

NUMBER TWO 2017

# KIHAKU 氣迫

THE SPIRIT AND VOICE OF THE BRITISH KENDO ASSOCIATION



REPRESENTING IAIDO, JODO AND KENDO





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# KIHAKU

THE OFFICIAL  
**BRITISH KENDO ASSOCIATION'S**  
 MEMBERSHIP PUBLICATION

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**We need your help.**

We want to make this a membership publication for all your questions and curiosities. We'd like info on your teacher(s), their teacher(s), dojo stories and experiences; your thoughts on the arts, philosophy, concepts, the whys and wherefores, the trivial or not so trivial. We'd also like your feedback and questions, so they can be addressed in one place for the good of our Association. For this publication to work, it needs to be current, accurate and informative. So, if you have something to say, please say it here.

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**Dear Member**

**Welcome to the second issue of Kihaku!**

We have received excellent feedback from people all over the world including Japan and central Europe on our first issue stating they enjoyed finding out more about the BKA and the arts we study.

This clearly demonstrates the value of our magazine in communicating with our members and the wider public.

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...many of you realise that for the BKA to move forward we need to continue improving our professional image...

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In this second issue, we again capture highlights of the European Championships and provide members' views on several interesting topics as well as valuable advice on our health and wellbeing.

During 2016, we conducted a survey to hear the voice of our members – YOU! We wanted to know what you felt worked well within our organisation and areas we could improve on and include in future planning.

I was delighted with the response, with over 520 replies and some excellent feedback. Over 50 members have offered to help in some capacity. This shows that we do have an active membership and YOU do want to be more involved.

There were some common themes across all three *bu* with suggestions such as:

- ensuring seminars can accommodate the number of people attending, not just to only meet safety requirements but also to ensure good quality training.
- more care should be taken in seeking centrally located venues to accommodate those travelling from distant parts of the UK.

As we are in the process of preparing a new membership pack, this is a good time for all suggestions to be submitted – so please contact us.

Other suggestions include dojo visitations and even a joint gathering so we can be more inclusive – all good ideas to consider and hopefully implement in the future.

When we asked for suggestions for attracting comment from new members, these included a wide range of useful suggestions summarised as follows:

- Build on recent TV/Press using social media e.g. YouTube and Twitter
- Start new advertising with fliers, posters and branding e.g. car stickers
- Organise more outreach programmes and public demonstrations in a variety of venues
- Invest in juniors and support universities more
- Nurture a feeling of belonging within the association
- Introduce free introductory session vouchers to encourage new students
- Arrange more brand promotion regionally and nationally

It is appreciated that many of you realise that for the BKA to move forward we need to continue improving our professional image through what we produce, such as the website, social media and the magazine. This also applies to how we conduct ourselves as practitioners in our chosen discipline, not just in the dojo but the wider community.

The *dojo* offers a safe environment to develop our character and enrich our understanding of not only ourselves but others. We learn how to share the knowledge we are freely given, and understand the difficulties of striving for perfection – that ever-moving target.

As we open our doors to people from all walks of life and abilities, we can learn from each other. We hopefully develop respect, understanding, compassion and an ability to communicate, not only through improving our verbal skills but also through our ability to learn how to demonstrate intricate physical manoeuvres combining timing, speed, body balance and inner composure.

As we share our experience, skill and knowledge, I trust the BKA Magazine is something we can use wisely as a platform for communication and comradeship, as well as a snapshot to capture special moments in time for many years to come!

Fay Goodman  
Chair  
**British Kendo Association**

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY!**

Words are powerful and can move a mountain,  
They can distort the truth and taint a fountain.  
Think carefully before you utter those words untrue,  
Which could destroy another and lay the blame on you.  
It is easy to spread rumour, deceit and lies,  
To encourage a network of secret spies.  
But is this what life is truly about?  
To waste energy on hurting others as we scream and shout.

If we can stop for a moment to see what we are really doing,  
To see the beauty of life and the seeds we are sowing,  
To see the good in others and celebrate their life,  
Rather than be negative and impose difficulties and strife,  
Let the beauty of your sword shine bright and true,  
So you can follow your heart knowing precisely what to do.

We are here but for a moment and we can give so much,  
If we see the beauty of life through practice and everything we can touch,  
As we tread our *Budo* path we should remember the reason why,  
Or give up and start knitting which is much easier to try?

Fay Goodman 2017

50  
YEARS

There then.



Here now.

# 50 EASY

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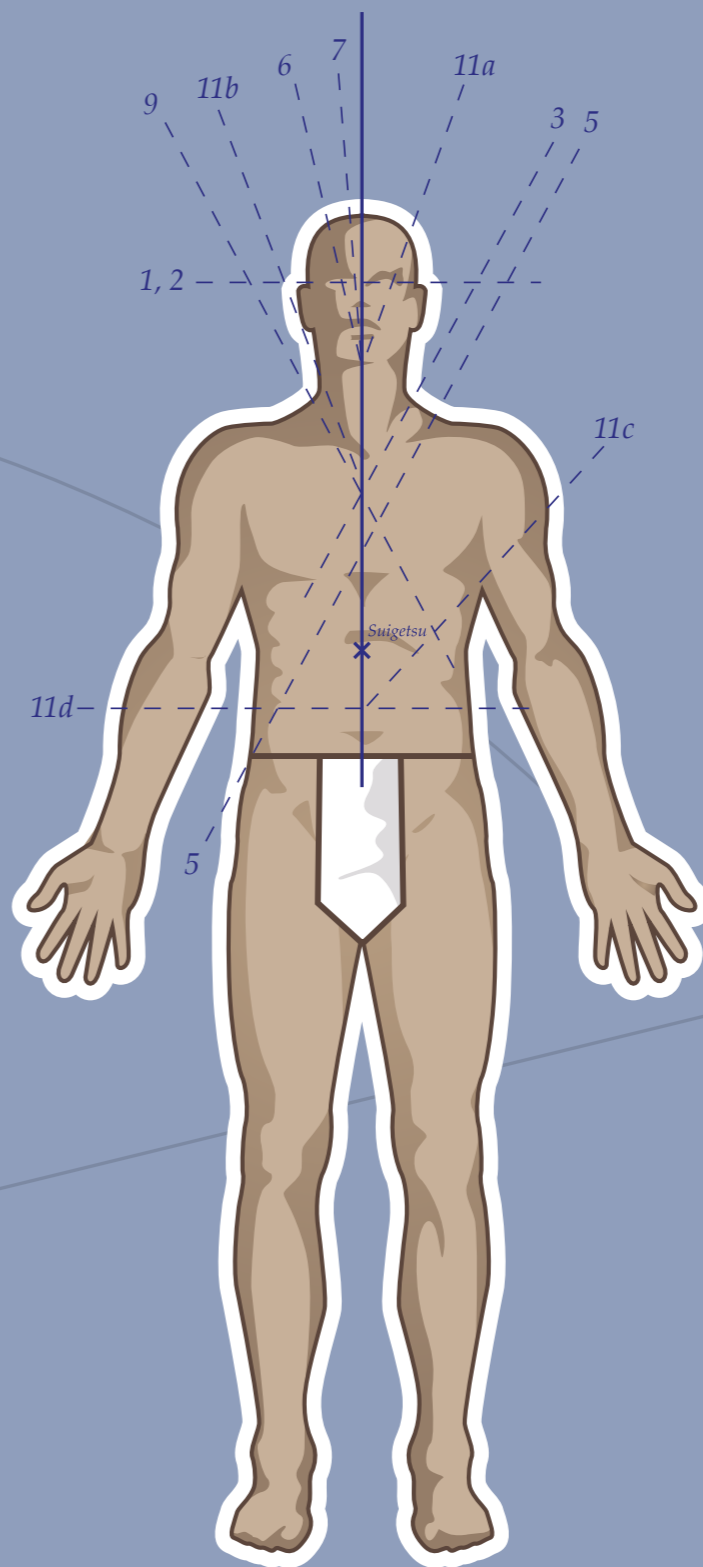
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# HASUJI

Seitei-gata

Centre line of  
kiritsuke



## Well done!

**M**ichael Taylor  
BKA No. 624 –  
the number speaks  
for itself.

This week we presented Michael with a BKA certificate celebrating his long membership of the BKA. I have known him for over 30 years, travelled with him, slept with him – lol – and as such I can write this.



This certificate represents many years of kendo at all its levels; he has represented GB as a squad member and he was a winner of the open. He's a fearsome but honest competitor; you may win the bout but you'll never defeat him.

Most of all Michael is a teacher. He teaches what he knows which comes from the heart; meet him half way and he'll give you all he has.

This certificate is a just reward which I was proud to present to him on behalf of both the BKA and our *dojo*, not only for the many years he has supported *Kendo* in the North East but also for the time he has given to teaching, from Bolton to Northumbria University and now our current Northumbria *Dojo*. His influence on British Kendo is spread afar from the many students visiting our *dojo*, including Brazil, Italy, China and even Japan. As such he's a bit of a legend. He will hate me for saying this but a local press feature once said; "Gas fitter by day, *Samurai* by night."

Lastly I'd like to thank Fay and the BKA for awarding this award.





# AROUND THE BU

## KENDO

### Kitamoto 2016

This summer *Young Park* and I were sent to represent the BKA at the **43rd Foreign Kendo Leaders Summer Seminar** in Kitamoto, Japan. The event was a one-week seminar that lasted from Friday the 22nd July to Friday the 29th July. Fifty-eight *Kendo* leaders joined the event from 44 different countries, with all regions of the globe being represented – South and North America, Europe, and Asia. All the participants at Kitamoto were from 3rd to 6th *Dan* and were nominated by their home country, with the final decision on delegates coming from the All Japan Kendo Federation.

As the purpose of the camp is to develop future *Kendo* leaders, the focus was on a mixture of different areas that were felt to be important for teaching and promoting *Kendo*. These ranged from lectures and demonstrations to *keiko* in groups and with partners. *Sensei* at the event covered *Kendo Kata*, *Bokutou Kihon Keiko Ho*, *kata* with *hibiki* (metal blades), *suburi*, *kihon* with *bougu*, referee practice and *shiai*.

An interesting thing about Kitamoto is that as it's a *gasshuku*; participants are split into groups by rooms (of about 8-10 people) with each room sleeping, eating and doing chores together! This was a great chance to meet other *kenshi* from lots of different countries and build a great team spirit together. Myself and *Young*, for example, were in room 302 along with people from Germany, Thailand, Hong Kong, and New Zealand.



Kitamoto was certainly demanding, and the daily schedule was very busy as we had a lot of material to cover. With a teaching panel of leading *Sensei* including *Masaharu Kakehashi* 8th *Dan Hanshi*, *Koji Kasamura* 8th *Dan Kyoshi*, *Susumu Nagao* 8th *Dan Kyoshi*, and *Hiroaki Tanaka* 8th *Dan Kyoshi* (as well as numerous visiting *Sensei*) we were able to learn a massive amount. There were four main sessions a day, with an additional 'unofficial' armoured *asa geiko* from 5:30 to 6:30 am. The first session at 6:30 am covered either *kata* or *kihon keiko ho*, this was followed at 9:30 am with *suburi* and *kihon*, referee skills after lunch, and an evening *keiko* that covered drills such as *uchikomi*, *kakari geiko*, and *mawari geiko* with all participants. This year we also had the chance to visit the All Japan Junior Taikai at the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo to watch the championship, which was great.

Finally, on the Friday at the end of the seminar there was also a *ZNKR* grading examination from 4th *Dan* to 6th *Dan*, for all participants. I decided to challenge for 6th *Dan* at this grading and fortunately I was able to pass, which was a great end to a long and very rewarding camp.

Kitamoto was a great seminar, and both *Young* and I are very grateful to the BKA and the *Kendo Bu* for nominating us. We both tried our best to represent Great Britain to the fullest of our abilities, and gained a massive amount from our experience in Japan.

**Jon Fitzgerald**, Captain, Team GB



### Mumeishi 3's – 2016

For the second year running, Cardiff-based *Denshinkan* won the prestigious international championship in London on 12th November 2016. James Ogle, *Ryutaro Tanaka* and Jac Davies won seven consecutive fights against teams from across the UK and Europe to secure the trophy.

James runs the *Denshinkan dojo* is 4th *Dan* and competes for the GB team.

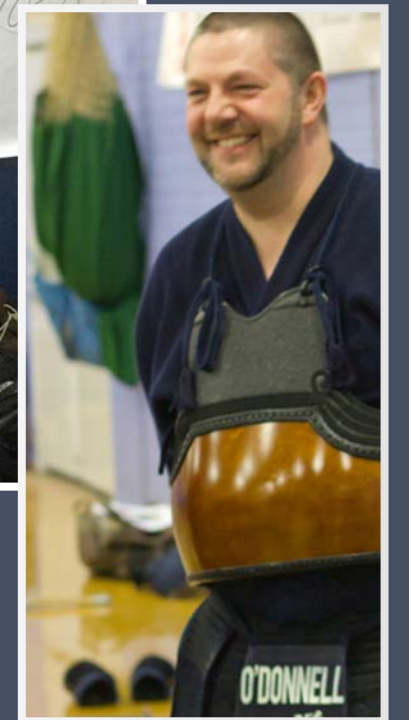
*Tanaka* is 5th *Dan* and assistant coach.

