Ichinin</i>	唯授一人	One-on-one teaching, something taught to just one person
<i>I-waza</i>	居技	<i>Suwari-waza</i>

J

<i>Jin</i>	仁	Benevolence
<i>Jin</i>	人	Person
<i>Ji-shû-gei-ko</i>	自習稽古	Practice alone
<i>Ji-yû-gei-ko</i>	自由稽古	Training in a free manner
<i>Ji-yû-ren-shû</i>	自由練習	Training in a free manner, informal training
<i>Jô-ba</i>	乗馬	Riding horse
<i>Jo-ha-kyû</i>	序破急	An element of rhythm in <i>lai</i> , ie. the triple tempo that is practiced during <i>Nuki-tsuke</i>
<i>Jô-i-uchi</i>	上位打ち	Execution according to the order of a superior
<i>Jô-seki</i>	上席	Right side of the <i>Kamiza</i> , teachers side
<i>Jû-dô</i>	柔道	Way of suppleness
<i>Jun</i>	順	Order, turn, right, obedience, occasion
<i>Jutsu</i>	術	Art, technique

K

<i>Kabuto</i>	兜	Helmet (of the armor)
<i>Ka-den</i>	家伝	Family teaching
<i>Kaete</i>	変え手	Hand turned upside down, reverse hand
<i>Kai-shaku</i>	介錯	The assistant during the ceremony of <i>seppuku</i>
<i>Kakari</i>	罹り	<i>Kakari-geiko</i> – a less experienced practitioner working/attacking a more advanced student repeatedly
<i>Kakushi-waza</i>	隠し技	Techniques that are part of a school but not taught until later, considered secret techniques

<i>Kamae</i>	構え	Posture, combative stand
<i>Kami</i>	神	God, divinity
<i>Kami</i>	上	Upside, high, top
<i>Kami-za</i>	上座	Place where the divinity stands, master side, the place we bow to
<i>Kan-geiko</i>	寒稽古	Training in winter cold
<i>Kan-ji</i>	漢字	Chinese character
<i>Kan-kyaku</i>	観客	Spectators at an <i>Embu</i>
<i>Kashi</i>	櫨	Oak
<i>Kashira</i>	頭	Decorative pommel piece at the end of the sword handle
<i>Kata</i>	形	Form, pattern
<i>Katana</i>	刀	Long sword worn thrust in the sash (<i>Obi</i>) around the waist
<i>Kata-te</i>	片手	One hand
<i>Katchû</i>	甲冑	(<i>Kenjutsu</i>) Swordsmanship in armor. Note: the armor may be of different weights, sizes and styles. In this manner <i>kata</i> may be conceived in function with types of armor: <i>Oyoroï, Haramaki, Domaru, Toseigusoku</i>
<i>Kei-ko</i>	稽古	Training (thinking of the past)
<i>Kei-ko-ba</i>	稽古場	Place of training. (see <i>Dôjô</i>)
<i>Kei-ko-gi</i>	稽古着	Training suit
<i>Kem</i>	剣	Sword ('n' becomes 'm' in front of 'p' and 'b')
<i>Ken</i>	剣	Sword
<i>Ken</i>	間	Japanese architectural measurement which equals 6 <i>Shaku</i> (1.818m.)
<i>Ken-saki</i>	剣先	Tip of the sword blade
<i>Ken-sen</i>	剣先	Tip of the sword blade
<i>Ke-sa</i>	袈裟	Buddhist priest stole, sacred shoulder scarf, diagonal
<i>Ki</i>	気	Energy
<i>Ki-ba-dachi</i>	騎馬立ち	Position as if riding on a horse
<i>Ki-mono</i>	着物	Clothes
<i>Kiri-age</i>	切り上げ	Upward cutting stroke
<i>Kiri-oroshi</i>	切り下ろし	Cutting down
<i>Kiri-tsuke</i>	切り付け	Main cut of a <i>Kata</i>
<i>Ki-sen</i>	機先	Before the occurrence, seize the opportunity

<i>Ki(s)-saki</i>	切っ先	Point of a sword
<i>Ki-za</i>	起座	Half-seated posture up on the knees
<i>Koku-tan</i>	黒炭	Bituminous coal
<i>Ko</i>	古	Old, ancient
<i>Kô</i>	孝	Filial piety
<i>Kô-bô</i>	攻防	Offensive and defensive
<i>Koi-guchi</i>	鯉口	Opening/mouth of the scabbard (<i>Saya</i>). <i>Koi-guchi no Kirikata</i> – breaking the seal of the <i>Habaki</i> in the <i>Koi-guchi</i> just prior to drawing the sword. The gravity with which this gesture was usually considered was tantamount to having drawn the sword. Also <i>Koi-guchi wo kiru</i>
<i>Ko-jiri</i>	こじり	Metal fitting that caps the end of the scabbard
<i>Ko-kyû</i>	呼吸	Breath, breathing and timing
<i>Ko-ryû</i>	古流	Traditional 'old' school
<i>Koshi</i>	腰	Hip
<i>Koshi-ate</i>	腰当て	Small back bustle of the <i>Hakama</i> to help keep straight
<i>Kumi-i-ai</i>	組居合	<i>Iai</i> practice with a partner
<i>Kumi-uchi</i>	組打ち	Grapple
<i>Kusari-gama</i>	鎖鎌	Chain and sickle
<i>Kuzusu</i>	崩す	(<i>Kuzushi, Kuzure</i>) Destroy, dismantle, disturb, crumble, deteriorate
<i>Kyô-chi</i>	境地	A mental state born from long and assiduous <i>Keiko</i> .

