



# Tsurugi Bashi Kendo Kai

## Reigi (Etiquette)

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Good manners, including politeness, safety and hygiene, are not empty rituals but an expression of respect for all the other members of the dojo who are offering you a chance to practice kendo.

- **Always bow on entering and leaving the dojo**
  - **Do not wear shoes in the dojo**
  - **Do not smoke, eat, drink or fool around in the dojo**
- **Do not lean on a sword or rest a sword point downwards**
  - **Do not step over or kick a shinai on the ground**
- **If someone is kneeling in armour, you should pass behind them or, if you have to pass in front of them, bow and extend your right hand in a vertical plane, fingertips forward.**
  - **Do not lean against the wall: stand, kneel or sit cross-legged when resting**
    - **Always check your shinai for splinters *before* attending the session**
  - **Always ensure your toenails and fingernails are clipped before attending the session**
- **Always air your uniform and your armour after each session: never leave them in the bag between sessions or they will get mouldy and smell horribly.**
  - **Keep your uniform clean and fold it correctly before attending the session**

For a greater understanding of the meaning and spirit of reigi in Kendo, please study the following note, originally written as advice to our members before the 2006 gasshuku. It was originally written by Jake Barber, then Shodan, and revised and completed by instructor, Masato Yokoi. Read this as if your instructor were talking to you.

The most important thing in kendo is perhaps one of the easiest things to do. No matter what your experience or ability in kendo you can show good reigi.

Reigi is important because it helps to maintain the relationship between the sword and the shinai. By showing such manners you are showing that you respect the fact you are dealing with a real sword and death is a very real possibility.

It also helps to maintain the relationship between you and the others, especially between you and your sensei/seniors. If you want some help from them then you should behave in the way they feel comfortable. They wouldn't teach those who don't do proper reigi and you shouldn't do so when you teach.

Reigi is particularly crucial during the gasshuku week. The high ranking sensei and sempai that will be visiting us next week are used to a much higher standard of kendo that we are unable to show them. Coupled with the fact that they have travelled from Japan, Belgium and Germany just to practice kendo with us showing good reigi is how we can thank them. It also shows that despite our low standard Western understanding of kendo we are still worthy of their expertise.

Important to realise is that constantly performing reigi can feel odd, and out of place with our own cultures. However, kendo is Japanese. You need to behave in a Japanese manner at all times inside the dojo or when interacting with seniors even outside the dojo. As Boffa-sensei explained during the Meibukan Gasshuku if we fail to maintain the Japanese identity of kendo it will lose its meaning and become a pointless sport where all you do is hit people on the head.

Kendo is not sport nor martial art to kill somebody. It is part of your life to train yourself. It is not about somebody else, it is about yourself. Kendo training is hard and strict because it means to be so and not to be something enjoyable like football or any other sports. Winning a match is not so important. More importantly is how you achieved that; how you prepared, practised before and how you fought, controlled yourself physically and mentally in the match. After saying this, I'd better note that winning a match is still very important. I guess most of you understand now how difficult it is to get ippon against your opponent. You need a huge amount of time and effort to be able to beat someone. Through the preparation for a competition you will learn many things and this is the reason why we have competition. However, a bad result or defeat makes your preparation meaningless. Only a victory can justify your preparation. I sometimes find myself trying to think that I lost but it was good kendo. This is completely wrong. What I thought is just excuse. Excuse for hiding or justifying my weakness. I don't like myself like that and don't want you to be like that. So please try to win once you do a shiai and after you have become able to win then talk about your ideal kendo.

Here are some points that should ALWAYS be maintained:

- \* Turn up early to practice. You shouldn't only just have time to get ready. You should help to prepare the dojo and be able to help if something goes wrong. It is usually the beginners' responsibility to clean the floor before and after every session. With a job or busy lifestyle this can sometimes be hard to achieve but if you make an effort to do this you will eventually understand the benefits. I know you are busy but so is everyone. So don't use business for your excuse to miss a session. Management of yourself is still part of your kendo. Those who are 'weak' in a life outside kendo are also weak in kendo.
- \* ALWAYS carry the sensei's equipment for them, you should also fold it for them after the session. If you offer to do this but they don't accept don't give up; offer again.
- \* ALWAYS bow every time you enter or leave the dojo. I have noticed recently that you are forgetting to do this. This bow is different to bowing to a partner you must bow 30 degrees and look at the floor. It is because the dojo or the shomen (God) and your sensei are not your enemies. Normal people can't trust your practise partners with a sword and so you keep eye contact. Losing eye contact means you are already dead.
- \* When you bring all your equipment into the dojo take up as little space as possible when you leave it at the side, make sure that it doesn't get in the way of the practice or

the doors. It is preferred that we put our equipments outside the dojo. For example, in the dance studio it is where we put our shoes.