Jac is 1st *Kyu*. One member of each team needed to be below 1st *Dan* for the competition.



## CONGRATULATIONS

to *Kazuyo Matsuda Sensei* on passing the 7th *Dan* exam in the USA in November 2016; and to Gary O'Donnell *Sensei* on passing the 7th *Dan* exam in Brussels in February 2017







## AROUND THE BU

### IAIDO

#### Miken no Shiwa

A person that I consider to be a wise man recently told me that he believed that it takes about one year to be fully aware of all the responsibilities of a new role, and around two years to become competent and confident in the role. Having survived the first six months as the new *laido Bucho*, and having dealt with various challenges presented along the way which have resulted in a lot of 'miken no shiwa', I feel that both the *laido-Bu* officers and myself are starting to make headway understanding our new responsibilities beyond those written in the constitution, and are coming to terms with the reality of juggling so many things at once in a transparent and equitable way for all members.

There have been growing pains for the new *laido-bu* team, and we also recognise this to be true for elements within the *Bu* membership. This has never been more true than when we slowly formulated and laid out our vision of where we would like to take the *laido-Bu* in 2017 and beyond, and how we elected officers feel the resources and finances should be utilised to further benefit all of the *laido-Bu* membership. We *Bu* officers feel confident that given a fair chance, our new and different ideas can yield significant results. The fact is that our *laido-Bu* is blossoming and we have our second and third generation of seniors coming through the ranks, and like any growth, there can also be accompanying growing pains. Also, as we become a more diversified *Bu*, new faces are stepping up to take on new teaching and management roles and responsibilities, so the future can indeed be bright, and the time does seem ripe for



change so we can make a more wholesome *Bu*. So, without further delay, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you some of the positive things which I think are worth sharing with you, along with our *Bu* vision for 2017.

#### The Bu Team:

The first thing I want to share, is that I am extremely proud of the *laido-Bu* officers and team that have gathered together in such a short space of time. We have a truly geographically, style and lineage diverse group of

Bu Position	Name	Style / Grade	Location
Events Officer	Anil Sahal	MSR / 3rd Dan	West Yorkshire
Grading Officer	Phil Henderson	MJER / 5th Dan	Middlesbrough
Cashier	Hugh Darby	MSR / 6th Dan	Glasgow
Squad Manager	Karl Gibbons	MSR / 4th Dan	Midlands
Squad Coach	Greg Drewe	MSR / 6th Dan Renshi	Stevenage
Senior Advisor	Dave Fanning	MSR / 5th Dan	London
Event Officer (As) EMP Coordinator	Martin Chambers	MJER / 5th Dan	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Squad Coach (As)	Martin Clark	MSR / 6th Dan Renshi	Cambridgeshire
laido Bucho	John Honisz-Greens	MJER / 6th Dan Renshi	Edinburgh

Bu Officers can be contacted by E-mail – addresses are on the BKA webpage.

people who have come forward to offer free service to our *Bu* and Association. We have university academics, two magistrates, a retired senior police officer, business professionals and business managers of the highest calibre and character. So, let me introduce to you the new *laido-bu* officers that I feel extremely excited to be working with: (see table opposite).

#### The 2017 Calendar:

While respecting the work done by the previous *Bucho* and his team, I also feel it important for the new team to find ways to build on their work and add our own ideas into the mix. One element I plan to get the *Bu* team to address are the points raised by members regarding the quality of seminar space. To this end, the *Bu* team have all agreed that we must improve the quality of venues we hire for our events. It may take time to find the perfect floor or space, but we are constantly on the look-out for excellent venues and locations. If you know of one or would like to see an event in your hometown, please let the *laido* Events Officer know. Thankfully, already we have found some great new venues for events in 2017 that are fully confirmed (except one venue – the Northern Seminar). We believe *laido* is difficult enough to do well, so we have worked hard to try find as many venues as we can with excellent wooden floors.

2017 will have the usual Regional Seminars; however, we also plan to add a new event to the calendar. This will happen the day after the AGM, aptly called The Post-AGM Event. This will be a very dynamic and demanding day, which will help *laido-ka* of all levels and grades to develop their skills in various ways, and at the end of the event each attendee should leave with two-pages of dedicated notes from a senior *sensei* for self-reflection and personal development. Thus, there is the potential of supporting your *Bu* at the AGM, getting free input and training during the AGM from a group of *sensei* who have agreed to attend and teach, and then participating in a new dynamic event the next day. The good news is we intend to make this a free (or as close to possible) event for all, but the success of the event depends on the students attending and the senior faculty volunteering to supporting it. Please watch the BKA website and Facebook page for more details as they arise.

I also plan to continue to ask senior faculty to create a teaching plan before any event. This, I believe, aids in better time management and saves holding seminar attendees hostage, as faculty discuss at the start of a seminar what to do and who is going to do it. Plans

such as these also promote better teaching that benefits both student and faculty alike by allowing deliberately planned rotation for varied input and prevents teacher fatigue in 2017. This worked well at the 2016 Summer Seminar where even our own 7th *dan sensei* were allocated time to study with *Morita Hanshi* (Hanshi 8th *dan*). There was also excellent feedback about the Northern Seminar led by Cook *sensei*. In 2017, many of our 5th *dan* seniors who have completed the Examination Mentoring Programme (EMP), will have the opportunity to assist the teaching faculty directly, thus taking on more responsibility and hopefully raising their own technical knowledge and ability in *ZNKR Seitei Gata*. Also, they will have the opportunity to sit on grading panels, which will (hopefully) help motivate them to develop as well. They will be monitored by senior faculty who will be asked to mentor and advise them so as to develop our next generation of senior *sensei*.

We have already had two very successful Level 1 Coaching Courses in Hove and Edinburgh, where around 45 *Kendo*, *laido* and *Jodo* members became Level 1 coaches. I would like to offer a massive congratulations to all of them. The *laido bu* also had its first ever Scottish Squad Training Session, hosted by Edinburgh Genbukan *dojo* and lead by our Squad Coach and Assistant Coach, supported by Hugh Darby *sensei* and *laido Bucho*, and we were delighted to welcome 31 members to what was a superb day of learning and practice enjoyed by both squad hopefuls, and those just coming to improve their *laido* for personal growth or upcoming gradings.

#### Summer Seminar 2017:

I am pleased to announce that after consultation with *Oshita Masakazu sensei*, the new contact for arranging Japanese delegations, the *laido-bu* was advised to invite six Japanese senior *sensei* to join us for our 2017 Summer Seminar. We confirm that from that group, three senior *sensei* will visit us. These will be *Morita Tadahiko* (Hanshi 8th *dan* - MJER), *Yoshimura Kenichi* (Kyoshi 8th *dan* - MSR) and *Oshita Masakazu* (Kyoshi 8th *dan* - MJER). They will also be assisted by Beau Brier (Renshi 6th *dan*) and *Fujiwara Takashi* (Renshi 6th *dan*). Equally exciting is that the venue to host the event will be at the University of Birmingham. This is a new hall with a superb floor, and we plan to utilise all 12 badminton courts to ensure enough space for safe and continuous practice. The Events Officer is also working hard to try to secure onsite university accommodation to make the event more affordable and convenient to attendees. Room availability





## IAIDO

may be limited so will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis. We are working hard to make this a great event and offered at a great price.

### Squad Training Sessions:

I will be working very hard with the Squad Management Team to encourage many more of our *laido* members to attend Squad Training Sessions (STS). We plan to do this by advertising these more effectively and endeavouring to make them more inclusive to all the membership. We have also planned to hold them in more areas to try to give more respect to the geographical diversity of our membership. We also plan to have higher levels of technical support to work alongside the Squad Coach by inviting local seniors and senior *sensei*. Finally, hard decisions have been pondered and we plan to enact revised and hopefully improved squad recruitment policies that respect the considerable investment being made in finding and training our eventual squad and team, and to use transparent and democratic selection processes in selection. We hope we can find a dynamic and committed final team to send to the **European Iaido Championship** in Turin, Italy (Nov, 2017) that will turn our 2016 bronze medals into 2017 Gold success. We are aiming high.

Information about STS can be found at:  
<http://www.britishkendoassociation.com/iaido-squad/>

### Other Support for Members:

Another increasingly important issue I would like to address, and one that has been on the NC agenda for some time, is to introduce to the *laido-Bu* members a BKA Identification Card that can be carried around in a wallet or purse (or better still with your sword) and is linked into a live database. This card will allow police officers to verify if a person, who has been stopped whilst carrying a sword, has just cause for carrying it. Working with a small team, headed by our Health and Safety Officer, we will initiate a small-scale pilot of this scheme in Scotland so we can evaluate efficacy and iron out any issues or logistical problems before rolling out the concept to the whole of the BKA.

Also, many of you will have participated in the BKA Level 2 Coaching Course as part of your continuing development. As part of this, candidates are required to submit an essay on a relevant topic set by the examiners. It struck me that many of these essays are a veritable gold mine of very insightful and interesting information that our membership would find useful in their own

development as *laido-ka*. However, up until now, these essays have been sitting on a hard drive somewhere gathering digital dust. I want to utilise these essays and, with permission from the authors, share them with you, the membership, to use in a self-reflective, progressive manner. Thankfully, some authors have already agreed to support this initiative, sadly some have not. Nevertheless, we have so much expertise amongst us and I think we should at least try to distribute those skills for the betterment of us all. I would like to say many thanks to Hugh Darby *sensei* for agreeing to share a re-edited version of his superb essay on the stresses that a seminar can inflict on us, and to Mansfield and Nash *sensei* for their superb contributions to this issue of *Kihaku* as well.

### Communication Policy and Facebook:

I would finally like to remind you that although the BKA webpage and Facebook will be utilised by myself and the *Bu* officers for poster and advertisements of *Bu* activity for members, Facebook is not what we consider our official or an appropriate method for answering enquiries. Not all officers, faculty or indeed members use Facebook (or similar media). Questions posted on Facebook can often go unnoticed or unaddressed, leading to the impression of being ignored, so please make use of E-mail to avoid disappointment, confusion or conflict. If you have an enquiry regarding *laido Bu* operations, then please E-mail the relevant officer/s directly, making sure that all relevant persons are included and named. The *laido* officers email addresses are available on the BKA webpage: <http://www.britishkendoassociation.com/who-is-who-iaido-bu/>

The *laido bu*'s philosophy is one of absolute inclusion and equality. Your ideas and opinions do matter to us, so please feel free to use your voice and get in contact if you have any ideas or comments. You may remember something that worked well in an *laido* seminar, that allowed the 'penny to drop for you' or in something from another martial art, sport or pastime you practise. If so, send us your suggestions to mull over and be aware we will credit those who've had the good ideas!

### John Honisz-Greens

British Kendo Association – *laido Bucho*  
[iaidobucho@britishkendoassociation.com](mailto:iaidobucho@britishkendoassociation.com)

## Iaido Squad Training Sessions 2017 – Open invitation to all Iaido Bu members

My name is Karl Gibbons and I am the new BKA *laido* Squad Manager. I consider it a great honour to manage the national *laido* squad and I will give my best effort to provide our members and team with the strongest platform for success. I want to make some changes to the way we run our squad sessions and make the selection of the squad and team as transparent and inclusive as possible.

Starting in Edinburgh on February 26th 2017 and continuing up until the end of the 2017 Summer Seminar, the Squad Manager and Coach will be running a series of UK Squad Training Sessions (STS). These sessions are open to all BKA *laido-bu* members regardless of squad aspirations and, despite the name, are intended to help members have more opportunities to develop their *laido*. The STS will be led by the Squad Coach; assisted by the Squad Manager and other nominated officers and invited seniors to focus on notable technical weaknesses or specific themes to better equip those in attendance to do more effective *laido*. The STS are not seminars, so explanations will be short and to the point, so that more repetitive practice can be achieved with specific and quick one-to-one feedback given when needed.

### The STS plus two other events to select the UK squad

Participation in the BKA National *laido* Championships and the new POST-AGM *Taikai-Shinpan* Training Event is also strongly encouraged for those who wish to be considered for team selection.