M

<i>Mak-ko-giri</i>	真向切り	Vertical downward cut
<i>Mawari-ashi</i>	回り足	A pivot
<i>Me</i>	目	Eye
<i>Mem-po</i>	面保	The face mask of the armor
<i>Me-tsuke</i>	目付け	Visual focal point
<i>Migi</i>	右	Right side
<i>Mi-tori-geiko</i>	見取り稽古	Learning through observation
<i>Mon-ji</i>	文字	Letter, character
<i>Monjin</i>	門人	Someone standing before the gate, a beginner
<i>Moro-te</i>	諸手	Both hands

<i>Mu</i>	無	Nothing, without, inexistant
<i>Mu-gamae</i>	無構え	Guard of no-guard
<i>Mugi-to</i>	模擬刀	Unsharpened blade.
<i>Mune</i>	胸	Back of the sword blade, chest/sometimes pronounced “ <i>Mine</i> ”
<i>Mu-sha</i>	武者	Warrior
<i>Mushin</i>	無心	Spirit of non-spirit, a true ‘empty’ mind

N

<i>Naginata</i>	薙刀	Halberd
<i>Nai-den</i>	内伝	Techniques not taught until later, considered secret techniques
<i>Natsu-gei-ko</i>	夏稽古	Training in the mid-summer
<i>Nip-pon</i>	日本	(or <i>Nihon</i>), Japan, rising sun
<i>Ni-tô</i>	二刀	Two swords
<i>Nô-tô</i>	納刀	Replacing the sword in its scabbard
<i>Nuki-tsuke</i>	抜き付け	Initial action of drawing the sword. Also <i>Nuki-uchi</i>
<i>Nuki-uchi</i>	抜き打ち	see <i>Nuki-tsuke</i>
<i>Nuku, nuki</i>	抜く抜き	Extract, pull out, unsheathe
<i>Nusumi-ashi</i>	盗み足	A ‘stolen step’ or concealed step. Or the action of moving discretely a foot in order to facilitate an action that will be misjudged by the adversary
<i>Nyu-mon-sha</i>	入門者	a beginner – literally ‘one who enters the gate’.

O

<i>Obi</i>	帯	Belt
<i>O Kakyu</i>	お客	Visitors
<i>Okuri-ashi</i>	送り足	Sliding one foot behind the other
<i>Omote</i>	表	Surface, right side, exterior, outside, front
<i>Oku</i>	奥	Heart, interior
<i>Oku-den</i>	奥伝	Inner, deep transmission
<i>Omote</i>	表	‘Outside’, ‘façade’, ‘face-value’. (like the face of the moon) see also <i>Ura</i>

<i>Ori-shiki</i>	折式	Standing up on the knees. Or a position on one bent knee or sitting on one folded leg with the other leg up
<i>Oshi-giri</i>	押し切り	Cutting action by drawing the blade across an object. ie. as in <i>Uki-gumo</i>
<i>Osu no sei-shin</i>	雄の精神	The Spirit of perseverance
<i>Otoshi-zashi</i>	落とし刺し	A way of wearing a sword in a more vertical position
<i>Oyo-gi</i>	応用技	Application of techniques, (this is different from ‘ <i>oyogi</i> ’ which means ‘swimming’ – different character)
<i>Oyo-waza</i>	応用技	or <i>Oyo-gi</i> – technical variations coming from an interpretation of a technique
<i>Ôza</i>	大座	Squatting position when wearing armor

R

<i>Rei</i>	禮	Etiquette, bowing
<i>Rei-shiki</i>	礼式	Etiquette
<i>Ren-shû</i>	練習	Training
<i>Rin-ki-ô-hen</i>	臨機応変	Adaptability to all circumstances
<i>Ritsu rei</i>	立礼	Bowing in a standing position
<i>Roppo-ashi</i>	六方足	Cross step where one does not change <i>Hanmi</i> (as is necessary with a longer weapon like a spear)
<i>Ryô-te</i>	両手	Both hands
<i>Ryû</i>	流	School, tradition, flowing
<i>Ryû-ha</i>	流派	Branch of a school, branch of a tradition

S

<i>Sabaki</i>	裁き	Judgment, decision, verdict
<i>Sabi</i>	寂	Ancient, mature, seasoned, serene, mellowed, antique; lonely, solitary or melancholic (classic image: patina and signs of age/wear on a treasured antique)

<i>Sage-o</i>	下げ緒	Braided cord of the scabbard
<i>Sage-tô</i>	下げ刀	Lower position of the sword when held standing
<i>Sagi-ashi</i>	鷺足	Where the legs are crossed and the shin of one leg is in contact with the calf of the other. See photo #8 in <i>Uki Gumo</i> . The Heron's feet
<i>Saki</i>	先	Before, point
<i>Sak-katsu-ji-zai</i>	裂活自在	Freedom to take or give life
<i>Sakki</i>		Hostile intentions
<i>San-kaku</i>	三角	Triangle, triangular
<i>Sasu</i>	差す	Carry in the belt (among many other meanings)
<i>Satsui</i>	殺意	Intention to kill or harm
<i>Saya</i>	鞘	Scabbard
<i>Saya-ate</i>	鞘当	Hitting or even touching the scabbard of the enemy (gives the excuse to start hostilities and justifies starting)
<i>Saya-banare</i>	鞘離れ	Drawing the sword
<i>Saya-biki</i>	鞘引き	Pulling the scabbard backwards to aid in freeing the blade. (also <i>Hikizaya</i>). Some <i>lai</i> styles do not use this technique
<i>Saya no uchi</i>	鞘の内	Literally 'within the scabbard'
<i>Sei</i>	正	Right, straight
<i>Sei-chû-sen</i>	正中線	Proper vertical alignment and balance
<i>Sei-gan</i>	正眼	Right into the eyes
<i>Sei-ka-tan-den</i>	臍下丹田	Lower abdomen, seat of energy
<i>Sei-shin</i>	精神	Mind, spirit
<i>Sei-shin-tan-ren</i>	精神鍛錬	Forging the Spirit
<i>Sei-za</i>	正座	Formal seated position on the knees
<i>Seki</i>	席	Seat
<i>Seme</i>	攻め	Exerting "pressure" towards your adversary, threatening attack
<i>Sen</i>	先	Before, first
<i>Sen</i>	線	Line
<i>Sen-jô Kem-pô</i>	戦場剣法	(Kenjutsu) – Battlefield swordsmanship
<i>Sen-jutsu</i>	戦術	Art of war
<i>Sen-sei</i>	先生	Teacher, master, professor

