

Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei “Shidō-jyō no Ryūi-ten”
“Instructional Considerations” 2024

"Points to Note When Teaching" is intended to provide easy-to-understand instruction for beginners to novices (3rd dan or below) and intermediate students (4th and 5th dan). We have endeavoured to make the text easy to understand not only for those who teach, but also for those who are taught.

We will continue to make improvements and modifications in the future, so please feel free to send us your questions and suggestions. Thank you.

1. Reihō:

1. Keitō shisei: The right hand is lightly extended so that the fingertips are touching the hakama and the hand hangs naturally down along the side of the body.
2. Shinza e no rei (shomen ni rei): From changing the sword to the right hand, both heels should touch and you should stand in an attentive stance.
3. Hajime no torei (Opening bow to the sword):
 - 3.1. How to place the sword: With your right palm facing up, have the thumb on the tsuba. Grip with the left hand close to the kojiri from above and keep hold of the sageo. Withdraw the kojiri about one fist closer to you and quietly lower the sword down. The middle of the entire length of the sword (from the tsukagashira to the kojiri) should be aligned with your own centreline.

Note: Close to the kojiri means about one fist from the end.

- 3.2. How to wear the sword (taitō): Take the sword with both hands at the same time and insert the kojiri into an opening in your obi made by your left thumb. Place the left hand on the left side of the obi; use the right hand to insert the sword so that the tsuba is in front of your navel.
4. Owari no torei (Closing bow to the sword):
 - 4.1. How to place the sword and za-rei: With your left hand, bring the sword slightly forward and to the right, then switch to your right hand. Stand the sword vertically on the floor diagonally to the right, and without moving the kojiri, gently lay the sword down to the left. The middle of the entire length of the sword (from the tsukagashira to the kojiri) should be aligned with your own centreline. Align the sageo with your right hand.

Note: When lying the sword down to the left, do not slide the kojiri along the floor.

- 4.2. How to pick up the sword: Quietly lift the sword into your centre without a pause in the movement, bring your left hand approximately halfway down the saya and slide down close to the kojiri.

2. Jitsugi (Techniques)

- ***Ippon-me - Mae***

1. Draw your right hand to the centre of your opponent's face.
2. At the end of the nukitsuke, your right fist should be at approximately 45° to the right front diagonal and the upper body opened to the left at approximately 45°.
3. At the above point, the kissaki should be directly in front of the right shoulder (so that the cut finishes at the opponent's left temple).
4. The left hand should be placed on the tsuka at the same moment of furikaburi, as the hand closes the vertical cut should be made (kiriorosu).
5. At the moment of chuburi, the palm of the right hand should be rotated up and, in accordance with the explanation, with the palm of the right hand inclined up, rotate the right shoulder and with the entire right arm, make a large rotation to raise the sword to shoulder height; from here, bend the elbow and bring the sword close to the upper part of the right temple. At this point, the kissaki should not be below horizontal; looking from the front the kissaki should be slightly outside and above the fist.

Note: When making chiburi with the fist being close to the upper part of the temple, there is a danger of injury through cutting the head depending on the angle of the sword, caution is advised.

Chiburi is made by swinging down to the left diagonal kesa angle (like cutting from 10:30 to 4:30 at the front).

- ***Nihon-me - Ushiro***

1. After elevating both feet onto the toes, with a feeling of opening the left shoulder to the rear, make nukitsuke to an opponent slightly displaced to the left. Do not look to the opponent by turning your neck only but turn the upper body to completely face the opponent.

- ***Sanbon-me - Ukenagashi***

1. Step the left foot to the inside of the right knee with the toes pointing outward slightly (around 30°), stand while drawing the sword up. At this moment, the upper body is turned about 30° from the opponent (ensure the left foot is not protruding past the right knee).

2. At the moment that the kissaki leaves the koiguchi, step the right foot to make a “イ”-like shape, deflect the opponent’s descending sword with a brushing up action of the left shinogi (ridgeline on the side of the blade). The right fist should be above and in front of the right shoulder, the kissaki should be aligned with the side of the body about shoulder height.
3. The kissaki of the deflecting sword (once impacted with the opponent’s sword) will rotate up and behind the shoulder as a result of the momentum imparted.

Note: The sword should not stop from the moment of starting the draw until the end of the cut. Endeavour to do this in one continuous movement.

4. When making a descending kesa cut to the opponent in front of you, the upper body should be opened slightly to the left of the shomen (about 30°), while drawing the left foot behind the right foot, the toes should be turned slightly to the left of the shomen (about 10-15°), the enemy should be cut at an angle of 1 o’clock to 7 o’clock. The face should look to the front (shomen).