Any BKA member can be considered for Squad inclusion and if anyone is interested in being considered for the 2017 Squad they must email the Squad Manager and inform him or her of the desire to be considered and confirm that they have read and agreed to the Code of Conduct. Please also list your name, e-mail address, contact phone number, current grade, when you are next eligible to grade, and a summary of any national and/or international results (if available):

Code of Conduct: <http://www.britishkendoassociation.com/resources/>

**\*\*\* Members of the 2016 team should also contact the Squad Manager to confirm they wish to hold their place. If there is no email confirmation, it will be assumed that you are not available for 2017 Team selection.**

You can contact the Squad Manager on:  
[karliaidoteammanager@yahoo.com](mailto:karliaidoteammanager@yahoo.com)

Only attendance at BKA *laido* events will be considered for team selection and will be based on skill, enthusiasm, attitude and attendance. Each *Dan* grade will ideally have between 4-6 team candidates with one or two being selected for the final team.

A points system will be used as an indicator of attendance and success, and will be used in conjunction with a log of a candidate's performance and attitude, to select a final team. Team selection will be done using a democratic process by the Team Manager, Team Coach and *Bucho*.

Event	Point Value
BKA Seminar Attendance	1
Squad Training (no points for half day attendance)	2
Iaido Nationals Attendance	3
Nationals Medal Win (Gold)	5
Nationals Medal Win (Silver)	4
Nationals Medal Win (Bronze)	3
Post-AGM Event Attendance	3
Post AGM Event 1st or 2nd place	5

### Coaching Format

Although not written in stone, it is important for you to have an idea of what to expect when you attend an STS. There will be two parts to the STS event: the open event, and a closed event for squad members.

STS will start at 09.30am with a warm-up led by the team coach and we intend to make this more relevant to *laido* (e.g. cutting, *chiburi*, *noto* practice etc.) The Squad management think it is fair for us to expect serious contenders for the team to be responsible for their own fitness level and be stretched and ready for *laido* STS at the start of proceedings. Competing at an international level requires a high level of fitness and commitment to achieve successful results. *laido-ka*, and especially those with aspirations for a team place, are expected to participate fully in all practice sessions organised by Squad management throughout the period of the event.





# IAIDO

Following notification of selection as a Squad member, you will be required to maintain good physical condition and should advise the Squad Manager of any injuries or illness so that expert advice may be sought.

The group in attendance will run through all twelve *ZNKR Seitei Gata* to gain insights into who is doing what and to assess the coaching requirements of the individual. STS hopes to use a mentoring system for the various grades. After a set period, we will do all 12 *kata* again, looking to make sure that the instruction has been implemented by the individual.

### BRING A PAD AND PENCIL SO THAT YOU CAN MAKE WRITTEN NOTES OF ADVICE GIVEN

On occasion, STS will implement an open *taikai* session where non-squad members can challenge a squad member to a dual with feedback coming from the judges. Squad positions can change during the year so be prepared to defend your place.

### General Rules

All squad members are expected to cooperate in a manner which befits the art of *iaido*. Members should remember that they are not only representing the BKA, but that they are sporting ambassadors for the United Kingdom before, during and after an event and particularly at any social event which they may be required or opt to attend. The Squad Manager will provide the squad and final team with a full code of conduct, befitting of an international competitor.

Team members are expected to co-operate and to assist in the building of team spirit. This will also factor into final team selection. The objective is to achieve the best performances in each event and to achieve, overall, the highest possible team and individual results. The European *iaido* Championship is about going and doing your best, and being your best. We in the Squad Management believe winning is a by-product of that.

### Important Dates

	Date	Locations
Squad Training Session (1)	Feb 26th	Edinburgh
Squad Training Session (2)	April 23rd	Northampton (Joint)
Squad Training Session (3)	May 6th	Halesowen

	Date	Locations
Iaido Nationals	June 11th	Sheffield
Post-AGM Event	July 9th	Birmingham
Squad Training Session (4)	August 19th	Durham
Squad Training Session (5)	Sept 16th	South TBC
Squad Training Session (6)	Oct 21st	North TBC
European Iaido Championships	Nov 4-5	Turin, Italy

The cost to attend STS is £15 (or £8 concession rate), payable on the day. No half-day rate is available to members. This rate is charged to help cover hall-hire and pay modest expenses. Excess funds will be used to support squad-only sessions and for sending our national team to the EIC.

Dates and venues will be posted on the:

BKA website:

<http://www.britishkendoassociation.com/iaido-squad/>

BKA calendar:

<http://www.britishkendoassociation.com/calendar/>

BKA Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/britishkendoassociation/>

As Squad Manager, I believe it is an honour to be selected to compete for your country, and with selection brings a responsibility to represent the United Kingdom in the best possible way, both technically and with exemplary *Saho*.

In closing, to every person in the *iaido Bu*, please take this as a formal invitation for you to attend UK Squad Training Sessions in 2017 to improve your *iaido* and, if desired, challenge for a squad place.

We do hope you will support us.

**Karl Gibbons** – Iaido Squad Manager

## EIC 2016 in Budapest, Hungary

In November, Team GB travelled to Budapest, Hungary for another European Iaido Championships. Every member of the squad gave a very good account of themselves, with at least one GB player through the pools in every division, and both players through in *sandan* and *godan*. Fantastic fights all round resulted in two bronze medals (Anthony Baker, *mudan* and Andy Watson, *rokudan*) and a fighting spirit (Daniel Silk, *godan*).

In the team event, the GB team flew through the pools without dropping a flag, then eliminated Greece and Poland (last year's winners) before being KO'd by the gold winning Sweden team. So, hard won bronze medals for Kristina Poslusna, Ed Marshall, Kevin McNeill and Daniel Silk.

Squad:

*Mudan* – Anthony Baker (Hagakure) + Dave Draper (Budokan)

*Shodan* – Rafal Radosz (*Kashiwa*) + Shakir Rahman (*Eishinkan*)

*Nidan* – Ed Marshall (*Ryoshinkan*) + Tecwyn Lee (*Kenyukan* Suffolk)

*Sandan* – Kristina Poslusna (*Mugenkan*) + Will Heal (*Kashiwa*) + Kevin McNeill (Reserve, *Ojika*)

*Yondan* – Ben Emberley (*Taigakai* Dartford) + Rob Townson (Budokan)

*Godan* – Lee Mountain (Budokan) + Daniel Silk (Mugenkan)

*Rokudan* – Andy Watson (*Ryoshinkan*) + Harry Jones (*Ryoshinkan*)

GB Referees:

Chris Mansfield (*kyoshi nanadan*)

Fay Goodman (*kyoshi nanadan*)

Chris Buxton (*kyoshi nanadan*)

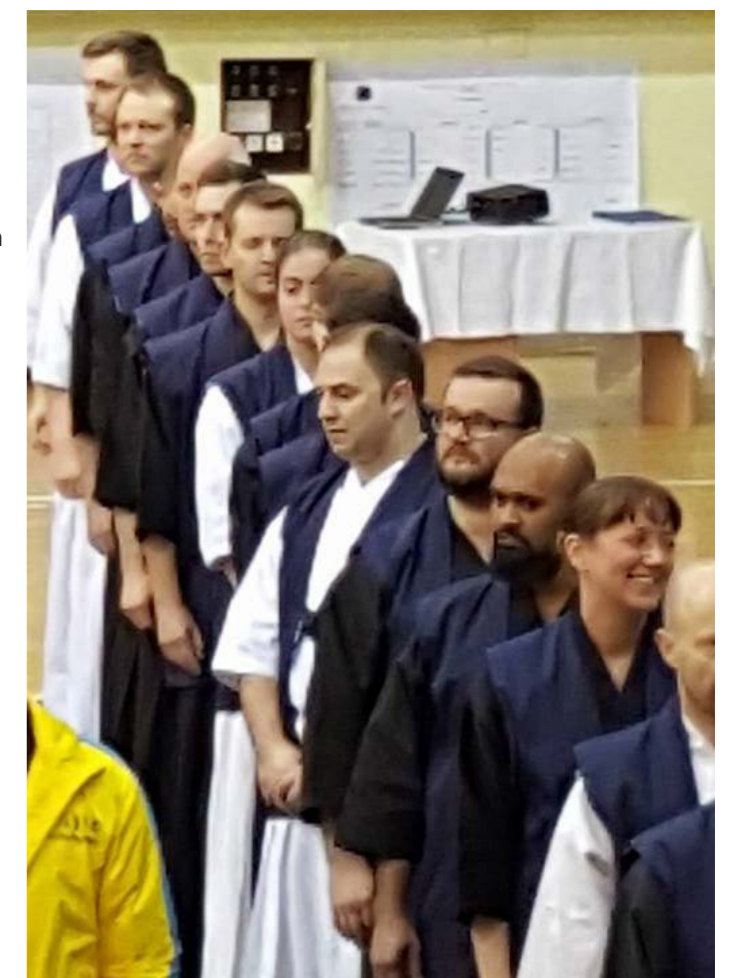
Alan Lee-Nash (*renshi rokudan*)

Martin Clark (*renshi rokudan*)

Huge thanks to the EKF, Hunor Mihalik and the Hungarian Kendo Federation and EIC organisation committee, all the referees and European *nanadan* teachers and, of course, the excellent *ZNKR* delegation: *Yamazaki sensei* (*hanshi hachidan*), *Mitani sensei* (*hanshi hachidan*) and *Nakano sensei* (*hanshi hachidan*). It really was a fantastic event, smooth running and efficient, with one of the best atmospheres I can remember. Lastly my personal thanks to Kevin McNeill for helping manage while I was competing, Squad Coach Greg Drewe for all his hard work

and dedication in the run-up to and during the event, and the GB squad themselves, who came together from many different *dojo* and all three *koryu* to create such a warm, friendly and supportive group.

**Will Heal**, Outgoing BKA Iaido Squad Manager







# AROUND THE BU

## JODO

### EJC 2016 in Magglingen, Switzerland

I am writing on behalf of the UK *Jodo* squad to thank you for your donation which helped us to send a full team to Switzerland for EJC 2016. In the first few weeks of our crowdfunder campaign, your generosity has been overwhelming, and the squad has felt a real boost from knowing that you are behind us. You have really made a difference to the development of UK *Jodo*.

Medal success came in the form of a gold in the *mudan* division for Rob Townson, bronze for Daniel Silk in the *yondan* division, and, in the most hilarious oversight possible, our deaf *mudan* competitor Mark Snowdon received a prize in the form of headphones for being one of the two best tachis in the tournament. It was interesting to see those who were stifling tears of laughter at what is usually a formal and sober awards ceremony.

In the team event the UK came first in our pool, beating Slovakia and Germany only to encounter a Netherlands team that we did not progress past. Although we came tantalisingly close, the event developed a squad which is galvanised for intense training this year.

Thanks to all squad members for putting in great fights to a tough competition:

**Mudan:**

Rob Townson and Mark Snowdon

**Shodan:**

Shakir Rahman and Abdul Oyede

**Nidan:**

Jenni Wilding and Ed Lief-Marshall

**Sandan:**

Kristina Poslusna and William Heal

Reserve: David Parker

**Yondan:**

Daniel Silk and Carlos Xilotl

**Godan:**

Stojanka Vidinic

Team: Ed Lief-Marshall, Kristina Poslusna and Daniel Silk, David Parker as reserve.

Thank you to our referees:

Hopson *sensei*, Mansfield *sensei*, Buxton *sensei*, Drewe *sensei*, Watson *sensei* and Jones *sensei*.

A big thank you to our coach Harry Jones for her dedication to the squad, and squad manager

Ally Mihaylova for a really smooth and well organised trip.

Congratulations to those that passed their grading: Jenni Wilding and Colin Porter successfully passed *sandan*.

Daniel Silk successfully passed *godan*.

The *Jodo bu* would like to particularly thank the following for their generous contribution to the squad fund:

*Ishido sensei*, *Otake sensei* and *Yoshimura sensei*.  
Kiran Khetia, Jeanne Heal, Nazia Hirjee, Neil Andriot, Andrew Bowen, Amanda Allen, Will Heal, Cliff Bowler, Helena Gonzalez, Elisabetta Carbone, Peter West and Steffi Bayer.

Jenni Wilding for selling cakes at the West Midlands seminar for the squad fund.

**Ed Lief-Marshall** – *Jodo* squad fundraiser and  
**Stojanka Vidinic** – *Jodo bucho*



Many thanks to Fakhri Al-Alami, David Parker and Stojanka Vidinic for letting us use their photographs.







# A brief history of the development of the Japanese sword

By Clive Sinclair

Of course, there are many reasons to enjoy and appreciate the Japanese sword. An understanding of *Jigane* and *Jihada*, as well as the intricacies of the *Hamon's hataraki* and form, is visually perceived. Even if some education and explanations are needed and desirable, provided that you have the eyes to see, the sword should hold no secrets. It takes only a sensitive nature and relaxed mind to fully appreciate such things. For some, this may be where it ends, but a fuller study of the culture of the Japanese sword will add a further dimension. To me, this is an integral and important part of Japanese sword appreciation.