<i>Se-oi</i>	背負い	Carrying on the back
<i>Seppukusha</i>	切腹者	A person performing <i>seppuku</i> (the principal)
<i>Shaku</i>	尺	A Japanese measurement of 30.3cm
<i>Shi</i>	士	Samurai, man, gentleman, scholar
<i>Shibui</i>	渋い	Restrained, quiet elegance. Also composed, understated, reserved, sedate; refined, elegant (classic images: a single delicate flower breaching cracks in a sidewalk; the quiet understated elegance of a formal tea ceremony)
<i>Shi-dô-gei-ko</i>	指導稽古	When a student is given a teaching situation to work with so that it will help his own progress
<i>Shi-hô</i>	四方	Four directions
<i>Shiki</i>	式	Ceremony, rite, function, method
<i>Shimo</i>	下	Low, less important, under
<i>Shimo-mura-ha</i>	下村派	One of two branches of Musô Jikiden Eishin Ryû
<i>Shimo-seki</i>	下席	Left side of the <i>Kamiza</i> , beginners side
<i>Shimo-za</i>	下座	Facing the <i>Kamiza</i> , students side
<i>Shin</i>	信	Sincerity
<i>Shin</i>	新	New, modern
<i>Shin</i>	心	Heart
<i>Shin</i>	真	True, serious
<i>Shin-jin</i>	真人	A true Man
<i>Shin-ken</i>	真剣	Real sword
<i>Shin-ken Shô-bu</i>	真剣勝負	Literally "the decision by a real sword"
<i>Shinogi</i>	鎬	Ridgeline that runs along the flat edge of a blade
<i>Shinogi-ji</i>	鎬地	Flat section that lies between the <i>Shinogi</i> and the <i>Mune</i>
<i>Shin-saku-tô</i>	新作刀	This is a sword made in modern times according to the traditional methods
<i>Shin-zen</i>	神前	In front of the deity
<i>Shira, shiro</i>	白	White
<i>Shita-gi</i>	下着	The <i>Keikogi</i> pants
<i>Shi-zen-tai</i>	自然体	Natural body position
<i>Sho</i>	初	Beginning, first

<i>Sho-den</i>	初伝	First teaching, basic transmission
<i>Shô-men</i>	正面	Vertical direction, straight
<i>Sho-shin-sha</i>	初心者	A beginner
<i>Shô-tô</i>	小刀	Short sword
<i>Shû-gyô</i>	修行	Training, practice, pursuit of knowledge
<i>Sô-dome</i>	槍留め	Stopping the spear
<i>Sô-go</i>	相互	Mutual
<i>Sô-ke</i>	宗家	Senior branch of a family
<i>Soku</i>	足	Foot, step
<i>Son-kyo</i>	蹲踞	A squatting position
<i>Sô-tai</i>	総体	Together, more than one people
<i>Sô-tai ren-shû</i>	総体練習	Practice with another person
<i>Su-buri</i>	素振り	Simple/basic swing
<i>Sue-mono-giri</i>	据物軌り	Cutting targets with a live-blade with the aim of furthering the competence of the practitioner. Not the same objectives as “ <i>Tameshigiri</i> ”.
<i>Su-hada</i>	素肌	<i>Kenjutsu</i> , Swordsmanship while wearing ordinary clothing. This was especially prevalent in the metropolitan settings of Edo period.
<i>Sun</i>	寸	Japanese measurement of 30.30mm
<i>Sunobe-to</i>	素延べ刀	This is a sword made without the traditional steel folding and, possibly, quenched in oil
<i>Suri-ashi</i>	摺り足	A sliding step that is at the base of all footwork in <i>Budô</i> as well as <i>Noh</i> and all other studies that imply footwork in their study
<i>Suu</i>	吸う	Sip, imbibe, suck, inhale, breath in
<i>Suwari</i>	座り	see ‘ <i>suwaru</i> ’
<i>Suwari-waza</i>	座り技	Seated techniques (<i>suwari-iai</i> , <i>tsume-ai</i> , <i>za-iai</i>)
<i>Suwaru,</i>	座る	Sit

T

<i>Ta-chi</i>	太刀	A long sword worn edge downwards
<i>Tachi</i>	立ち	Standing

<i>Tachi-i-ai</i>	立ち居合い	Standing techniques
<i>Tachi-waza</i>	立ち技	Standing techniques
<i>Tadashii</i>	正しい	Proper, right, true
<i>Tai</i>	体	Body
<i>Tai-sabaki</i>	体裁き	Body movement
<i>Tai-tô</i>	帯刀	Referring to wearing of a sword in the belt
<i>Tameshi</i>	試し	Attempt, try, experiment, test, sample
<i>Tameshi-giri</i>	試し切り	Test cutting with a blade with the objective of evaluating the quality of the blade. See “ <i>Sue-monogiri</i> ”
<i>Tan</i>	短	Short
<i>Tan-doku</i>	単独	Alone, one person, by oneself
<i>Tanimura-ha</i>	谷村派	One of two branches of <i>Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryû</i>
<i>Tan-jô</i>	短杖	Short stick
<i>Tan-ren</i>	鍛錬	Forging, temper, hardening, training
<i>Tan-tô</i>	短刀	A dagger up to 30 cm long
<i>Ta-ryû ji-ai</i>	他流試合	Competitive testing between systems, schools, <i>Dôjô</i>
<i>Tate</i>	立て	Standing
<i>Tate-hiza</i>	立膝	A sitting position with the right knee raised
<i>Te</i>	手	Hand
<i>Teki-zuke</i>	敵付け	Controlling the opponent with the point of your sword
<i>Te-no-kaeshi</i>	手の返し	The wrist action used to create proper <i>Hasuji</i> . ie. in <i>Kasumi</i> , turning over the hand
<i>Tei-tô</i>	定刀	Sword carrying
<i>Ten</i>	天	Heaven, sky, top
<i>Ten-kan-ashi</i>	転換足	A pivot + a step, or a step + a pivot – Creating a turning around
<i>Te-sabaki</i>	手裁き	Hand movement
<i>Tô</i>	刀	Sword, blade
<i>Tobi-chigae</i>	飛び違え	Techniques of jumping to gain advantage
<i>Tobi-giri</i>	飛び切り	A jumping form of <i>Battô</i> or <i>Nuki-uchi</i>
<i>Tô-i-soku-myô</i>	当意即妙	Quick wit
<i>Tsuba</i>	鐔	Sword guard

<i>Tsugi-ashi</i>	次足	Sliding one foot behind the other
<i>Tsuka</i>	柄	Hilt of a sword
<i>Tsuka-ito</i>	柄糸	Handle wrapping of the sword
<i>Tsune</i>	常	Natural, normal
<i>Tsuki</i>	突き	Thrust

U

<i>Uchi</i>	内	Inside
<i>Uchi-gatana</i>	内刀	A shorter sword than the <i>Tachi</i> worn in a sash around the waist. It was introduced in the Muromachi period
<i>Uchi</i>	打ち	see 'Utsu'
<i>Uchi-kubi</i>	打ち首	Decapitating in a rough manner
<i>Ugoki</i>	動き	Movement, activity
<i>Uke-mi</i>	受身	Fall
<i>Uma</i>	馬	Horse
<i>Uma-nori</i>	馬乗り	Mounting a horse
<i>Ura</i>	裏	Means the back-side of something, the reverse face or hidden side. (like the back-side of the moon), see also <i>Omote</i>
<i>Utsu</i>	打つ	Hit, beat, knock, punch
<i>Uwagi</i>	上着	The <i>Keikogi</i> jacket