\* Don't leave your shinai or bokuto in a way that means they can fall over, they are swords and are incredibly valuable. Also, the blade and kensen of your shinai and bokuto should never point to the shomen. If the dojo is small, then place your swords on the floor close to the wall.

\* If you are warming yourself up before a session you MUST stay in the shimoza. The kamiza is for your sensei and the shomen. Never enter it unless you are doing so to prepare the dojo for practice or are carrying sensei's gear for him. Usually the half near to the entrance is the shimoza and the other half is the kamiza.

\* ALWAYS run in the dojo, but do so in an appropriate manner. There should not be a wild rush, however, when you are asked to line up, this should not take more than 5 seconds. KNOW YOUR PLACE IN THE LINE. The order in which you line up is the order of your responsibility, not your rank ONLY. So you can move to the shimoza side if you don't like the responsibility. I expect the more proper kendoka or those who want to become like them, to be on the kamiza side of the line.

\* When you sit in seiza DON'T fiddle or move unnecessarily. You should sit with perfect posture even if it starts to hurt. Controlling your posture and maintaining seiza even when it becomes uncomfortable is part of kendo. If you have a serious issue swap to cross-legged position but do not move again.

\* When you do mokuso, do it properly. Ideally, you need to make your mind "empty" but it is very hard. I want you to use mokuso for calming down yourself and focussing yourself on what you need to learn/practise in that session or what you have achieved.

\* When you bow (shomen-ni, senseigata-ni, or otagai-ni) always bow longer than your seniors. Also if you are saying 'onegaishimasu' or 'domo arigato gozaimasu' say it correctly. I often hear garbled attempts. IT IS CRUCIAL YOU KNOW THE JAPANESE WORDS THAT WE USE IN KENDO.

\* When you put on your equipment (MEN when we are in seiza, or DO after KATA practice) be the quickest, ALWAYS! However, it is worse if you have to retie your equipment. Be quick but put gear on properly. If your MEN-HIMO are too long, shorten them; if your KOTE are untied then tie them.

\* Boffa-sensei says you should read your tenugui before you put it on and after you take it off. Also take your MEN off correctly: Pull the himo over your head and untie them there. Then take the MEN off, the MEN should be held in front of your face until you have removed the tenugui.

\* During practice always bow correctly; 15 degree maintaining eye contact. Also, never fall over during sonkyo. During rotation you will have to pass around the back of the sensei; run! DO NOT slow the whole practice down by being slow. The things you need to consider always in a session are your sensei, your seniors, the others and yourself. The priority is in this order. So if you need to fix your bogu during a session then first ask your partner if you can do that. As long as you are in a group, you need to think about the group.

\* Keep practising unless you truly can't continue. It is reigi to keep going to get the most out of sensei, they will appreciate that you kept trying despite it causing you pain. Kendo practice means to train you, in other words, to make you feel pain physically and mentally. Don't run away from this.

\* If someone falls over in the dojo, unless it directly involves you you HAVE to continue training. DON'T STOP AND CROWD AROUND. Sensei will say if we have to stop.

\* The weather may be very hot. It is reigi to be ready for practice, so that means eating and drinking enough that you don't become tired and dehydrated. In this weather it is hard to eat lots and we forget to drink! Drink lots before sessions because if you don't have the energy to continue you have let the sensei, the dojo, and yourself down. Also, if you are dehydrated practising for such a long time in this weather you may get heat stroke. Heat stroke can make you vomit. If you are sick (there is a chance) your first responsibility is to clean the dojo floor. After the dojo is cleaned you can take off MEN and clean it, after which you can tend to yourself.

\* There is a good chance that Boffa-sensei will knock the shinai out of your hands. The gut reaction is to defend your head with your hands - never do this. He will appreciate this if you prevent yourself from blocking or dodging. When you pick up your shinai go down on one knee. You must pick up the shinai so that the shinai is between you and the sensei and the knee that touches the ground is the knee that points away from the sensei. It is important to recognise that even when you lose your sword, it is not finished. You are still alive and he is still trying to kill you. Don't give your life away easily. After trying to survive, if he gives you another chance then pick up your sword.