- ***Yonhon-me - Tsukaate***

1. After the strike with the tsuka, rotate the saya while making sayabiki at the same time as turning to face the rear opponent.
2. At the same time as opening the upper body and releasing the sword, make the sword level with the suigetsu (solar plexus), place the back of the centre area of the sword on the left chest. At this point, the edge should be facing outwards and the blade horizontal. The right fist should be positioned at 90° to the tsuka while gripping.
3. When the thrust is made to the rear opponent’s suigetsu, the blade should be horizontal. The right knee should remain at 90° and should not collapse inwards, additionally the hips should not sink, the upper body should be in an open-to-the-left position (migi hanmi).
4. After the thrust, the sword should go through a withdrawal (hikinuki) and through ukenagashi to be raised above the head.

Note: The term “ukenagashi ni furikaburi” (lifting the sword through ukenagashi) means that the tsukagashira is raised and the kissaki is left inclined down when it is above the head.

Note: From Yonhonme onwards (excluding No.11), all furikaburi are made by going through ukenagashi.

5. After the cut down, ensure the left toes are aligned behind the left knee as per Ipponme - Mae.
6. As noto is completed, with one knee on the floor making sonkyo posture, the left knee should be pointing to the front. The right knee should be opened to about 45° to the right.

- ***Gohon-me - Kesagiri***

1. Draw forwards keeping the right fist on the opponent's centreline.
2. Rotate the saya around to the left and down while the right foot is stepping forwards, and cut up through the opponent's reverse kesa from 7 o'clock to 1 o'clock. At the end of the cutting up action, the right fist should come above the right shoulder. The left foot should not move from that position. The raised sword should immediately cut down from the shoulder joint through kesa (from 1 o'clock to 7 o'clock).
3. When the uppercut is completed, the kissaki should be inclined up and back without going below horizontal.

- ***Roppon-me - Morotezuki***

1. Draw forwards keeping the right fist on the opponent's centreline.
(The nukiuchi should go from the opponent's upper right point of the head, around 11 o'clock, to the chin with an effective kirioroshi cut).

Note: The term nukiuchi means once the sword is released from the koiguchi, from that moment the sword should not stop, the kirioroshi should be performed in one moment.

2. When the kissaki is lowered into chudan (suigetsu height), the toes of the left foot should not go past the heel of the right foot.
3. When cutting the two opponents at the front and rear, the sword should not go outside the width of the body, the tsukagashira should be raised to make ukenagashi ni furikaburi.

- ***Nanahon-me - Sanpogiri***

1. In this technique with three opponents, at first you cut the opponent to the right from above the head with nukiuchi, next you cut the opponent on the left from above with kirioroshi, finally the opponent to the front is cut from above with kirioroshi to win the fight. For this purpose, it is important to be correct, to not make any unnecessary footwork or movements.

2. To the front opponent (at 12 o'clock), draw the sword about 1-2 fists as if to make nukiuchi; at the same time as controlling the front opponent's movement, instantaneously turn to make nukiuchi to the right opponent (at 3 o'clock).
3. As you turn to face the right, the toes of the left foot should be turned slightly to the right (around 2 o'clock), the upper body should be turned to the right. At the same time as turning to the right while drawing the sword, the right foot should step to the front right diagonal (about 2 o'clock; at this point the left foot should remain in the same position); nukiuchi should be made from the opponent's upper right side of their head to the chin (the right enemy is in the 3 o'clock direction).
4. While turning to face the left opponent (at the 9 o'clock direction), take hold of the tsuka with the left hand above the head and do kirioroshi. During this moment, neither the left nor right foot should move, the heels should rotate using the balls of the feet as a pivot to rotate the body (both feet should be parallel).
5. Chiburi is performed along the kesa line from morote hidari jodan.

Note: Jupponme Shihogiri is performed in the same way.

- ***Hachihon-me - Ganmenate***

1. After the strike to the face, at the same time as turning to face the rear opponent, the saya is rotated while doing sayabiki. At the same time as sayabanare, the left foot should step across (fumikae) to completely face the rear opponent.
2. Once the opponent who is approximately one body-width displaced to the left is faced, a kamae is taken where both the sword and the saya should be horizontal.
3. When the tsuki is made, sayabiki should be performed. The right fist should move from the upper waist horizontally with the elbow adequately extending (so that it finished a little below suigetsu height).

Note: At the end of the tsuki, the kissaki should be approximately half a fist above horizontal.