W

<i>Wabi</i>	侘	A subjective feeling evoked by an object; unassuming, solitary, calm, quiet, still, impoverished or unpretentious; melancholic, lonely, desolate (classic image: abandoned fisherman's shack on a lonely beach buffeted by a strong wind on a gray wintry day)
<i>Waki</i>	脇	Side, armpit, flank
<i>Waki-zashi</i>	脇 刺し	A short sword between 30cm and 60 cm long
<i>Waza</i>	技	Technique, act, work, art, performance

Y

<i>Ya-gai</i>	野外	outside, outdoor, in the field
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<i>Yari</i>	槍	Spear
<i>Yo-kyoku</i>	陽極	State of Yang
<i>Yô no ugoki</i>	陽の動き	Evolving towards a Yang state
<i>Yobu</i>	呼ぶ	Call, call out, exhale, breath out
<i>Yoko</i>	横	Side
<i>Yoroi</i>	鎧	Armor
<i>Yû-gen</i>	幽玄	Profound, uncertain, subtle; dark and mysterious (classic image: moon shining behind a veil of clouds, or the morning mist veiling a mountainside)
<i>Yumi</i>	弓	Bow

Z

<i>Zagi</i>	座技	Techniques in seated form
<i>Zan-shin</i>	残心	A state of spiritual alertness or awareness
<i>Za-rei</i>	座礼	Formal seated bow
<i>Za-shi</i>	刺し	see 'sasu'
<i>Zen-go</i>	前後	Front and back



Closing the main part of this book is worth blowing a little musical piece... or something like that?

Afterthoughts

So here we stand at the completion of having learned the main technical curriculum of the *I-ai* of the Musō Shinden Ryū. It is my firm belief that this is not an end in itself, but, rather, that we stand at the beginning. I often remind people that it is only when you are perfect that you can begin work perfecting. Think of, for example, a musician. When he is finger-perfect he can then begin learning music. And when he has learned perfectly a particular piece of music he can, in turn, begin perfecting his interpretation, his expression. He can begin to become 'music'. All that he has done up to that point has been the means of beginning his true study.

The idea that is expressed in the two characters: I – 居 and Ai – 合い mean, as we have already seen:

Exist or To Be (for something animate) (居) and Unity, Harmony, One (合い).

If we reflect on the ramifications of these two *Kan-ji* and begin to apply this to a "Path of Life" we begin to feel that there is not only a great spiritual meaning implied but also, we can begin to see applications on different levels – technical, moral, behavioral, social, practical, relational, emotional, intellectual and so forth. The understanding of these things is born and nourished by the hours and years of 'Sei-shin Tan-ren' initiated by assiduous practice (*Shū-gyō*) which begins with learning the basic structure illustrated in this book. It is in this that one will find the true value of studying *I-ai* as a Way particularly given that, of all the *Bu-dō* we can study today, this one can be said to be "practically anachronistic". It is just an obvious fact that swords have no practical applications in today's world.

Let's take a look, nonetheless, at how the concept of *I-ai* would (should) function in application to an attack situation. A useful image for this concept may be found in the "firesteel". When a piece of flint is struck against a piece of steel it creates a spark (of burning steel). The spark flies simultaneously when the flint strikes it – there is no time lapse in the action. It is one unified process (*I-ai*).

Now let us suppose hypothetically (and slightly facetiously) that a legendary swordsman, Mushin Denko-tō, is seated in a room enjoying some tea and gazing out at the autumn moon when he senses a potential attack upon his person.... He is master of the Tensai Mangi Ryū and thus possesses an infinite repertory of lethal sword techniques. What takes place before he can unleash any one of his 10,000 + *waza* ??? He will be called upon to intuitively, simultaneously, correctly and instantly perceive a number of elements before any action. All of which are not part of general practice in a *Dō-jō* I might add.

A. He must evaluate the 'level of threat' that is presenting itself.

The first thing that he must properly determine is the true intention of his would-be attacker: serious (ie. an assassin), not life threatening (ie. a bumbling drunk unaware of the circumstances), serious but not a danger (ie. a young student of the master seeing if he can catch him off-guard). There can be

many modalities to judge and these will determine what he must deal with and how he must deal with them.

Let us consider that this is serious business and his life is in real danger.

B. He must next determine the nature of the attack.

This means to determine the following elements:

- a) whether there is one attacker or multiple attackers?;
- b) what weapon or weapons must he face?;
- c) what is the precise target of the attack?

C. Now we come to the technical elements he must evaluate correctly.

The following are absolute necessities:

- a) the *Ma-ai* or combative distance – is his adversary close or further away – how many steps or *tatami*? The closer the enemy is the less time there is to act and defensive tactics become limited. Is there space for movement or escape routes, etc.?
- b) the speed or momentum of the attacker. It is not only a question of speed but also of the size and weight of the attacker not to mention other elements such as his balance (weaker position) and eventually obstacles in his path;
- c) what is the angle of the attack? Which direction is it coming from in relation to our hero? Is it frontal, lateral, from behind – this is the most difficult and therefore a first choice of an attacker....?

Once all of these evaluations have been made there comes the critical decision.

The Final Outcome.

It is necessary to decide what the final outcome of the situation should be. Very rarely do we see the hero in a Hollywood film faced with this decision. The viewer almost always knows that he must dispatch his enemies and that's it. However, an individual lives within his society and his culture – every act has consequences which are both long-term and short-term. We only have to look at the story of the 47 Ronin to realize how complicated the written and unwritten rules of society made this situation. The point is that these sorts of considerations may limit or inhibit certain actions or they may be in conflict with one's own moral or civil convictions. We generally see "self-defense" as a sweeping justification for discarding these considerations in a given life and death situation. However, in the aftermath the judgement may not be based on this vision of things. This would be, after all, a little too simplistic.

So, therefore, it is a question of determining what are we prepared to do and what are we against doing.



Ô-Sensei Ueshiba acting spontaneously to an unexpected attack.

- a) Is our swordsman prepared to kill another human being? or injure? or maim for life?
- b) Is he firmly convinced he must preserve Life at all costs? And whatever be the situation?
- c) Does he believe he should sacrifice himself to defuse the situation?
- d) What constitutes this man's Honor, Integrity, Sense of Duty, Responsibility?
- e) Is this a situation that occurs within civil society or within a military situation (the rules were different)?