\* Finally, the dojo is not a social place. NEVER talk during practice. You may talk before and after practice while inside the dojo, if you do so make sure it is about kendo. Ask questions, as it means you will get the most information from the short time we will have together with the sensei. However, don't ask stupid questions. Don't ask the same questions again and again. Once you take note of every advice and review it and think yourself, then ask the question to the sensei.

\*\*\*\*\* Sensei or teacher in kendo is a teacher who doesn't teach. So don't expect advice from them. Try to steal their kendo from them. Kendo sensei should be father-like: they will lead you with their attitude towards kendo and their physical and mental strength. He never tells but shows you what you should do. Through trying to copy them you will learn a lot more than waiting for them to teach you.

Reigi is important, but very easy to do. I expect to see good reigi from everyone. Remember that you are representing the dojo first, and yourself secondly.





# Tsurugi Bashi Kendo Kai

## Kendo Terminology

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The vocabulary of kendo is based on Japanese terminology. Once you become serious about kendo, you will undoubtedly want to obtain the authoritative but hard to get *Japanese-English Dictionary of Kendo* published by the All Japan Kendo Federation, a fascinating volume in which every kendo word is not simply translated but also insightfully explained in its proper context.

Until then, here is a survival kit. Remember that the proper way to write Japanese words is, obviously, using Japanese script (a mixture of kanji, hiragana and katanaka) and that the roman characters you see here are just an approximate transliteration based on the Hepburn system (minus the long vowel mark). **Do not read these transliterations as if they were English words:** to stand a chance of pronouncing them sensibly, spend a few minutes understanding the basic phonetic rules of the Hepburn system, in particular the sound of the five vowels a i u e o (read similarly to Spanish or Italian).

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## Counting

Ichi = 1

Ni = 2

San = 3

Shi/Yon = 4

Go = 5

Roku = 6

Shichi/Nana = 7

Hachi = 8

Kyu/Ku = 9

Ju = 10

Ni-ju = 20

San-ju = 30

Yon-ju = 40

...

Hyaku = 100

Grammatical rules sometimes require that you add a "counting suffix" which depends on the nature of things you count. For counting cylindrical things such as shinai, beer

bottles and, imaginatively, suburi repetitions, the suffix is -hon (or -pon, or -bon where euphony requires). So, if you are going to perform suburi, you will announce:

**Juppon = 10**

**Ni-juppon = 20**

**San-juppon = 30**

**Yon-juppon = 40**

**Go-juppon = 50**

...

**Hyappon = 100**

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## **Common commands**

**Rei = Bow**

- **Ritsu-rei = standing bow**
- **Za-rei = kneeling bow (more formal)**

**Hajime = Start**

**Yame = Stop**

**Kotai = Change round**

**Seiza = Sit in the traditional Japanese manner**

**Sonkyo = Take the squatting posture**

**Osame-to = Return the sword to your side**

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## **Directions, postures, distance**

**Hidari = Left**

**Migi = Right**

**Shizentai = Natural standing posture**

**Kamae = "On guard" posture. There are 5 kamae in kendo:**

- **Chudan-no-kamae = Middle-level guard**
- **Jodan-no-kamae = High guard (sword overhead)**
- **Gedan-no-kamae = Low guard**
- **Hasso-no-kamae (sword to side of head)**
- **Wakigamae (sword hidden by body)**

**Maai = Distance.**

- **Chikai maai = Close distance**
- **Issoku itto no maai = "One step, one cut" - swords just crossed**
- **Toi maai = Wide distance**

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## Forms of training

**Kata = Prearranged forms**

**Suburi = Cutting practice (without opponent)**

**Kihon = Basic cuts on target**

**Kirikaeshi = A sequence of cuts to the head**

**Ji-geiko = Free sparring**

**Uchi komi geiko = Sequence of cuts on offered target**

**Kakari-geiko = Hard cutting practice**

People frequently ask what is the difference between uchikomi-geiko and kakari-geiko. Here is what the AJKF Kendo Dictionary says:

### **uchikomi-geiko**

**A method of keiko in which one learns basic techniques of striking by responding to striking chances provided by the moto-dachi (instructor). An uchikomi-bo is used in a supplementary type of uchikomi-geiko.**