*Ogasawara Sensei* (ex curator of Japanese swords and Tokyo National Museum, Ueno Park, Tokyo) once said to me: "The trouble with you, Clive, is that you look at swords from a *Kendo* man's point of view." Whilst I may not completely agree with this assessment, I have no problem with it. Even modern swords, far removed from the life-and-death struggles of bygone times, acknowledge the importance of a sword's practical properties. That is to say, to maintain their integrity as a weapon, they must not bend or break and must be capable of cutting well. It is such considerations that make today's *Shinsaku-to* so satisfying to view and handle.

How can one not be moved, therefore, when the historical context of a sword's life is considered on top of all this? To own a sword that may have seen the Mongol invaders or had fifty generations of previous

owners who cared for and preserved it, places weighty obligations on our shoulders. There can also be no doubt that there is a "way" in the *Zen* sense of the word, and a spiritual aspect, associated with the study and appreciation of fine Japanese swords. Such study as this was the province of the gentlemen of rank in old Japan.

Personally, I think an even greater appreciation of swords may be gained from adding an active study of *Kendo* and *laido*, the martial arts of the sword. This helps give a very practical understanding of what a sword was made to do and is capable of. I consider this to be the other side of the coin to a purely academic study of swords. Of course, it may not be suitable for everyone, but both *Kendo* and *laido* may be practised to a fine old age! For a sword collector, this may be a great experience as well as a way to gain a fuller understanding of the sword.



Beyond the aspects just described, I have not touched on the other great benefits of Japanese sword study in today's international market. I owe a debt of gratitude to the Japanese sword for bringing me to many places and introducing me to friends that I have made all over the world. This is the culture of the Japanese sword as I see it today, and it is the culture that I enjoy so much. If this means that I look at swords from a *Kendo* practitioner's perspective, then I suppose that *Ogasawara Sensei* was right.

To own a sword that may have seen the Mongol invaders or had fifty generations of previous owners who cared for and preserved it, places weighty obligations on our shoulders

What follows is a basic and historical account of the development of swords in Japan, which is necessary to impart an initial understanding of Japanese swords.

**KOTO**

The history and development of the Japanese sword is intrinsically entwined with the history of the country itself, as both practical and political considerations influenced and developed both its shape and forging techniques. The earliest swords, known as *Chokuto*, were straight, ridgeless blades and both the makers



This magnificent wakizashi or short sword has a blade by Etchu no Kami Masatoshi and is stripped down to show its constituent parts. These include the tsuba (hand guard) habaki (collar), seppa (spacers) as well as kogai (a skewer like tool, and a kodzuka (small auxiliary knife). The elaborate workmanship represents the Mino-Goto style of decoration. This sword is part of the British Museum's collection.

and blades were imported from Korea and China. The later straight-ridged versions, known as *Kiriha-zukuri* may have been amongst the first to be domestically produced in Japan. Along with sword-making and metal technology, both Buddhism and the Chinese method of writing were imported into Japan in the 7th and 8th centuries AD, known historically as the *Nara* period, Nara being the imperial capital at this time.

By the 10th century, having gone through a number of further transitions, the Japanese sword was more or less the same as those made today. That is to say, it was a single-edged, curved blade with a ridge line running its entire length, or to describe it properly – a *Shinogi-tsukuri Tachi*, with *Zori* (curvature). These swords were mainly made in the vicinity of Nara (Yamato Province) and Kyoto (Yamashiro Province), and it is these two provinces which lend their names to the two earliest 'schools' or traditions of swordmaking, i.e. *Yamashiro-den* and *Yamato-den*, to be followed closely by the *Bizen-den* (around present day Okayama Prefecture). The sub schools of *Yamato-den* were mainly supported by

the Buddhist monasteries of the area, whilst those swords of *Yamashiro-den* reflect the refined taste of the noble and aristocratic people of the Imperial Court which by then had moved to Kyoto (Yamashiro Province).

By the end of the 12th century, the *samurai* were in control of the government, after the famous battles of the *Gempei* wars, in which the *Minamoto* clan (the *Genji*) completely annihilated their rivals for power, the *Taira* (the *Heike*). The victorious *Minamoto Yoritomo* then established his *Shogunate*. A shrewd man, he moved far away from Kyoto, the effete imperial capital with its corrupting influences, and set up his capital far to the east, at Kamakura in the province of Sagami, more commonly known by its other name of *Soshu*.

Although *Yoritomo* had established his *Shogunate*, it was not uncontested, and a few years later the retired Emperor *Gotoba* prepared an uprising to regain his usurped power. Preparing for this, *Gotoba* gathered around him the best swordsmiths of the day. They attended him on a continuous basis and taught him to

make fine swords. The large number of *Bizen* swordsmiths who attended the Emperor's court attests to the fact that this school was highly regarded at this time. Swords made by *Gotoba* still exist in Japan, and are simply signed with an Imperial chrysanthemum crest called a *Kiku*. These swords are therefore known as *Kiku Gyusaku* (Imperial Chrysanthemum Made). It is said that *Godaigo's* dark and brooding mood, as he plotted to overthrow the upstart *Yoritomo*, may be seen in his swords. In fact, he was probably only

A pupil of *Shintogo Kunimitsu*, named *Masamune*, developed that style and produced gorgeous blades that were far less likely to be irreparably damaged in battle. *Masamune* had ten famous pupils, known collectively as the '*Masamune jittetsu*', who spread their master's teachings throughout Japan. The so-called *Soshu-den* had arrived and flourished.

By the early 14th century, the Kamakura Shogunate, still controlled by the *Hojo* family as regents, was in dire financial straits and was finally

may have been brought about by the difficulties encountered with the larger swords in street and indoor fighting as well as the tendency towards fighting on foot rather than horseback. Both the styles of swordmaking of *Soshu-den* and *Bizen-den* were popular and the influence of *Soshu-den* on *Bizen* swordsmiths at this time is evident in a hybrid style known as *Soden*.

With the settling of the Imperial dispute in 1393, *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu* became the first 'official' *Ashikaga Shogun*, and whilst there were still



Another style of tachi known as an Efu-no-tachi which was worn in ancient times by courtiers and Imperial guards although this is a later copy. It was probably made for donation to a shrine and bears many mon of the Takeda family.

responsible for the *Yaki-ire* (quenching of the blades) rather than the demanding labour involved with the hammerwork of the forging. *Gotoba's* uprising was not to succeed and the so-called Kamakura *Shogunate* remained under the regency of the *Hojo* family.

The military atmosphere that was prevalent in the Kamakura period allowed the production of swords to flourish and many swordsmiths gathered at Kamakura to be patronised by the great *samurai* families that lived there. The style of swords from the middle Kamakura period were to set the pattern for swords for many years to come.

In 1274 and 1281, Japan experienced invasion from *Kublai Khan's* Mongol hordes, and it was found necessary for the *samurai* to drastically change their battle tactics from individual or single combat, to group warfare. Swords became wider and stronger in appearance and more resilient.

overthrown by Emperor *Godaigo*. However, an Imperial succession dispute heralded a new era of warfare, known as the *Namboku-cho* period.

The *Namboku-cho* period is characterised by there being two Emperors reigning at the same time! Emperor *Godaigo* had set up his court in Yoshino in the south (*Nan*) of Kyoto, whilst Emperor *Komyo*, protected by a self appointed *Shogun* named *Ashikaga Takauji*, held court in the north (*Hoku*). This state of affairs lasted for sixty years until the Emperor *Gokomatsu* ascended the throne in 1392 and reunited the two courts.

Swords in this period often became exaggerated in their proportions, with wider bodies, extreme lengths (some as long as 90 cm) and long points, although some swords were made at about 70 cm and began to be worn through the belt with the cutting edge upwards, whereas previously most swords were of the *tachi* or slung sword type. This latter development

skirmishes throughout the country, there was a state of relative peace and the new age became known as the *Muromachi* period, named after the area in Kyoto where the *Shogun* had taken up residence. The long unwieldy swords of the *Namboku-cho* period were abandoned and there was a general return to the style of swords popular in the Kamakura period. At this time the production of *wakizashi* (short swords of about 40-50 cm in length) began to be made, mostly also in the *shinogi-zukuri* shape (with a ridgeline). However, the peace proved to be a short passing thing and was not to last.

Rebellions against the now weak *Ashikaga Shogunate* in 1439, the *Eikyo* Rebellion, and in 1467, the *Onin* Rebellion, began the periods of civil strife known as *Sengoku Jidai* that was to last in excess of one hundred years. A constant stream of wars created a huge demand for swords, which became almost mass-produced, with a subsequent





This koshirae (mounting) is of a katana, which unlike the tachi, was a sword worn with the cutting edge uppermost. The saya is covered with polished ray-skin known as samé. This was very expensive and highly desirable during the Edo period (1600-1868).

loss of quality. It was only the 'special order' blades from this period that retained any vestiges of artistic merit, and cutting ability was the main criterion for all others. The production of swords through this period was mainly in the so-called *Mino-den* style, a style created from one of *Masamune's Jitetsu* named *Saburo Kaneuji*. Swordsmiths of this school who were famous in the *Muromachi* period included *Kanesada* and *Kanemoto* and the supposedly dark character *Muramasa* whose swords gained a reputation for being evil and bloodthirsty. As well as *Mino-den*, the later *Bizen-den* was active and a town named *Osafune* in *Bizen* appears to have been almost entirely populated by swordsmiths for centuries!

It will be noted that we have now five main schools or traditions, which are collectively known as the *Gokaden*. These are *Yamato-den*, *Yamshiro-den*, *Bizen-den*, *Soshu-den* and lastly *Mino-den*. Although these are the main traditions there were many styles, variations, sub-divisions and smaller schools within the *Gokaden*.

Towards the end of the *Muromachi* period, a powerful *Daimyo* named *Oda Nobunaga*, began his attempt at the unification of the country. On his death in 1582, assassinated by one of his own generals, the job was carried on by *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* and eventually completed by *Tokugawa Ieyasu* after the battle of *Sekigahara* in 1603. This period (up to the first year of the *Keicho* period, 1596) is known as the *Momoyama* period in sword history and was a time of great

creativity in the culture and arts of Japan.

In Japanese sword history, the start of the *Keicho* era ended the *Koto* (old sword) period and began that of the *Shinto* (new sword) period.



This is a koshirae known as an Ito-maki Tachi or "thread-wrapped slung sword". The name derives from the wrapping on the saya which protects it from damage when worn with armour, especially whilst mounted on a horse. It later was worn on more formal occasions. A heraldic Crest known as a "mon" may be seen on the lacquered part of the saya and this device is repeated on the metal mounts.

**SHINTO**

*Tokugawa Ieyasu* established his capital at a small fishing village named *Edo*, far to the east of *Kyoto* and quite close to *Kamakura*. With the final unification of the country under *Tokugawa Ieyasu*, peace finally came to the land and the new creative surge of the *Momoyama* period was reflected in the genius of a *Kyoto* metalworker named *Umetada Myoju* and his main student, *Horikawa Kunihiro*. These two gentlemen attracted many pupils who were to spread the new styles of swordmaking throughout the land. *Umetada* is known as the father of the *Shinto* (new sword) period and both his and *Kunihiro's* influence were enormous. It was at this time that the wearing of the *Daisho* (one long sword and one short sword, usually with matched fittings) became compulsory to all those of *samurai* rank.

The emergence of castle towns attracted all kinds of commerce and

craftsmen, including swordsmiths who now had stable centres from which to ply their trade. At the same time, improvements in trade and communications meant that swordsmiths no longer had to mine their own ore, but could buy it from

central sources and they were now free to experiment and try to rediscover the old techniques of swordmaking, lost in the turmoil of the *Muromachi* period battlefields. The *Tokugawa Shogunate* virtually sealed the country off from the rest of the world, prohibiting the entry of foreigners or the exit of Japanese nationals.

As the *Tokugawa* or *Edo* period progressed, and peace was maintained, the requirement for highly efficient blades was diminished and artistic properties were emphasised. However in the early *Tokugawa* period, whilst the warrior ethic was still strong and assertive, there was a great demand for swords. Swordsmiths flocked to the new capital of *Edo* (present day *Tokyo*) where the *Shogun's* court was located, as well as to the commercial centre of *Osaka*. The blades they made reflect the bravado of the age and the different atmospheres of the



The matched pair of swords are known collectively as a daisho (lit. great and small) and were the distinguishing badge of rank of the samurai class. As this particular style of mounting owes much to the previously mentioned tachi style, it is known as a Handachi (half-tachi) daisho-koshirae.

locations. They are characterised by their splendid *Horimono* (carvings) and by differently shaped *Hamon* (quenched and hardened edges) that were newly adapted or invented as the artistic aspect of swords was emphasised.

Apart from the swordsmiths resident in the great cities of *Edo*, *Kyoto* and *Osaka*, a number of the better swordsmiths of the early *Tokugawa* period benefited from the patronage of the *Daimyo* (feudal lords) and were retained in this manner for many generations. Swordsmiths such as *Tadayoshi* in *Hizen* (who studied under *Umetada Myoju*) were retained by the *Nabeshima Daimyo* in *Saga*, and *Kunikane* in *Sendai*, retained by the *Date Daimyo*, benefited in this way.