The action that he chooses to undertake is the defining point of his role as a human being within his society. To a certain extent some of the elements involved here could have been resolved upstream of the incident or, at least pre-meditated as a (professional) code of conduct.

Once our swordsman has a clear conviction and certainty as to what he considers should be the outcome of the situation he is free to act as he sees fit and accept the consequences.

A. B. and **C.** represent very many factors that must enter into any decision about choice of action. Admittedly, this is all an intellectual description that requires a lot of explanations but, nonetheless, there is reason for hesitation in the final choice – hesitation that could be uselessly fatal. Let's hope our swordsman does not have to further search through his 10,000 *waza* as well...! There existed many different manuals concerned with Samurai ethics and behavior codes such as the following writings: "Hagakure", "Yojokun", "Chikubasho", "Iwamizudera Monogatari". Almost all Han had their own writings pertaining to ethics and behavior so we can suspect that an enlightened swordsman such as our Mushin Denko-tô would be aware of what was expected of him.

So let's go back to our initial image: "When a piece of flint is struck against a piece of steel it creates a spark (of burning steel). The spark flies simultaneously when the flint strikes it – there is no time lapse in the action. It is one unified process (*I-ai*)". When all this took place in this manner, in one harmonious and unified instant, it could be seen as 居合い – *I-ai*.

We have a very long Way before us!

Appendix I – Folding a Hakama



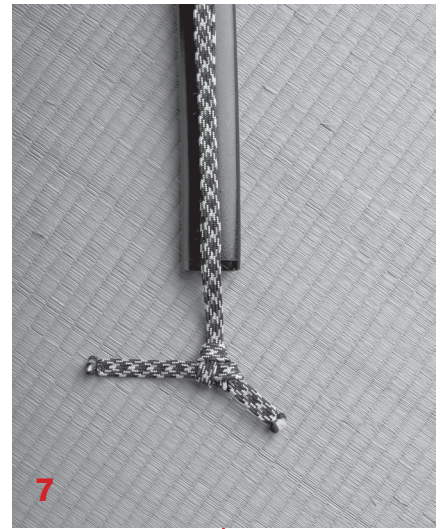
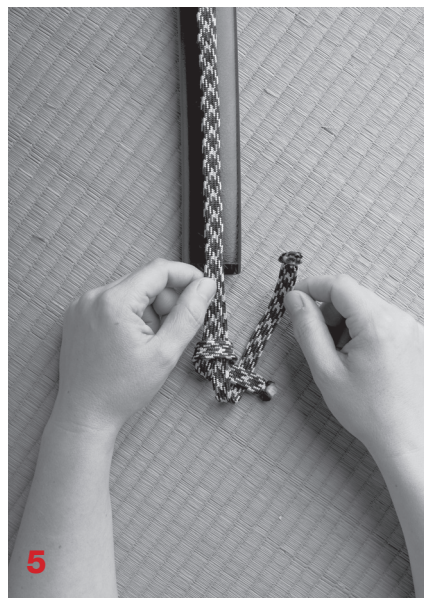
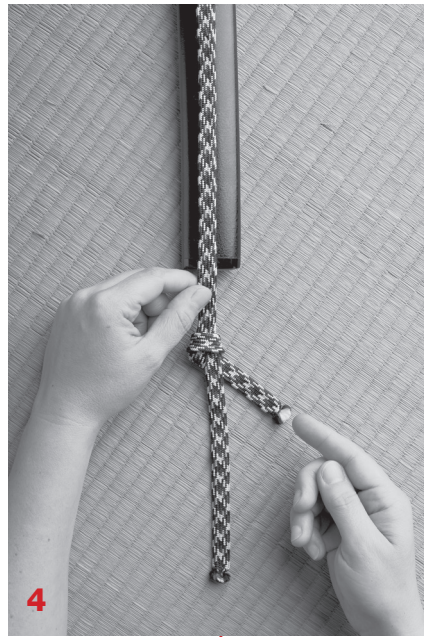
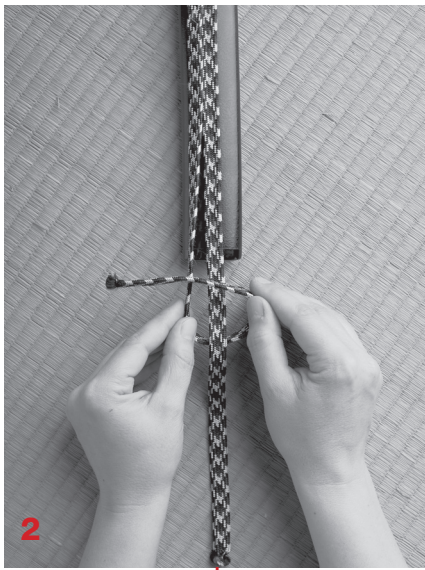
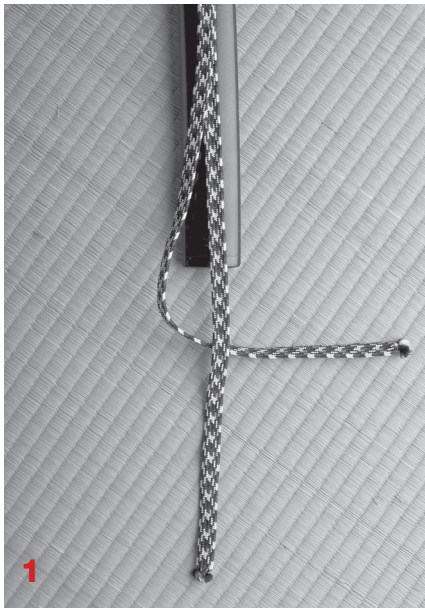