### **kakari-geiko**

**The keiko method where the trainee for a short period practices striking the motodachi (person acting as instructor) with all his/her might, using all the waza he/she has learned, and without thinking of being struck or dodged.**

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## Techniques

**Kiai = Cry given when cutting**

**Kikentai-itchi = Spirit, Sword, Body as One**

**Fumikomi = Stamping the front foot on the floor while striking**

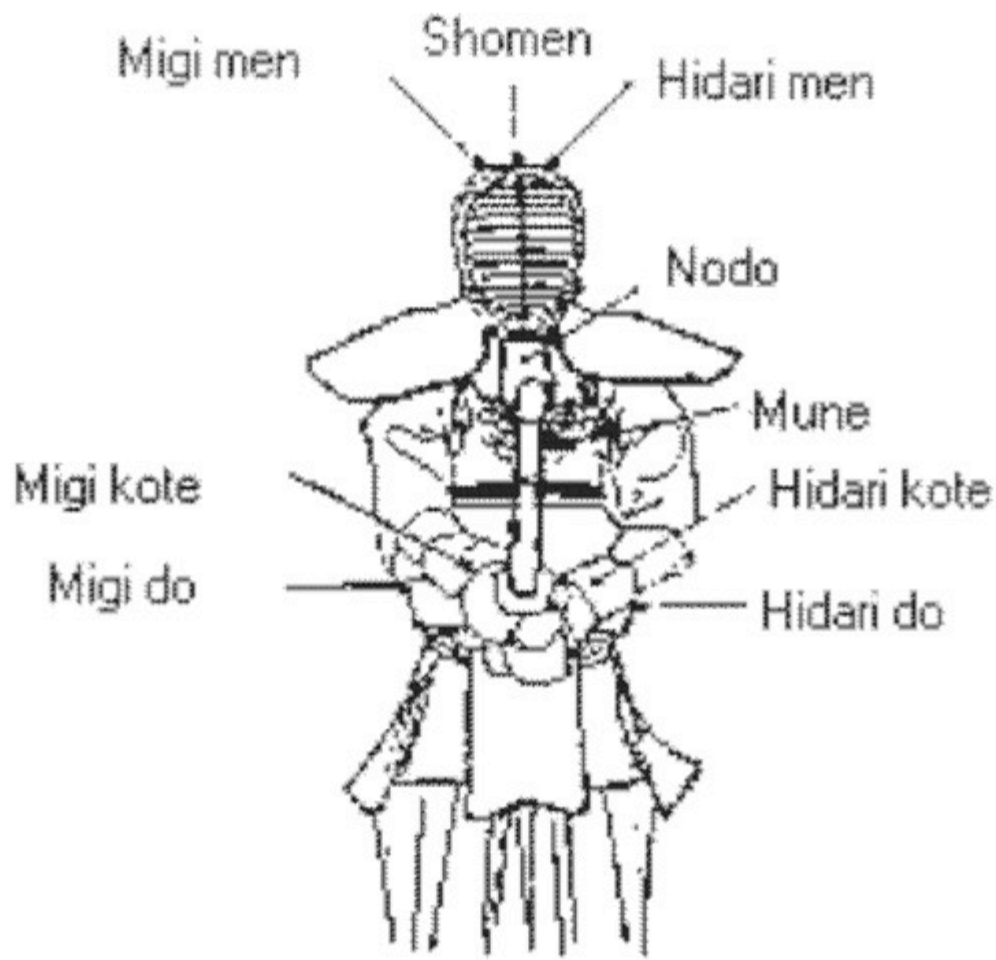
**Tai-atari = Collision with the opponent with the surplus force of a strike**

**Uchi = Cut**

**Tsuki = Thrust**

**Datotsu = Cut or thrust**

**Datotsu-bui = (valid) striking target, see diagram below**



Position of DATOTSU

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## People

**Sensei = Teacher**

**Uchidachi = In kata, the instructor, the one who initiates the moves**

**Shidachi = In kata, the student, the one who applies the technique and "wins"**

**Motodachi = In keiko, the instructor, the one who offers targets for datotsu**

**Kakarite = In keiko, the student, the one who performs the cut**

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## Useful phrases

**Hai = Yes**

**O-negai shimasu = Please may I...**

Domo arigato gozaimasu = Thank you very much

Sumimasen = Excuse me / sorry

Dozo = Please, go ahead

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剣橋剣道会