Throughout the first part of the *Tokugawa* period, subtle changes in the shape of swords occurred. For instance, the swords made in the *Kanbun* era (1661-73) became straighter and tapered towards a smaller point. This change was influenced by the rise in popularity of *Kendo* and the use of bamboo swords known as *Shinai*. In other words the swords began to resemble the shape of the *Shinai*, but the merchant class started to take over the economic running of the country and the *samurai* ethic was diluted. During the first two-thirds of the 18th century the quality of swords was low and few swords were made, other than by those retained swordsmiths mentioned above. Even in *Edo* and

*Osaka* few swordsmiths could be found, although the production of ornate and highly decorative sword fittings flourished and reflected the more ostentatious tastes of the merchant class.

Towards the end of the *Tokugawa* period in the late 18th to mid 19th centuries, the *Shogunate* was under great pressure both from within and without. The seclusion policy was being severely tested as foreigners tried to open trading relations with Japan and some of the more militant anti-*Tokugawa Daimyo* were becoming restless. Mostly these families had been on the losing side at *Sekigahara*. As a reaction to this, the *Shogunate* desperately tried to rekindle the flagging martial vigour of the *samurai* and in the wake of this there was a renewed interest in the Japanese sword.

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**SHINSHINTO**

This resurgence of interest was led by a swordsmith named *Suishinshi Masahide*. He was a great theorist and preached a return to the sword styles of *Soshu-den* and *Bizen-den*, from the *Kamakura* and *Namboku-cho* periods. Although a reasonably accomplished swordsmith, he is better known for his writings and research than for his good sword making.

This revival, spearheaded by *Masahide*, heralded the sword-making period known as the *Shin-shinto* period (very new sword period). *Masahide*, together with his highly talented pupil *Naotane*, spread the revival throughout Japan influencing many swordsmiths. *Kiyomaro* was another great swordsmith who set up his shop in the *Yotsuya* area of *Edo* and his work became so highly acclaimed that he became known as the *Yotsuya Masamune*. The untimely suicide of this flawed genius prevented him from realising his full potential shown in his extant works, particularly his later pieces, and in some ways he may be regarded as the *Van Gogh* of Japanese sword-smiths.

The coming of Commodore *Perry* in 1853 and the forcing of Japan to open her doors to international trade, sparked pressures that would eventually lead to the *Shogunate* relinquishing power to the Emperor *Meiji* in 1868. The *Meiji* Restoration of 1868 was soon followed by edicts permitting the cutting of the



*samurai's* topknot, and then in 1876 a strict order that banned all citizens, other than the military or police, from carrying swords was enacted. This, for some-while appeared to be the end of the history of the Japanese sword.

Fortunately, a very few swordsmiths, such as the *Horii* and *Gassan* families, managed to keep making blades and saved the art of sword-making from disappearing and being lost altogether. This was greatly helped by Emperor *Meiji* himself who was both an avid collector and patron of Japanese swords. However, the swordsmiths of this time had a precarious existence and many resorted to making fakes or reproductions of swords from famous swordsmiths of the past, in order to make ends meet and satisfy the demand from the few collectors of the time.

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With few exceptions, most of the swords made in the World War 2 period were machine made and should not be considered true Japanese swords at all

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The Russo-Japanese War of 1905 and the rise of militarism in the 1930s once more sparked interest, as all officers of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy were required to carry a sword. With few exceptions, most of the swords made during the period of the Second World War were machine made and should not be considered true Japanese swords at all. It is these *Showa-to* (swords made in the early *Showa* period, 1926-45)

blades that are most commonly found in the West and are valueless as art swords but of interest to collectors of militaria. Swords made in the traditional manner were, however, still made during the war and are known as *gendaito* (modern swords). One of the principal centres and best-known locations for making such blades was the famous *Yasukuni Shrine* on the *Kudan Slope* in Tokyo, as well as the *Nihonto Tanren Denshujo* founded by *Kurihara Hikosaburo (Akihide)*. These institutions laid the foundations of the post war production of swords.


After the Second World War, a great reaction to Japan's militarist attitude set in, affecting both the victors and the vanquished. Swords were considered by the occupying powers to be at best souvenirs and at worst weapons that had helped to inspire Japan's aggression and only fit for destruction.



Fortunately a few enlightened souls amongst the American occupation troops, realised the high artistic merit of the true Japanese sword, and their intervention prevented the wholesale destruction and looting of many masterpieces. Amongst these Colonel Cadwell is considered the great saviour, and his bust is to be found in the foyer of the Japanese Sword Museum in Tokyo. Several years after the war, the government set up the *Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai* (the Society for the Preservation of Japanese Art Swords) publicly recognising that swords had

high artistic merit. Amongst their responsibilities is the running of the aforementioned Sword Museum and the fostering of all aspects of the Japanese sword, including polishing, *Tsukamaki* (hilt wrapping), *Saya* (scabbard) making and many other aspects of sword preservation and study. They encourage modern swordsmiths and hold a swordmaking competition every year. The annual *Shinsaku Meito Ten* (newly made swords competition) is one of the year's highlights in the sword world.

There now appears to be a great resurgence of interest in the arts of the Japanese sword in Japan. There are two swordsmiths alive today who have been designated a "Living National Treasure" as well as a good number of younger men who have considerable talent. Currently the styles of the old Bizen swords are popular in Japan and some of the lost techniques are being rediscovered, similar in many ways to the revival of swordmaking at the start of the *Shinshinto* period.

From the foregoing it will be understood that the arts of the Japanese sword were constantly changed to suit both fashion and practical needs. It is an art form that is as much alive today as it was 1000 years ago and with dedication it may be appreciated as much by the Westerner as the native Japanese. The secret is not about whether or not you are Japanese (although that helps), but whether or not you are prepared to spend the time and effort on serious study and be greatly rewarded for the effort. In this respect, the study of Japanese swords is the same as the study of *Kendo* or *laido* or any of the martial arts. 

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**The To-ken Society of Great Britain**  
[www.to-ken.com](http://www.to-ken.com)





# JUST HOW BAD IS A SEMINAR FOR YOU?

By Hugh Darby

## Disclaimer:

These articles are prepared based on my own research and understanding. I am not, however, a medical professional. So, while I've endeavoured to ensure the information is accurate, please take responsibility for your own physical wellbeing, and take professional advice as required, specific to your own circumstances. And just don't sue me, okay?

Whether you do *iaido*, *jodo* or *kendo*, you will at some point attend a seminar, which can be a very physically demanding experience.

Summer seminars might run for a week, with 6+ hours of practice each day; weekend seminars are slightly less gruelling, but still typically mean a 6+ hour practice on the Saturday followed by a Sunday morning practice and a grading in the afternoon, possibly followed by further practice. A look at the BKA directory of clubs and club times suggests that the majority of us train perhaps a couple of times a week, for 1-2 hours each time. And that assumes we don't have jobs, families, holidays and so on that prevent our attending from time to time. So, for most of us, seminars represent a step change in our level of physical activity, which can pose physical challenges and risks.

In this first of three articles I'll explore a number of the main physical issues associated with attending seminars. In the second article I'll conclude an exploration of the main physical issues, and in the third article I'll look at how we should consider managing the issues as students and as coaches.

## Overview of the physical issues

The main physical issues associated with a seminar can be grouped into the following broad areas:

- Energy expenditure
- Dehydration
- Prolonged standing or kneeling
- Repeated cycle of warm up/cool down
- Recovery and Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS)
- Overstressing your body

In this article we'll look at the first four.

## Energy expenditure

Energy expenditure during exercise depends on intensity and duration. To obtain a reference point, I've used a wrist-based heartrate tracker in a number of *iaido* sessions – not necessarily the most accurate of devices, but hopefully at least indicative. For a largely talk-based session, my effort increased by only around 100 calories per hour over my base energy expenditure: equivalent to a fairly slow walk as compared to lying on the couch. In contrast, for a session of pretty much non-stop *kata*, my effort increased by nearly 500 calories per hour: roughly equivalent to jogging or walking up stairs for that time.



More frequent consumption of smaller amounts of carbohydrates maintains blood glucose and insulin levels better than refuelling only at lunchtime, or just in the evening

Nutrients from fluids are absorbed more quickly than from solids, so it's suggested that you start by consuming carbohydrates from fluids. You can get sports drinks like Lucozade and Powerade that contain a large amount of carbohydrate to keep you going, however they don't contain any protein to support your recovery once the practice ends (there's more about what you should do post-practice in the second article in this series). You can get specific 'muscle' or 'recovery' formulations, often in powder form, which do include protein, but they can be expensive. You can find or make good, cheap alternatives to both sorts of drinks. A glass with about two thirds orange juice and one third water, with a pinch of salt thrown in, gives you the same sort of drink as a bottle of (orange-flavoured) Lucozade sport. Chocolate milk is good for both carbohydrate and protein, or else a home-made banana milkshake with a spoon or two of peanut butter does the same sort of thing.

**Dehydration**

The body loses fluid in two main ways – sweating and breathing, both of which you'll do a lot of during a hard practice. Sweat also contains salt (mainly sodium and potassium) which helps the body absorb water. After or even during a long practice session, you can sometimes see the white salt marks appearing on your gi as your sweat dries (awesome!).

Water is essential for many chemical reactions that occur inside our cells, including the production of energy. In addition, your blood becomes thicker if you don't replace fluids.

The result is a decrease in the amount of blood pumped by the heart per beat and consequently a decreased oxygen delivery. This means a decline in your ability to exercise. The best rehydration fluids are those that contain sodium, which stimulates the kidneys to retain water. You need to be aware of how much you're exercising to gauge your requirements during and then after exercise. Look at the colour of your urine (yes, I said urine, stop sniggering at the back of the class) throughout the day – a light colour indicates sufficient hydration; cloudy and yellowish (or worse, feeling no need to go) then you need to drink more. If your practice is at a low intensity, for periods of less than an hour, then plain water and your normal balanced diet is likely to be fine. If you're cranking out the *kata* for six hours straight, then you're likely to benefit from something with some salt in it, whether it's a sports drink or a home-made concoction.

If you're serious, the best way to gauge how much fluid you've lost is to weigh yourself immediately before and immediately after each day's practice. A possibly useful comparison is that the 'average' runner doing a three-hour marathon could expect to lose 3-5 kilograms of weight, the advice for which is for every kilogram lost, to drink 1.5 litres of water. So, keep track of the volume of fluid you're drinking, and make sure it's enough while not excessive. Excessive fluid intake can result in hyponatraemia – where the sodium concentration in your body becomes too low.

Keeping properly hydrated should also reduce the risk of cramp – a particular risk when fatigue and dehydration can cause muscles to tighten.

**Prolonged standing**

Seminars often call on us to stand for long periods getting taught in addition to performing numerous standing *kata*. Standing in itself requires considerable muscular effort but, if you're standing still, it's just a strain on the body, rather than actual exercise.

Issues include:

- **Joint compression:** Each body part is compressed by all of the sections of the body above it. Compressing a joint means body fluids are squeezed out of the space in the joint. Without body fluids and circulation, joints become malnourished, and can't continue to support the weight of the body without discomfort.
- **Insufficient blood return in the legs:** Gravity pulls blood down into the feet. Leg activity acts as a pump to assist in returning blood to the heart. When muscles are engaged in one long contraction to keep you standing, it hinders proper circulation. This can result in blood pooling in the legs.
- **Postural muscle fatigue:** Postural joints and muscles keep the body from falling over while a person is standing or walking. These joints and muscles need nourishment, which they get from circulation. Muscles also need rest breaks to recover from bouts of work. Standing for a long time forces muscles and joints to work nonstop without nourishment. Without rest, muscles become exhausted, resulting in pain.

The overall result: sore feet, swelling of the legs and pain in the muscles of the legs, back, shoulders and neck. Hard flooring – i.e. the floors we often train on – exacerbates problems with prolonged standing. If you're tired and sore your practice will suffer as you seek to work through and/or limit the pain, rather than being able to focus on your practice. As a consequence, you may get even more tired and be more liable to injury because you're compensating in odd ways. You may also be less safe to practice because you're less in control and less focused. It's interesting to note that prolonged standing is listed among the CIA's 'Enhanced interrogation' techniques.

Keeping properly hydrated should also reduce the risk of cramp – a particular risk when fatigue and dehydration can cause muscles to tighten.

**Prolonged kneeling**

But it's not all about the standing. In *iaido* in particular there are many seated techniques – a third of *seitei* and about three quarters of *Muso Shinden ryu*, for example. Also, if you don't want to stand while the teachers are demonstrating, maybe you kneel instead. Kneeling, however, involves some of the issues encountered with prolonged standing in relation to restricting circulation. We've all had pins and needles when first standing up after being seated for a long time.