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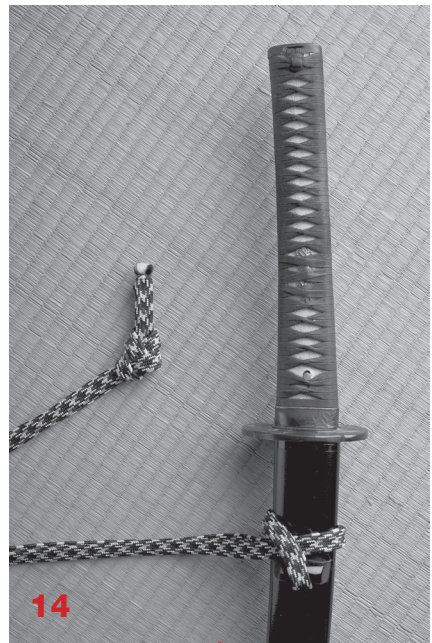
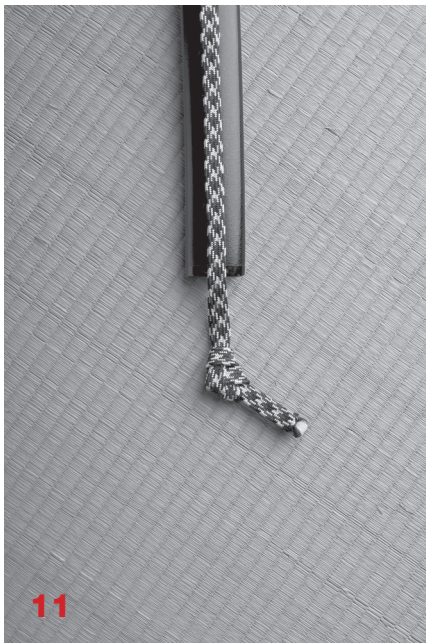
This is a way of folding a *Hakama* as taught in a *Ko-ryū*. It is very useful for keeping your *Hakama* in good shape when travelling. Obviously there are other valid ways of folding a *Hakama*.

Appendix II – Tying a formal knot in a Sageo





Tiki, here a small note saying there are other ways and so on???



Appendix III

The nature of movement: learning and teaching

by Malcolm Tiki Shewan from the book: "Iaido – The Art of Japanese Swordsmanship", 1980

Although I believe that *Bu-dō* cannot be learned from a book (or, for that matter, from any amount of theoretical material, such as pictures, etc.) I think that there is, nonetheless, a certain connection between comprehension through "Mind" and comprehension through the experience of "Movement". Further, I feel that this relationship could be far better understood than it is at present, if some sort of satisfactory explanation could be furnished. The "eastern" method of teaching is quite correctly based on the notion that movement should be learned by "making movements". That is to say through direct experience.

The main method of imparting correct movements is, thus, to demonstrate, and allow the trainee to "copy" these movements, and, thereafter, to correct them as they proceed, until these movements correspond to those demonstrated.

It is considered that if the trainee works hard enough and long enough, he may, perhaps, acquire an understanding of his art that will lead to mastery. This higher "understanding", discernible by another "Master", differentiates the higher levels of acquisition in any of those *Bu-dō* which seek to achieve these higher levels. Anything less is seen by the "Master" as being the "perfection of techniques", but not as "perfection of the Spirit of the Art". During the time that it has been my privilege to be working and teaching *Ai-ki-dō* and *I-ai-dō*, I have been continually inundated with requests to "explain in words" what I was seeking to teach. Two facts became immediately apparent to me:

- 1) that most people always want explanations for what they do;
- 2) that these people are under the impression that they will learn more satisfactorily if they have these "explanations".

This seems to be a western trait in learning. In the East students seem to naturally NOT ask questions but simply get to work on following the teaching.

After some time, I came to the conclusion, while providing "explanations" requested of me, that very few trainees, did, in fact, learn better what they were being taught, when they were given explanations. This led me to examine the question of teaching and learning, and to make some very interesting observations upon the subject. Two important conclusions came from this:

- 1) that, in fact, instruction by explanation is not, and very nearly cannot be, effective for two reasons:
 - a) movements cannot be properly described in words by a teacher:

- b) descriptions of movements in words cannot be understood by the trainee.

- 2) that this situation is due to the fact that, from evidence available, there does not appear to be a knowledge of sufficient depth, relating to the way in which a complete Man is actually supposed to function, from which one may draw certain elements that would permit one to overcome this deficiency when attempting to provide explanations.

The Japanese form of writing, *Kan-ji* (ideograms) helps considerably to overcome the inherent weakness of words by inciting the trainee to study the ramifications of meaning contained not only in the ideogram but also in the meaning of phrases of ideograms.

Nonetheless, at this point I asked myself two questions:

- 1) did there exist somewhere a sufficient knowledge of man, and how he operates in all his relations, including Physical and Mental, that could clarify the problem?
- 2) could I, from my own careful observation and experience, attempt to seek an answer myself?

I shall pass over my ultimate conclusions concerning these last two questions until later date. I will leave them for the reader to reflect upon.

However, I would like to offer the following reflections as a preliminary estimation as to how this exasperating gap between "explanation", and "performance", may, perhaps, be bridged. "Explanation", lies in the realm of concept, idea. "Words" are required to convey these. The whole together may be considered a mental or intellectual function. "Performance" lies in the realm of movements. Movements of intricate design are composed of simpler movements. These may be considered the "words" of movement. They aid one in the capacity to observe, seize, and eventually, imitate the movement. This whole together may be considered a physical or moving function. This works through movement-feeling and not through an intellectual process. This is a very simplified description of two of several functions of a man: but they are the two functions that concern us here.

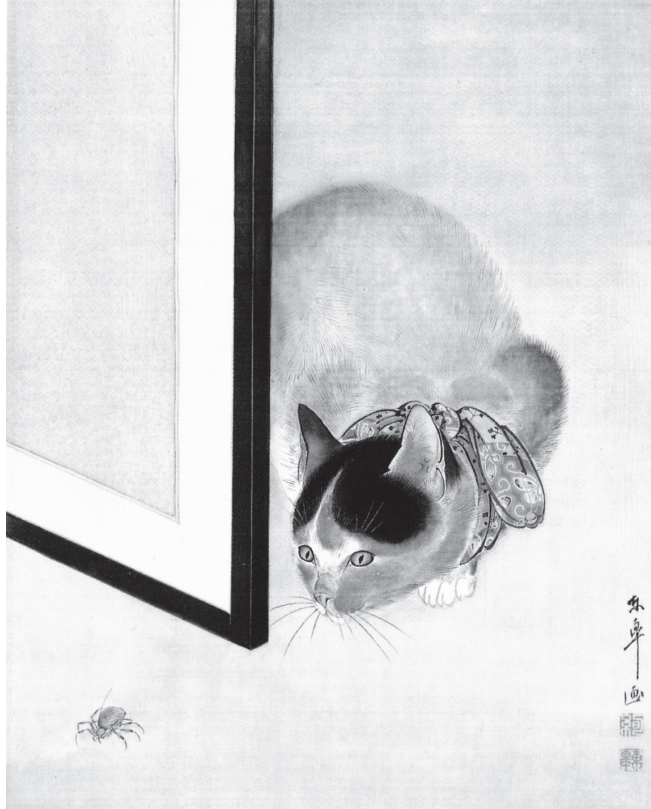
I would like to speak of some points of view which may, perhaps, appear as "new" concepts, not easy to understand without proper reflection, but which I hope will incite you to seek more of your own information and knowledge through the application of the method described here.