- ***Kyūhon-me - Soetezuki***

1. When making the nukiuchi to the opponent on the left, the right fist should follow the centreline of the opponent as the draw is made; without overturning the body and leaving the left hip inclined towards the opponent, draw the left foot back while making nukiuchi.
2. When making soetezuki-no-kamae, from the opponent's perspective, the right foot is pulled back half a step, and the body is turned to face 30° to the right.

3. When the thrust is made to the opponent's abdomen, the left hand should support the blade from above with the palm down, the fingers should not protrude below the blade.
4. When chiburi is made, kamae should be taken with the right hand at suigetsu height, the kissaki is swung to the lower right diagonal

- ***Juppon-me - Shihogiri***

1. When engaging the rear left opponent, make sayabiki while turning to face, rotate both heels to the right and open the upper body to the left (to make migi hanmi). The central area of the back of the sword should contact the left chest at suigetsu height with the cutting edge facing outwards horizontally. Immediately thrust the opponent's suigetsu. At this moment, the blade should be horizontal and the kissaki should not be pointing up.
2. When engaging the front left opponent, as the left foot steps across (fumikae), ensure that the left foot does not step forwards (fumikomi). While passing through wakigamae, the kissaki should be in a position lower than the kneecap and be aware that the kissaki is down when making ukenagashi ni furikaburi.

- ***Juippon-me - Sogiri***

1. When the right foot is stepping forwards, draw the sword forwards about one quarter of the blade from the saya; draw the sword out while the right foot is being drawn back towards the left foot, drawing the sword up through ukenagashi using adequate sayabiki (while the tsukagashira goes up), make furikaburi and cut in one action.
2. When making the kirioroshi cuts, the cut should not happen once the right foot has finished moving forwards but instead, the cut should happen at the same time as the right foot is stepping forwards, keeping awareness of ki-ken-tai-no-icchi.
3. When horizontally cutting the opponent's abdomen from left to right, open the upper body to the left, step forwards at the same time as cutting horizontally (with the kissaki moving from 8 o'clock to 2 o'clock). The left foot should be pulled up in unison with the cut (when doing hikitsuke, keep the left foot behind the right foot i.e., do not let the toes of the left foot go past the heel of the right foot).
4. Without stopping after the horizontal cut, as the kissaki moves from the 3 o'clock position, make it move exactly behind you as you make furikaburi above your head. Cut the opponent down directly from above.

- ***Junihon-me - Nukiuchi***

1. Do not draw the tsukagashira forwards; with the left hand make adequate sayabiki while opening the left shoulder, keeping the blade within the body width, draw the sword up (not above and in front of the head but only above).
2. Once the sword is above the head, cut down vertically in one motion. Ensure that the left foot does not move.

At the end of the cut, iaigoshi should be adopted.

3. Supplement

1. “Yagai de no torei” (outside bow to the sword i.e. standing): Bring the sword to eye height, without changing the height, bow respectfully without bending the neck.
2. Gripping the tsuka: Grip so that the right index finger does not cover the fuchigane. The left hand should grip so that the small finger does not cover the makidome. The space between your hands should be between 2-3 fingers width.
4. Regarding Kamae
 1. Hasso: From hidari jodan no kamae, keeping this same position, lower the right hand to above the right shoulder, bring the tsuba to mouth height so that it is about one fist away to make this kamae. When this kamae is set, the feeling should be to make morote hidari jodan with the cutting edge towards the front. The left fist is approximately in line with the centreline, the kissaki is approximately 45° behind and up. The right foot is turned out slightly (to about 10-15°) with the heel slightly raised from the floor.
 2. Chudan: The kissaki should be at suigetsu height, the left hand approximately one fist in front of the navel, the joint of the left thumb should be at navel height. The extension line of the kissaki should be between the opponent’s eyes.
 3. Morote hidari jodan: With the body in a natural left position (hidari shizentai), the left fist should be above and in front of the left eye, separated by about one fist; the kissaki should be inclined back and up at about 45° and slightly inclined to the right (**without protruding outside the body width**). The right foot is turned out slightly (to about 10-15°) with the heel slightly raised from the floor. (Hidari shizentai means, standing in a natural position and slightly withdrawing the right foot).
 4. Wakigamae: The right foot should be facing slightly outwards with the heel not touching the floor. The kissaki should be behind, the cutting edge should be inclined down to the right so that an opponent standing at the front cannot see

the blade. The left fist should be about one fist below and to the right of the navel, the kissaki should be about one fist below the knee.

5. Gedan: The kissaki should be straight down, slightly below knee height (by about 3-6 cm).
6. Iaigoshi: This is a posture for showing zanshin with both knees slightly bent and the hips lowered.