Some (fascinating) US research looked at working conditions in height-restricted mines, where miners were forced to kneel or squat as they worked. The research pretty much concluded that whether they squatted, knelt, or half-knelt they were going to have problems in the knee joint because of the various stresses placed on the knee. There's also lots of information available on what's variously called housemaid's knee/roofer's knee/carpet layer's knee, citing symptoms of swelling, warmth and tenderness caused by prolonged kneeling damaging the bursa (a fluid sac in the knee). On top of that, research also suggests that regular, prolonged static kneeling or squatting can increase the risk of developing osteoarthritis of the knees at an earlier age. Oh yes, and prolonged kneeling is also cited as a stress position that 'aids' interrogation.

So kneeling's no better for you than standing.


**Dealing with prolonged standing and kneeling**

What can you do to make all that standing and kneeling easier? Well, there's not a lot out there I could find

that's completely helpful. Guidance suggests simply moving around and changing position, and when you do have to stand 'still', you should alternately contract and relax the calf muscles, flex and straighten your ankles and knees, and shift body weight from one leg to the other. The best advice – all sources say – is to avoid fixed standing or kneeling positions altogether and to restrict even prolonged non-static standing or kneeling activities.

**Repeated cycle of warm up/cool down**

Warming up then cooling down repeatedly during a seminar can be seen as a manifestation of improper warming up, done many times each day over the course of a number of days. Warm-up prepares your body for exercise by raising core temperature, increasing the efficiency and elasticity of muscles and tendons, improving their work-rate and endurance, making synovial fluid less viscous and allowing for a wider range of movement. Warm-up is believed to help prevent injury, although the evidence isn't completely clear. Although the body temperature only returns to near normal after about 45 minutes of rest, you're cooling down all the time. The main risks of not warming up before resuming practice are likely to be a reduced focus on your activity, with the concomitant safety risk; a generally reduced quality of performance and ability to perform; and possible increased risk of injury. This may be a difficult point to manage as it depends on the mix of activity during the seminar. The lunch break will generally be the most distinct cool-down period during a day's training, so you may wish to consider warming up before practice resumes.

In the second article in the next issue of *Kihaku*, we'll continue to look at the physical issues, focusing on recovery, delayed onset muscle soreness and the risks of overstretching your body. 





24-26 June 2016

## 10<sup>TH</sup> KODOKAN LADIES KENDO SEMINAR

### *Setsuko Kobayashi* Fine Ladies Kendo Seminar

with *Kazuyo Matsuda Sensei* 7th Dan Renshi

By Garance Watford

“ Having attended two *Kobayashi Sensei* seminars, I have found them extremely helpful. Not only was it the only seminar to date run by Japanese female *senseis*, but it also brought to my attention *kendo* from a female perspective.

Bates *Sensei* and my fellow *Ich* *Byo Shi* members appreciated the progress shown in my *kendo* after each seminar. I felt very privileged and wanted to involve our Hemel Hempstead young ladies. I was very happy to introduce Miranda to the teachings of *Kobayashi Sensei*. She enjoyed it immensely and has signed up for *Matsuda Sensei's* seminar in York with me.

This year *Matsuda Sensei*, who is herself a pupil of *Kobayashi Sensei*, has taken the lead in the seminar. She is one of the most gracious Japanese *Kendo Sensei* that I have had the pleasure of practicing with. I really like her style which is fluid and seems effortless. She explained during the course of the seminar the necessity to address *kendo* from a feminine perspective. We usually practice this martial art in a primarily male dominated environment and, thus, learn to move and fight like our male *sempai*. However, our bodies differ and this difference means that at times our techniques may need adjusting in order to measure up successfully against a stronger and taller opponent.

#### The Kobayashi method

The first time I attended the seminar, in 2014, I was struggling to define the right *men-uchi* movement. I remember waiting in the queue for *Inoue Sensei* and discussing it with one of the other attendees [Jessica (Cheltenham *Shudokan Dojo*)]. She had the most amazing description of the *Kobayashi* method: Barbie doll arms...

Only a woman could have really thought of this description and I must say it hit the spot. The method revolves around the movement of the shoulders. The arms do not move until the strike and then extend at that point with *Tenouchi*. The way *Matsuda Sensei* decoded the movement was by asking us to extend our arms in front of us as if we were carrying laundry. So shoulder level with elbow slightly bent. Then joining our hands together without changing the morphology of the arms. This is the striking position. From there, bring your joint hands between your shoulder blades. The movement makes the shoulder rotate backwards, folding at the elbow when they are at forehead level approximately.





The emphasis was put on the fact that the movement back and forth from this position should not lead to strenuous movement. It should be kept effortless and fluid. This method means that I have been able to strike correctly (*Ippon*) from a much closer distance than what I would normally have been asked to do. As a woman I tend to do this facing a bigger and taller opponent as my sense of distance is threatened by his presence.

#### EXERCISES

**Men-uchi** – We did numerous *shomen suburi* using our hands joined together, using *suri-ashi*. Once we were more aware of the movement, we carried on with our *shinai*. Then we used the same technique and performed *suburi* from *chudan*. The aim was to cut *men* on the right foot movement and using the shoulder as the key element. Eventually we moved forward with three consecutive *men-uchi* and moved backwards with three consecutive *men-uchi*. A kind of tripled *zenshin kotai shomen suburi*. This had to be in time as we were in rows of three and this also taught us rhythm. *Men* strikes with this method mean that you lift your *shinai* high enough for your left hand to be level with your forehead.

**Kote-uchi** – Same as above. The difference is that *kote-uchi* only requires you to lift up your *shinai* level with your sternum.

**Do-uchi** – As above

**Rei/Sonkyo** – We had a short break at this stage and when we got back we took a little while to go over the correct posture. How to *rei* and *sonkyo* properly.

The second part of the morning was about using the learnt method with correct footwork.

We spend a little time doing footwork in front of the mirror, in the shape of a cross holding *chudan* position. One *suri-ashi* forwards, then backwards, then right and finally left (I can only remember the words *migi* and *hidari*).

We were asked to stay in groups of three. I was paired with Emilie Knight (Hull's *Genbudo dojo* and GB Squad) and Michelle Hayes (York's *Doshinkenyu dojo*). Each one after the other (so in three lines) we did several *suri-ashi* dashes from one end of the *dojo* to the other.

We added *fumikomi-ashi* then sub-categorised this exercise with the following:

- *Men/kote/do-uchi* – Forward to the end of the *dojo* and back.
- *Men/kote/do-uchi* to the end of the *dojo* and *hiki-men/kote/do* going back.
- The same as the above but with *kote-men* and *kote-men-do*.

At this point we worked in groups and performed the same type of exercises by relaying the role of *motodachi* and *kakarite*. We finished this second part of the morning with *kirikaeshi* exercises.

#### KATA

This year we had an element of *kata* added to the seminar which *Kobayashi Sensei* normally did not include. As I love *kata*, that was really welcomed. We paired by level and I worked with Michelle Lim (Oxford *Kendo dojo*) whom I had not seen since April when she came to train with us in Aylesbury.

We worked our way through all seven *bokken* forms but I did not feel confident enough to take on the three *kodachi* forms as I only know *ippon-me* correctly and *sanbon-me* to a basic degree.

Budden *Sensei* took the *kyusha* group of four young ladies and so Miranda was really well looked after.

#### MOCK GRADING

*Kodokan dojo* Budden *Sensei* presided on the panel for this mock grading and we were asked to treat this as if we were going for our next grade.

Very kindly, he told us that he doesn't sit on grading panels in the UK but sits as a grading panel member on examinations around Europe. He never fails an *ikkyu* grade as, for him, it is a way to encourage a newcomer to the world of *kendo* to carry on. He would also very rarely fail a *shodan* as this is his way to thank the person for persevering. However, from *nidan* onwards, he needed to be shown something to demonstrate that the examinee was technically ready for the grade they were hoping to get. I was in hot water as I only passed *shodan* and was nowhere ready for *nidan*.

Miranda took her *ikkyu* grading with gusto. She did very well in the etiquette and posture. She did a good *men-uchi*. Matsuda and Budden *Sensei* advised her to carry on doing what she did. She was not there yet but with practice and confidence she would make it.

For myself, there were no negative comments in the sense that my

posture, my *bogu* and my spirit were not questioned. The start of the *jigeiko* was very good but left *Matsuda Sensei* disappointed as she was expecting a big outcome yet we could only manage a busy demonstration without securing *ippon*.

To be honest, I know that this is my biggest challenge. I detest all forms of confrontation and this exercise is often becoming more of a *shiai* under the pressure of the examination. This takes away my confidence and my abilities to see an opportunity to score. I need to work on this.


#### MOTODACHI-GEIKO

All senior grades present (Juliette Li Wan, Yutaka Zenon, Emilie Knight and Annick Pollet from Belgium from those that I can remember) joined *Matsuda* and Budden *Senseis* as *motodachi*. We queued for a two minutes *jigeiiko* with them.

Emilie told me that I am not holding my centre too high and that I tend to point it to the right. This makes sense as I am usually against taller and stronger opponents in the *dojo* and automatically compensate. I need to be aware of this and change it according to the person I train with.

Then, afterwards, all *motodachi* organised themselves into a *mawari-geiko* and it was very nice to be able to watch their individual styles.

I did not take part in the *Kobayashi Cup* the next day as my knee just gave up by the morning but I made the most of the seminar. It was a great opportunity to meet again with familiar faces and get to know some a little bit more than the previous year. I enjoyed the way *Matsuda Sensei* took us from just touching our hands to striking men. Subtle and efficient.

We only have three active female members in our *dojo* but, if possible, I would like us all to attend next year. I will make the arrangements for all the information to be fed through our page. Please watch this space... 



# 三磨の位

## SANMA NO KURAI

### THE THREE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

by Chris Mansfield, *Kyoshi Iaido/Jodo*

Japanese *Budo* (martial arts) like many other physical or learning activities has a number of ideas or concepts which enable practitioners to gain a deeper theoretical insight as well as providing an overview of their particular study.

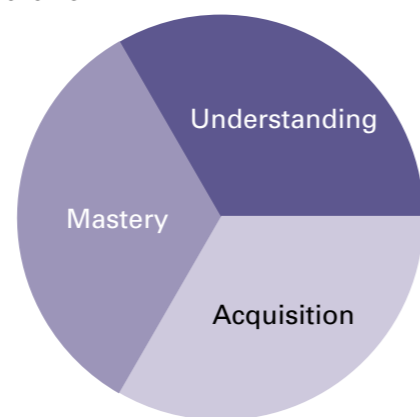
At the seminar of the 23rd European Iaido Championships in Budapest, Hungary in November 2016, Yamazaki Takashige Sensei, 8th Dan Hanshi Iaido and official delegate of the All Japan Kendo Federation, expounded this concept for the benefit of those members visiting and participating in the championships. He stressed that without a clear understanding of this idea our progress in *Iaido* (as well as many other martial arts) would remain incomplete and unfulfilled.

In order to remind those practising this article has been written with the hope that it will not only encourage and motivate practitioners, but also engage them to look more deeply and seriously into the art they are practising and studying.

The three elements are introduced here in their stages as related to the title. The elements can be identified as *San Toku* 三得 (three benefits):

**Understanding, Acquisition and Mastery.** It should be further understood that the term *SHU-HA-RI* (whilst similar) is a description in the broader sense.

For diagrammatic purposes Understanding – Acquisition – Mastery can be summarized in the form as follows:



#### Understanding or Comprehension (*Kai-Toku* 会得)

1. The **Shu** (protect/copy) stage is the time when the student studies diligently under a *sensei* or master. At this time their actions are purely that of learning to assimilate the technique and knowledge of rational thought. Literally the meaning of *Kai Toku* is "to write down". Deep discussion of theory is not necessary, as they must only look at the master/teacher and copy.

In general this may be regarded as the stage when the student has achieved 1st *dan* and is working through to 5th *dan*. For many this period can represent 15 to 20 years of their life.

#### Acquisition (*Shu-Toku* 習得)

2. The **Ha** (break or move away) stage sees the student progressing where they begin to experiment with the sum of what has been learnt. This stage is problematical as there are clear insights as to what has been acquired, but also doubts arising because there is still much that cannot be seen and understood. In general this stage may be regarded as the level when the student has achieved 6th *dan* and is working towards 7th *dan*. This period may be equally demanding in terms of time representing anything from 15 to 30 years of life.

#### Mastery (*Tai-Toku* 体得)

3. The **Ri** (separation or realisation) stage is the last but infinite level that very few reach. It is where the student having assimilated as much as they can from their teacher will combine it with their own discoveries from the first two levels (this will

include both positive and negative aspects) and to which they will create something which is uniquely theirs. They now become independent of their teacher. This period represents 8th *dan* and continues until the end of their lives.

The following process also outlines briefly what is said above.

*Shu* (習): to study or learn something.