As it happens it is also the answer to the problem of why "explanation" does not, in most cases, hasten or improve "Performance". Explanations, in themselves, are not what is of foremost importance. It is the way in which these observations are derived that merits interest; that is my essential point.

The answer lies, therefore, in the fact that a "very special form of observation" of one's own movements is necessary to improve the learning process: and this form of observation has to be learned and understood.

Arikawa Sadateru often said that in order to learn properly one has to have the spirit of a child...! (he most certainly was not encouraging people to become childish – there's quite a difference).





As an example, the following may be said:

when learning a new movement, it is either explained and/or demonstrated, and the beginner attempts to reproduce what he understands or sees.

Thereupon the trainee reproduces something other than that which was explained and/or demonstrated.

This is because, in the case of an explanation, it consists of intellectual concepts and ideas that a trainee has not yet acquired. He, thusly, has no fund of either intellectual ideas nor concepts with which to form a mental picture of the explanation and translate it into his movements.

In the case of demonstration, he has no store of "movement vocabulary", either intricate or simple, which will correspond to what he has been shown. So he cannot reproduce, by correspondence, what has been demonstrated. What happens after this is that the trainee will begin to form an array of concepts and ideas that satisfy him in thinking that they correspond to those of the teacher. Sometimes the results can be truly surprising to the teacher.

Since we cannot see what his thought processes were we can only conclude from the trainee's efforts that they do not correspond to those of the teacher. Otherwise, they would have induced a correct understanding which would have resulted in reproducing the movements. Keep in mind that it is common that a good teacher should be ever ready to break up this 'mistake' process by placing him in an apparently 'unsolvable' quandary to incite further efforts and search for understanding.

In the case of a demonstrated movement, with no explanation whatsoever, we can see that the trainee does not reproduce the movements demonstrated, and we know that he has, therefore, no experience of movements which will enable him to imitate the demonstration. As it is not the province here, to seek to establish the means whereby a trainee may derive an exact correspondence of intellectual concepts and ideas with those of his teacher; I will leave this problem as we have it – exposed, but not concluded.

In the case of demonstrated movements, the following interesting observations may be made : upon seeing a movement demonstrated, a trainee does one of two things, he imitates the movement either :

- a) correctly
- or
- b) incorrectly.

And no other alternative exists.

If, at this point, the trainee could reproduce the movement correctly, and continue to do so, he would, in effect, know all that he could be taught to him about that particular movement at that stage of his experience. The whole question of teaching and learning, then, is concerned with the length of time that it takes for a trainee to pass from not knowing how to produce any required movement, to knowing how to produce the required movement. This can be understood in the following way: (and this is really a description of how movement is, or can be, acquired in its most primitive sense). In making a new movement without instruction, we can assume that whoever undertakes it, will make it incorrectly. This will either satisfy, or, be unsatisfactory, for individual reasons.

If unsatisfactory, the mover will try again until time and experience produces a satisfactory movement. However, the satisfactory movement may not be correct, in which case, time and effort have not achieved the desired aim, and the movement must be ultimately put right.

At the moment of any movement, something may be right about it, and something may be wrong about it.

If the mover "tends" to make it correctly, it will ultimately arrive at perfection, but if the mover "tends" to move incorrectly, he will eventually create a movement that may seem perfect to him, but, in reality, is wrong.

And then, it must be unlearned.

The question arises: is there a moment of choice, at the time that a mover makes a movement, between a correct movement and a wrong movement? This is a very interesting question! There can be a choice if two conditions are present at the moment of a movement :

- a) that the mover can correctly "observe" the movement and his own movement;
- b) that the mover can know a wrong movement from a right one, if he "observes" it correctly.

The state of mind that will make the above possible for the *Bu-dô* practitioner is referred to as *Mitori-geiko and Nyu-nan-shin*.

So a very special form of observation is necessary to learn in an improved way.

If, at this point at the making of a very simple movement one's whole capacity to observe what one is doing, in a concentrated endeavor, is thrust upon the observation of the muscular sensations involved in this movement, the movement itself can be observed, and the sensations of what contribute to right movement and what contributes to wrong movement, may be distinguished.

One's attitude here must be as though one's life depends on seizing the correct movement, and, that it is the first and last time (in our life) that this possibility will present itself. In combat, this would truly be so! This required kind of observation will show by simple repetition:

– that, of the sensations noticed, some will represent the tendency to right movement, and some will represent the tendency to wrong movement.

In distinguishing these two classes of movements, the trainee, in fact, acquires a means for his own further self improvement. He must know what movement is and what it is not – being aware of this simultaneously.

But in practice, the trainee does not notice any of this at all! He is really unconscious of what he is doing! The following experiment illustrates this simply.

Place your foot in full sight, and begin to try to move the toes independantly sideways, or, up and down, etc. For quite some time, it cannot be done because there is no sensation recognizable as to what muscular movement is necessary to move the toes in any direction (the big toe and the small toe may have some capacity for small independent movement).

After the required effort is made many times, in producing some movement, separate sensations begin to become evident as connected with different movements: continued efforts will expose the sensation connected with a required movement, and the sensations connected with interference with the movement.

After some time, it will be possible to distinguish clearly the right sensation for producing a required movement. We have learned both the movement and the non-movement.

Thereafter the correct movement will follow, as long as the “special effort” is maintained. And the movement would only become more and more perfect for its purpose, if not interfered with.

Were this a movement of *I-ai-dô* or *Ai-ki-dô*, for example, it would be corrected by the instructor, at the first moment; so that the trainee could experience the correct sensations accompanying the correct movement from the start. If all movements were learned in this way, vastly improved movements, in a minimum time, would be the result; since, admittedly, most instruction consists in either, constantly correcting wrong movements of trainees, unconscious of what they are doing, or, preventing the intrusion of incorrect movements, introduced for the same reason*. However, unless this “special form of observation” is understood, used, and maintained, no “explanation”, nor “demonstration”, will produce results other than those to which we are accustomed. It is evident that unless future trainees learn to be more conscious of themselves and what they are doing at every moment, even the most celebrated Master will be unable to teach better or more quickly. But these reflections are intended to suggest, and indicate, the way in which these present obstacles may be overcome. Nonetheless, the two elements, *Mitori-geiko* and *Nyû-nan-shin* (*Sho-shin no Shin*) are the keys to learning.

