

# **Kendo no Kata**

(Formal Technique in the Way of the Sword)

## **Introduction to Kendo no Kata**

Kendo kata consist of two man forms where the student learns aggressive and defensive movements that will be used later in competition. For many students, these forms seem stiff and unnecessary except for promotional purposes, but in reality they are essential for learning distance between opponents and developing proper technique.

## **Fundamental Concepts & Elements**

Each kata consists of an attacker (uchidachi) and a defender (shidachi). Each performer is given a designated posture (kamae) at the beginning of each form. Eye contact is very important, as the eyes are the windows to one's soul. Foot work is also very important. Direction, length of stride, and body shifting are all fundamental elements of kendo kata. Once the student has developed confidence in knowing the forms well, they can be performed with the feeling of a real duel between adversaries.

## **Kendo Kata Rules**

1. The uchidachi has the role of teacher, the shidachi the role of student.
2. The uchidachi moves first, the shidachi slightly later in response to this movement; the uchidachi therefore leads the shidachi.
3. From the first sitting bow through the last sitting bow there should be no relaxing of concentration.
4. When moving your feet, in principle move forward with the leading foot, and backward with the rear foot.
5. Foot movement should be silent, and care taken to ensure that your toes do not point upward.
6. The shidachi establishes a maai which enables his monouchi to reach the point where he is going to deliver a strike or thrust.
7. The call is "yah" for uchidachi and "toh" for shidachi.
8. The katana (habiki - without cutting edge) is used only on formal occasions. For everyday practice, the bokken (wooden sword) is used.
9. In principle, the uchidachi and shidachi focus on each other's eyes, without wavering (metsuke).
10. Zanshin should be asserted with strong kigurai (noble bearing, pride, and dignity).

## **TACHI KATA**

(long sword forms)

1. Ippon-me (1st form) Men nuki Men (attack head, evade, and counter-attack head)
2. Nihon-me (2nd form) Kote nuke Kote (attack forearm, evade and counter-attack forearm)
3. Sanbon-me (3rd form) Tsuki kaeshi Tsuki (thrust, ride, and counter-thrust)
4. Yonhon-me (4th form) Tsuki kaeshi Men (thrust, ride, and counter-attack head)
5. Gohon-me (5th form) Men suriage Men (attack head, parry, and counter-attack head)
6. Roppon-me (6th form) Kote suriage Kote (attack forearm, parry, and counter-attack forearm)

7. Nanahon-me (7th form) Men nuki Do (attack head, evade, counter-attack to trunk)

<b>Kata</b>	<b>Waza</b>	<b>Uchidachi</b>	<b>Shidachi</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Name of technique</b>	<b>Posture</b>	<b>Posture</b>
Ippon-me	Men nuki men	Hidari Jodan	Migi Jodan
Nihon-me	Kote nuki Kote	Chudan	Chudan
Sanbon-me	Tsuki kaeshi Tsuki	Gedan	Gedan
Yonhon-me	Men kaeshi men	Hasso no kamae	Waki-gamae
Gohon-me	Men suriage men	Hidari Jodan	Chudan
Roppon-me	Kote suriage Kote	Chudan	Gedan
Nanahon-me	Men nuki do	Chudan	Chudan

## Glossary

<b>Ashi sabaki</b>	Footwork
<b>Aiyumi ashi</b>	Stepping
<b>Bokken, Bokuto</b>	Wooden sword
<b>Chudan no kamae</b>	Middle guard
<b>Do uchi</b>	Strike to trunk?
<b>Gedan no kamae</b>	Lower guard
<i>Hajime!</i>	<i>Begin</i>
<b>Hasso no kamae</b>	'Eight Directions' guard
<b>Hiraki ashi</b>	Diagonal stepping
<b>Jodan no kamae</b>	Upper guard position
<b>Kaeshi waza</b>	Block and counter techniques
<b>Kamae</b>	Guard position
<b>Kamae otoku</b>	Lower your guard
<i>Kamae-te!</i>	<i>Assume guard position</i>
<b>Katana</b>	Japanese long sword
<b>Kendo</b>	The way of the sword, Japanese fencing
<b>Kendo no kata</b>	The formal techniques of kendo
<b>Kensen</b>	Tip of the sword
<b>Kigurai</b>	bearing, pride, dignity
<b>Ki ken tai ichi</b>	Unity of spirit, sword, and body
<b>Ki no tsuke</b>	Attention
<b>Kiai</b>	Spirited shout
<b>Kissaki</b>	Sword point
<b>Kodachi</b>	Short sword
<b>Kote uchi</b>	Strike to the wrist
<b>Men uchi</b>	Strike to the forehead
<b>Metsuke</b>	gaise, direction of sight
<i>Mokuso!</i>	<i>Meditation</i>
<b>Monouchi</b>	Cutting edge
<b>Nuki waza</b>	Evasion techniques
<b>Okuri ashi</b>	Sliding steps with leading right foot

<b><i>Osame to!</i></b>	<i>Return your sword (to scabbard)</i>
<b>Otogai ni rei</b>	Bow together
<b>Rei</b>	Bow
<b>Ritsu rei</b>	Standing bow
<b>Sageto</b>	Standing with sword by your side, lit. 'Hanging sword'
<b><i>Sei Ritsu!</i></b>	<i>Line up</i>
<b><i>Sensei ni rei!</i></b>	<i>Bow to teacher</i>
<b>Shidachi</b>	'Performing sword', the defender
<b>Shinogi</b>	Ridge running the length of the sword, used in parrying
motion	
<b>Shizentai</b>	Natural standing position
<b>Sonkyo</b>	'En guard' crouching stance
<b>Suri ashi</b>	Sliding steps
<b>Suriage waza</b>	Parrying techniques
<b>Taito</b>	Standing with sword at waist, lit. 'Body Sword'
<b>Tanden</b>	Center to gravity, 'sea of energy'
<b>Tenouchi</b>	Squeezing the grip
<b><i>To!</i></b>	<i>Shidachi's kiai</i>
<b>Tsuba</b>	Hand guard
<b>Tsuka</b>	Handle
<b>Tsuki</b>	Thrust
<b>Uchidachi</b>	'Striking sword', the attacker
<b>Waki-gamae</b>	Hidden guard
<b><i>Ya!</i></b>	<i>Uchidachi's kiai</i>
<b><i>Yame!</i></b>	<i>Stop</i>
<b>Zanshin</b>	Resolute willpower to the end
<b>Zarei</b>	Seated bow

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