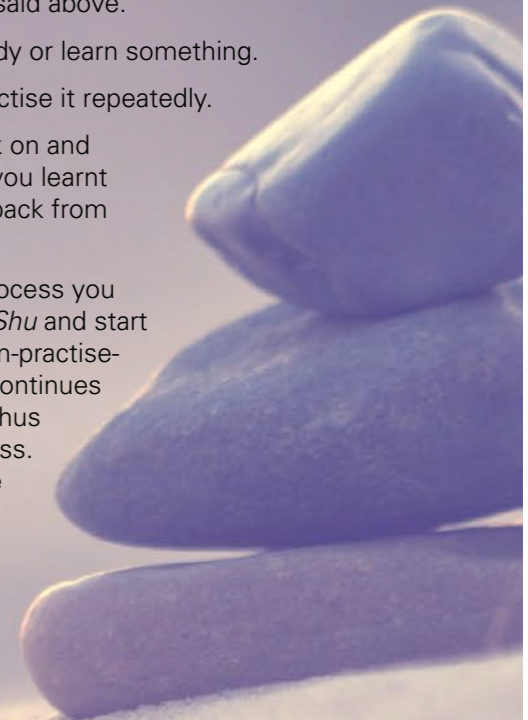
*Ren* (練): to practise it repeatedly.

*Ko* (工): to work on and improve what you learnt based on feedback from practising.

After the *Ko* process you then return to *Shu* and start again. This learn-practise-think process continues endlessly and thus ensures progress. Sometimes the terms *Kenkyu* (研究) Study/Research and *Kufu* (工夫) To Solve are also used to describe this process.

Another interesting phrase known as *Mon-Shi-Shu* (聞思修) literal meaning Listen – Think – Practise also implies the same circular learning process.

This article has taken certain extracts from related internet sources for which the author gratefully acknowledges those contributors.







A relaxed Ryoma Sakamoto

# bushin or goshi?

## Hereditary or paid for?

In difficult times, it seems anything can be bought or sold.

This also applied to the status of *samurai*. Not all *samurai* were born into the position. This was the case in *Tosa* towards the end of the *Tokugawa shogunate*.

Tosa is a small province on the island of Shikoku. Nowadays known as Kochi, a small fan-shaped area which is largely unchanged from its appearance during the *Tokugawa* rule. Mountainous, hot and humid and generally off the beaten tourist track, it's an area with plenty of rainfall, it's rice yield is high and irrigation is not an issue, unlike in other areas. Therefore a self-sufficient province with little or no need for food imported from other areas. Popular writers sometimes distinguish between two types of personality that developed out of

the warm skies, sudden storms and difficult terrain.

**The mountaineer:** harsh, intolerant, rigid and unyielding. **The coastal dweller:** credited with a more supple approach in negotiation, and an open-minded curiosity about the new and strange.

Of the local and renowned samurai, *Ryoma Sakamoto* (a Tosa loyalist who organised the *Kaiantai* and helped bring about the Satsuma-Choshu alliance, and formed the eight-point programme, the basis for the



Ryoma Sakamoto



Shintaro Nakaoka

proposed compromise at the centre of the *Meiji* Restoration) would be "coastal"; *Shintaro Nakaoka* (a Tosa loyalist leader who worked with *Sakamoto* for the Satsuma-Choshu alliance) the "mountaineer".

The ruling family was *Yamauchi*, though this wasn't their traditional domain. Originally the ruling family of Totomi, a small area in comparison to Tosa, had gained favour from the *Tokugawa* before the battle of *Sekigahara* in 1600. *Ieyasu* removed the then ruler of Tosa, *Chosogabe Morichika*, following the battle, and bestowed Tosa onto *Yamauchi Kazutoyo*, even though the *Yamauchi* had not taken part in the battle. This led to implications during the *Meiji* Restoration, as the *Yamauchi* always felt a great debt of gratitude to the *Tokugawa*, and it explained why they were reluctant to rise against the shogunate at the crucial time of the Restoration.

*Yamauchi* rule was imposed through bureaucratic institutions, similar in manner to the *Tokugawa shogunate* and its major vassals. Due to problems maintaining and imposing rule, what follows are the divisions that made up the provincial government common in *Tokugawa* times.

**Court Office (*Naichokan*):** responsible for the administration of the lord's household affairs.

**Division of Internal Administration (*Naikan*):** responsible for the supervision of the *samurai*, residences in Edo (Tokyo) and elsewhere, instruction of the *samurai* and with records and archives.

**Outer Office (*Gaichokan*):** responsible for the administration of the province.

Of the above three offices, the last office would be the most visual in terms of presence amongst the commoners and *samurai*, as this





office would dictate the governmental policies that ran the province. Of the Outer Office, there were three sub-divisions:

**Commissioners General** (*Bugyo-shoku*): three high-ranking retainers with ultimate authority and responsibility.

**Assistant Ministry** (*Shioki-yaku*): three assistants to the Commissioners General. They were responsible for shrines and temple, as well as religious surveys and census.

**Great Inspectors** (*Ometsuke*): three men heading the police and surveillance services.

Further divisions were to be found in the above offices, the most important being the Assistant Ministry. Here could be found the magistrates for towns, taxes, finance etc. Of these magistrates, the **District Magistrate** (*Kori-Bugyo*) was the person who formed the link between the central government and the local affairs.

Their offices could be found in Tosa's seven districts and they usually dealt with subordinating baillifs (*Daikan*) and with the village heads.

These magistrate posts were only served by specific ranks amongst the *samurai*. With this rank came the responsibility of command in the military. During the period of peace – in place since the 17th Century – the positions were ceremonial and hence had been retained.

The main ranks of the late-*Tokugawa* period are as follows:

**Upper Samurai** (*Joshi, Osamurai* or *Shikaku*):

1. *Karo*, eleven individuals headed the Court and Internal administration, serving as Commissioners General and headed the major military formations. They granted the use of the *Yamauchi* name, and served the *Daimyo*.

2. *Churo*, eleven individuals holding important offices. Responsible for implementation from the more honoured *Karo*.

**Regular Samurai** (*Hira-zamurai*):

3. *Umamawari*, comprised approximately 800 mounted *samurai*, field grade officers in battle formations, and formed the leadership at an administrative level, in particular the Assistant Ministry along with the *Churo*.

4. *Koshogumi*, number not fixed, but worked with *Umamawari* as magistrates.

5. *Rusuigumi*, number not fixed, but worked with *Koshogumi* as magistrates and lesser positions.

These five ranks provided the bureaucracy of *Tokugawa* feudalism.

**Lower Samurai** (*Kashi* or *Keikaku*):

*Goshi*, 900-1000 individuals  
*Yonin*, number not fixed  
*Kachi*, number not fixed  
*Kumigai*, number not fixed  
*Ashigaru*, the "foot soldier", which was sub-divided into further groups.

The last four ranks received modest employment of the lowest sort, and were paid, if at all, with rations for dependants. The lowest rank of *Ashigaru* performed labour services within the logging organisations.

Of the Lower *Samurai* ranks, it would be the *Goshi* that would figure prominently in the *Meiji* Restoration and the lead up to it. Key figures of the loyalist movement hailed from this rank; *Ryoma Sakamoto*, *Shintaro Nakaoka* and *Zuizan (Hanpeita) Takechi*.

The rank of *Goshi* owed its formulation due to problems in administration during the takeover of *Yamauchi* from the *Chosogabe*. At the time of the *Yamauchi* takeover, following *Sekigahara*, its warrior following was small, as a direct result of their previous land holding in *Totomi*. Therefore they were unable to fill all the positions required to administer the province. The province was still under the influence of the loyal *Chosogabe* retainers, and from time to time, rebellious resistance would spring up against the *Yamauchi*. In order to placate some of the retainers, the *Yamauchi* granted them the status of *Goshi* or "country *samurai*". The rank was granted in 1613 to a number of *Chosogabe* retainers in an area close to *Kochi* City. They were expected to administer and live in the countryside, and were

given military assignments equal to those of non-commissioned officers, sometimes accompanying their lord on visits to *Edo*.

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...it was made known that anyone could be considered for the *Goshi* rank as long as they proved suitable.

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In 1644, in an attempt to bring more order to the countryside, it was granted that the rank of *Goshi* could be awarded as an incentive for individuals to reclaim land that yielded a specified amount of income.

These newly claimed fields (*Shinden*) by a qualified individual could claim one of 100 *Goshi* patents created. This led to an additional 800 ranked *Goshi* over a period of time in the early 1700s, with an emphasis on character, rather than family, that would guarantee the rank. It was therefore inevitable, as the newly acquired *Goshi* increased their land, that their income grew, which, following the rules laid out in 1690, meant that they were now eligible

to shift from "Lower *Samurai*" to "Regular" and even "Upper *Samurai*", namely the *Rusuigumi* and sometimes *Koshogumi*.

In 1763, at a time when the *Hata* District of *Tosa* was due for development, it was made known that anyone could be considered for the *Goshi* rank as long as they proved suitable. Only having a criminal in the lineage could exclude an applicant. As a result, merchants and wealthy rural individuals applied for the *Goshi* rank. As a result, many newly acquired individuals with *samurai* rank moved back to the main City of *Kochi*, away from their lands. These "urbanised country *samurai*" were looked down on by the Upper *Samurai*, and in the future would prove troublesome.

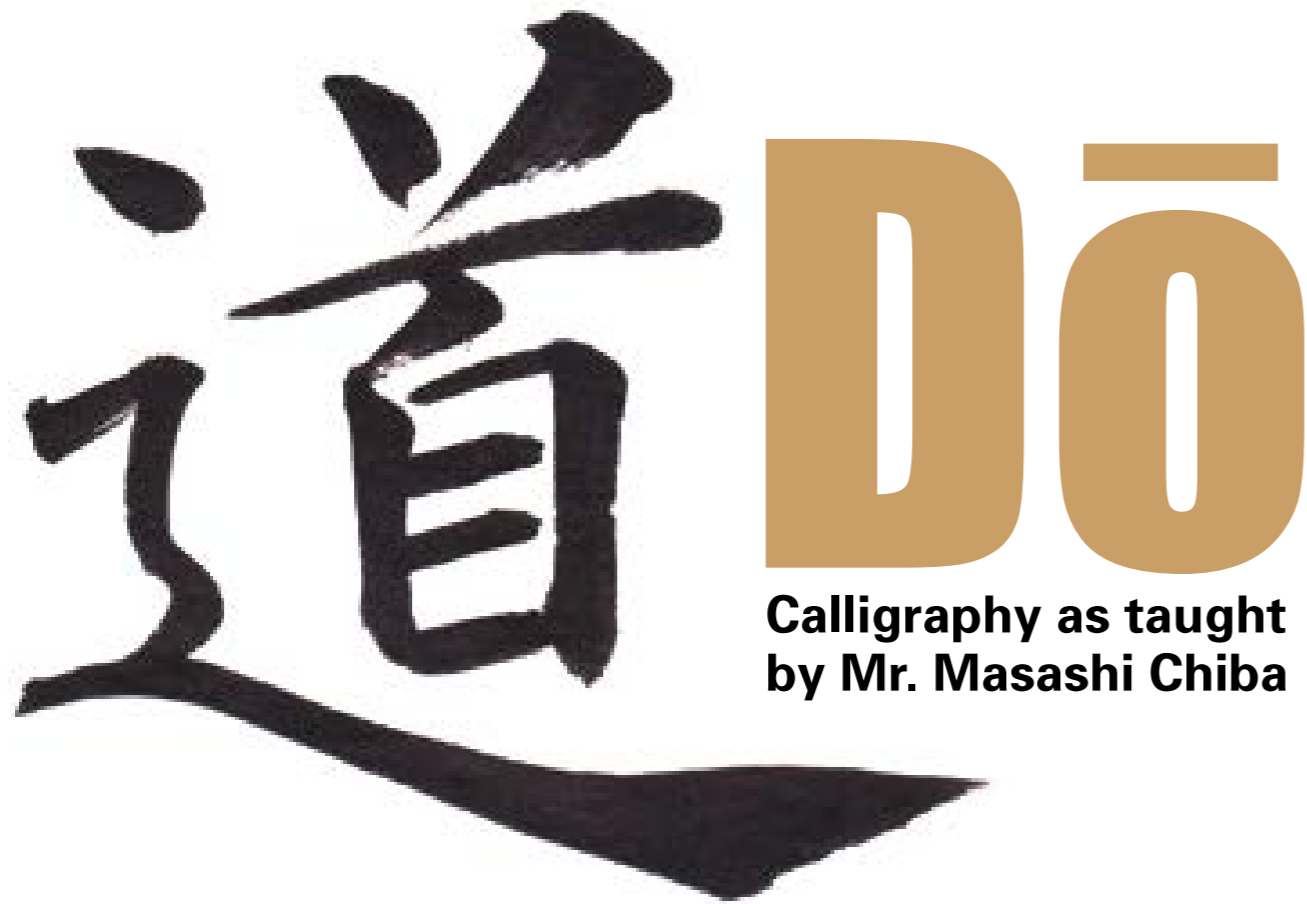
It was into these ranks that *Ryoma Sakamoto* was born, in 1835. His father was a wealthy *Sake* brewer who had purchased the rank of *Goshi* in 1771 and so had continued to live in *Kochi* City.