* In general practice, however; a trainee starts with movements that are already “partly” right for a purpose, and also, “partly” wrong. For they have been learned, usually, for some purpose altogether different. For example, he may know the movement of “raising an arm” by having learned it for putting on a hat, scratching his head, or chopping wood, etc... none of which are exactly right, for example, for raising a sword in preparation for striking. As a result, the major part of this “customary” movement, which may feel quite natural, indeed, is filled with movements trained for the wrong purpose. We are typically familiar only with “stereotypical patterns of action and reaction entrained through another type of kata training — the repetitive, habitual patterns of movement one arrives at simply by living.” (quoted from an essay on *I-ai* and *Kata* training by Ellis Amdur).

At this point, I wish to say that *Mitori-geiko* can only effectively be applied, in the beginning, for very simple movements like hitting a nail with a hammer, chopping wood. In the case of *Ai-ki-dô* or *I-ai-dô*: simple *Su-buri*; basic *Tai-sô*; simple hand, foot and body movements (*Te-sabaki*, *Ashi-sabaki*, *Tai-sabaki*); *Rei-shiki* (etiquette), etc. But it is in the simplicity of the movement and the opportunity to observe it, because of its simplicity, that the value of this training method lies.

We can observe, if we try enough, the sensations within this movement, which enable us to lay bare the very essence of the movement. And after some time, if we persist, we will not only begin to understand what movements really are, and how they may be related to the practices that we undertake, but we will begin to see that they have a guiding intelligence of their own, that remains unperceived by us, as well as certain emotions, also unperceived, that bring them to perfection. And when the full impact of what this implies begins to stir within, the huge gap between “explanation” and “performance” will lessen somewhat, and, thereafter, we may glimpse the interesting path that lies between the trainee and the Master.



Young Kappa practicing *Mitori-geiko*.

Drawing by Miyo for the Îles de Lérins seminar
in 2005

Acknowledgments

This is the text that people often don't read unless they've read everything else in the book. This is why we have put it here at the end. As you might imagine it is almost impossible to thank each and every one of the individuals who contributed in one form or another to a book like this. Nonetheless... At the end of a class there is a bow to the Kamiza which is an acknowledgment of the Universal. And, then, usually prefaced by the words "Sensei ni Rei", there is a mutual bow between what seems to be the teacher and the students. It took me some years to understand that because the word 'sensei' means 'who came before' — this bow is NOT just the students-to-teacher bow. This bow signifies thanks to all those who 'came before' and had a significant influence on who we are and what we became. And so it is here that I wish to offer thanks to all of these spirits both living and past that contributed to my existence up to this point and for all their efforts on my behalf... I do, however, wish to mention some very specific thanks.

To the people who worked on and participated in this book. Many thanks to Cédric Russo whose unflagging dedication to getting the photography the way we all felt it should be. He was always totally flexible in his listening and with his time — but always firm when he knew what needed to be done. He was always ready to discover and learn new aspects and to try new things — but sparing of no effort to accomplish what needed to be done. Always demonstrating the true spirit of "Shoshin". Many thanks to Dominique Falquet who has worked in cooperation with Pascal and constantly "behind the scenes" contributing all sorts of things without which this book may never have seen the day. An example of true "Shinobu". All my thanks to the teachers of the FEI : Daniel Leclerc, Christophe Marie, Dominique Pierre, Jaff Raji — les Kuden. A well as Floréal Perez who demonstrated reishiki of which he was always exemplary. Members of the Committee — J-M Spothelfer, J-L Martin. And the teachers — S. Dieci, Masa Seki, J-L Pierragi and others who willingly gave their time and efforts.

I wish to express here a very special gratitude to Pascal Krieger for all that he has done in this book and in my life. This book is the direct result of his combination of a high level of competence in both Budô and layout design. I first met Pascal in 1976 when he came home from an extended Budô study trip in Japan. Since that time we have joined forces 4 to 5 times a year to teach seminars (in retrospect that is quite a few!). Our shared aim has always been to help people to see the similarities in different Budô disciplines and practices — acknowledge and respect differences while seeing the overall and predominant common ground that all Japanese Dô possess. Many people have remarked over the years that we work together as complimentary opposites. Pascal has always practiced Jûdô, I have always done Aikidô; Pascal does Jôdô and I practice the Ken — we both share a great interest in Iai. In this way our joint seminars have always presented a wide-range of different practice firmly unified within the same path on the Way (Dô) — Pascal uses a weapon that is straight and mine is curved — to achieve an aim both characteristics are required. We both hope this book will make a positive contribution and indicate something of our direction.



Young Shewan (center) practicing Mitori-geiko during European tour with Otake Risuke Sensei (left) and Donn F. Draeger Sensei (right) in 1980.



TOOK A LONG TIME GETTING THE BOOK BUT I THINK WE HAVE CREATED A TRULY VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE FOR TODAY!

COME ON!!! IF YOU TWO CONTINUE AT THIS RATE THERE MIGHT NOT BE ANY BUBBLES LEFT TO POP THAT CORK!

SO, TO "SABRER LE CHAMPAGNE" SHÖHATTÖ? ATARITÖ? YOKOGUMO? KASUMI? OR JUST DO IT LIKE NORMAL HUMAN BEINGS?

PK 2013



Japanese Swordsmanship

Malcolm Tiki Shewan

Photos:
Cédric Russo

Calligraphy/layout:
Pascal Krieger



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About the author

Malcolm Tiki SHEWAN began the study of fencing when he was 6 years old. At age 8 his father enrolled him in Jûdô classes. At age 14 he began learning lai in the style of Musô Jikiden Eishin Ryû. At the age of 18 he began studying Aikidô with Tamura Nobuyoshi Sensei. He continued studying lai under the direction of Otani Yoshiteru, practitioner of Tenshinshô Jigen Ryû and who taught Musô Shinden Ryû in New York City. At the same time he studied sword appreciation under the direction of Usui Bumpei Sensei. In 1975 he met and studied lai with Mitsuzuka Takeshi Sensei and also began studying Shintô

Musô Ryû Jôdô. In 1980, through his friendship with Donn Draeger Sensei (director of the International Haplological Society), he was able to do studies of a number of traditional sword schools. During this same period he spent 2 1/2 years working and studying the forging of Japanese swords with the swordsmiths: Wakita Ryôsui Shisshô and Onô Masami. He also studied damascus steel making with bladesmith Mr. William F. Moran. Throughout his life the study of Budô and the Japanese Sword has been his foremost interest and his personal quest for learning more continues ever on...



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