So the *samurai* rank of *Goshi* became a purchasable position, not an hereditary one. Though once acquired, it was handed down within the family. ☞

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This article first appeared in *Cutting Edge*, July 2013.





Calligraphy as taught  
by Mr. Masashi Chiba

By Yukiko Ayres 惠杏壽昌鶴

**M**r. Masashi Chiba passed away recently. I would like to share something he taught me after a *Kendo* practice in Tokyo. Mr. Chiba knew I was a calligrapher and taught *Shodo* in Tokyo and London. He asked me to write the *kanji* for *Do* 道, which means 'way' in English.

Mr. Chiba explained that *Do* 道 is used for many Japanese arts like *Kendo* 剣道, *Shodo* 書道, *Sado* 茶道 (tea ceremony) and *Kado* 華道 (flower arrangement). He said that I had written it correctly and that it looked like the *kanji* used by the Tokyo *Kendo* Association with a long extension on the final character.

I have written my version of *Do* 道 opposite; the Tokyo *Kendo* Association logo is even longer.

I should explain that *Do* 道 is made from two characters:

*Kubi* 首 which means 'neck'. I have shown how it was derived opposite (Fig. 1).

*Kubi* 首 is used as there should be a feeling of *Kubi wo Kakeru* 首を賭ける, this is difficult to translate but means something like "to put one's neck on the line", or one is prepared to die to complete the task.

The second character is *Shinnyou* (Fig. 4) meaning 'to move forward', sometimes with a pause, but always forward. Again I have shown its derivation opposite. It is combined with moving forward, as on a road (Fig. 2), and to 'stop' 止 (which is why there is a foot) (Fig. 3).

Although *Shinnyou* uses stop 止 in its *kanji*, Mr. Chiba wanted to emphasise the feeling of continuing, and that *kubi* 首 was included in the *kanji*, this is why he liked the long extension on *shinnyou* (Fig. 4).

I taught *Shodo* at the University of Cambridge and, as Mr. Chiba told me, I have tried to show the meaning of the *kanji* from how it was derived. ぎ



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



# Chonmage

The *chonmage* is a traditional hairstyle worn by men and most commonly associated with the *samurai*. It features a shaved pate, with the remaining hair, which was long, oiled and tied into a small queue, which was folded on to the top of the head in the characteristic top knot.

The word **chonmage** is a combination of two words, *chon* and *mage*. There are various theories on the origin of the *Chonmage* hairstyle. One is a style of folded hair that thin-haired old men wore as it resembled the *kanji* character *chon*. Another reasonable theory is that the hairstyle derived from the *hondamage*, which is a hairstyle spread among *samurai* under *Honda Tadakatsu*, a Japanese general and later a *daimyo*. The *hondamage* was especially popular from 1772 to 1781, of which there were eight variations worn according to status, ranking and fashion.

Whichever theory is right, the *Samurai* took great care styling their hair. For battle, they would shave the tops of their heads, which reduced the heat under their helmets, and wore their hair straight at the sides. When not wearing helmets, the hair was pulled up at the sides and back into the top knot.

It is said that this hairstyle respects age, as it camouflages age-related, and male-pattern baldness. Not only *samurai* wore the *chonmage*, but tradesmen and artisans also wore the hairstyle.

In modern times, the only remaining wearers of the *chonmage* are *sumo* wrestlers. This style of *chonmage* is slightly different, in that the pate is no longer shaved, although the hair may be thinned in this region to allow the top knot to sit more neatly.

*Sumo* wrestlers with *sekitori* status are required on certain occasions to wear their hair in a more elaborate form of top knot called an *oicho* or *ginkgo* leaf style, where the end of the top knot is splayed out to form a semicircle, resembling a fan. Given the uniqueness of the style in modern Japan, the *Sumo* Association employs specialist hairdressers called *tokoyama* to cut and prepare the wrestlers' hair.

The *chonmage* is of such symbolic importance in *sumo* that snipping it off is the centerpiece of a wrestler's retirement ceremony. Dignitaries and other important people in a wrestler's life are invited to take one snip, with the final one taken by his trainer. ㊦

Sources:

[http://www.pbs.org/empires/japan/entered0\\_8.html](http://www.pbs.org/empires/japan/entered0_8.html)

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*Chon* written in kanji resembles the hair style.



Hairdressers of old Japan



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# Zen

A personal interpretation by  
John Howell *Kendo Kyoshi*

## John Howell

Started *kendo* at *Nenriki Dojo* in London UK in 1967. Obtained 1st *dan* in Kyoto in 1970, 24 years later attained 7th *dan*, followed by *kyoshi* in 1995.

In the interim, he represented Great Britain (GB) as a competitor nine times; achieved Gold medal in the 1974 European Championships.

He managed the GB team at the World Championships three times and the European Championships five times, also the Italian International Championships three times.

As a coach, he passed as a lecturer from the School of Physical Education London in 1964 for *judo* and later for *kendo* in 1973. Was instructor at *Nenriki*, *Fujiken* and *Shinbukan dojos* (the latter is where he still continues to coach).

He has refereed at the World and European Championships, as well as instructing at British Kendo Association (BKA) referee seminars.

He held the posts of BKA Chairman for 25 years; President for five years; director of the European Kendo Federation for 22 years; and the International Kendo Federation for 21 years. He is also an elected Life Senior Counsellor of the European Kendo Federation. In recognition of his commitment to *kendo*, the All Japan Kendo Federation (ZNKR) awarded him a prestigious '*Koroshō*' for his work in the promotion of *kendo* in the UK and internationally.

Well what is *Zen*: is it a type of religion or a social sect? At least it is some type of discipline and, as in all disciplines, has some type of enlightenment at its end.

Is *Zen* a discipline of the mind, and at its end has enlightenment? Does this enlightenment mean freedom from restraint and inhibitions?

We talk and think about all sorts of freedom, but those freedoms are not always in actual fact real. When one understands the natural restraints afforded to a person and acknowledge his or her inhibitions, the understanding of freedom is the outcome, therefore enlightenment. When a person comes to realise this, in whatever situation they may find themselves, they are always free in their inner self because that pursues its own line of action.

So one can say that *Zen* is a type of religion of "self-reliance and "self-being".

### How is *Zen* and its relationship connected to Swordsmanship?

In olden times, the *samurai* tried to achieve the state of *mushin* (or no mind). Throughout his life of training, he had to try to develop this state. The meaning of no mind is where you forget your training and let all conscious thoughts and emotions evaporate. You let the unconscious mind take over and allow the body to show its capability of displaying the art acquired over the years of training. For example, do not let your mind "stop" with thoughts of winning. You must perceive the opponent's move and let the unconscious mind take over.

To use a phrase, be "unconsciously conscious" or "consciously unconscious". To obtain this state, one must give up the desire of self and understand and respect human dignity and the natural laws which regulate our life.

This way, *zen* and *mushin* are very much involved together.

I would like to take a quote from Daisetz T Suzuki's "*Zen and Japanese Culture*".

*"What makes swordsmanship come closer to zen than any other art that has developed in Japan is that it involves the problem of death in the most immediately threatening manner?"*

One can translate these rules into our modern day *kendo*.

When we start upon our journey, sometimes we feel frustration, anger, and loss of dignity. However we have no fear of being killed, as we do not use the *katana*, but the thought of losing is the same state, therefore all the above rules in their forms do still apply. Hard training learning from our mistakes with a desire to do better is the grounding required to build one's character.

Enjoy the hard training and its discipline, thereby understanding oneself.

It is the progress that we make in our *Kendo* which can teach us the true value of life. ☩



This article first appeared in *Cutting Edge* magazine, July 2014.



# THE ART OF WARMING UP

OR HOW TO MAXIMISE YOUR SEMINAR TRAINING TIME

by Alan Lee-Nash

**A**fter attending a number of seminars this year and having discussions with the other senior *sensei* about our BKA seminars and how best to utilise the time we have to teach everyone at a seminar, ...

... I soon realised that we waste a lot of time at the start of every day on every seminar with warm ups/ stretching and organising into grade groups.

Now I am not advocating not doing warm-ups but, from what I have observed, everyone approaches the warm-up part of the seminar with different levels of enthusiasm or apathy – and I am as guilty of these feelings as everyone else (I am not going to mention those who turn up late and miss the warm-up completely).

As an individual, I know what parts of my body need extra attention when it comes to warming-up and stretching-out the odd kink in my battered and abused body, so my warm-up and stretching exercise may be different to someone else's.


Please note that when I mention warm-ups or stretching exercises, I am talking about those done without

a sword. To my way of thinking and practice, my sword drills are designed to teach me feedback on how the sword behaves through different cuts and to make my hand actions smooth, such that the sword feels like an extension of my body and my hands can rotate or change on the *tsuka* naturally and correctly to present the correct *hasuji* line for my cut.

Anyway I digress a bit. After observing how we have been implementing the warm-up into our seminars, I noticed that after registration at, let's say 9:00am, everyone mills around in the *dojo* chatting and waiting on the teachers to call everyone together for the start of the seminar at, let's say 9:30am. We then have a little speech, all put our swords down, do a warm-up session, pick swords up, get organised into grade groups, then get split into grading, non-grading, *koryu* etc. before any teaching has been done. Typically this can take up to one and a half hours, so we are looking at 11:00am before you do your first *kata*.

My suggestion for the future would be that the time after registration and before the official start of the seminar should be used for your own individual stretching and warm-up exercises, all done without a sword then five minutes before the start of the seminar, everyone gets their swords and lines up in grade order. This is usually done with the higher grades on the right facing the *sensei*.

Hopefully we can then quickly issue any instructions and complete *reiho* and start practicing before getting cold again.

I know this system is not perfect but I would welcome the member's feedback on how to improve and maximise our training and teaching time in seminars. If anyone would like to email me their suggestions, good or bad, I will happily collate them and take them to our regional and national coaches and senior *sensei* to see how we can make your precious training time more effective. After all, you are paying to attend a seminar and expect value for money, and as a *sensei* I would love to be able to teach you everything I can so that you can improve, pass your grading and surpass my own achievements. 



# Summer Seminar 2016, Cambridge

## Post-seminar thoughts

Thoughts and feedback from five attendees of various *iaido* levels. Some attended the three days, and some were present for just a couple.

This year's three day summer seminar was focused on 'back to basics' in all aspects of today's *iaido* from general etiquette to starting *rei* and ending *rei*. The reason given for this was that *sensei*'s looking at the standard of teaching in the UK.

**Day one:** The *iaidoka* had been divided up into grade order, I was in the group *nidan* to *sandan* under *Oshita sensei*, working through the basics of each item from breathing to *rei*, over use of power to perform a cut, also looking at the height of cuts; *kata*, detail of each *kata* also the use of the correct Japanese *kata* names when performing *embu* or just general training; *kihon*, *metsuke* and timing of each of the movements, sword grip; footwork, going through all 12 *kata* and working the corrections *sensei* had seen for each student.

**Day Two:** Under *Morita sensei*, a repeat of the first day footwork, going through all 12 *kata* and working on the corrections that *sensei* had seen for each student; but the second day went further with the detail and reason for the detail, as it was felt that from the top down, and bottom up, we all should be working the same way for *seitei kata* and have the same understanding of the *kata*; but for *koryu* which to a point, will still involve the above and dependent on your school of training.

**Derek Hart**

The first day of the seminar saw the largest number of *dojo* members at a BKA seminar. I was very much looking forward to seeing *Oshita sensei* and *Morita sensei* in what was a great venue. The morning saw very focused training in *seitei* forms. The points I took from this were to avoid an overly tight grip and heavy steps. It was a good feeling to be in such a large space with so many other *iaidoka*.

In the afternoon we split into groups and I was in the *Mudan/Shodan* group under the teaching of *sensei* Hobson, Buxton and West. We split into two lines facing each other, with *shodan* on one side and *mudan* on the other. In this manner we worked through *seitei gata* 1-8. One side performed the *kata* whilst the other observed, then giving 10 second feedback before swapping roles. It was an intense day rewarded with a beer (or two) in the evening.

Friday saw some of our group preparing for gradings. My group was taught by *sensei* Mansfield, Bean and Goodman who elaborated on many details as we continued to refine *seitei gata*. Just before the break for lunch we were able to practise the set forms for our level of grading. For *shodan* this meant *mae*, *morete tsuki*, *sanpogiri*, *gamen-ate* and *soetetsuski*. Goodman *sensei* gave me some very useful key points to work on including keeping my *iaito* level when changing feet in *mae*. I used quite a lot of lunch to go over the grading. Only three people were going for *shodan* so we were a small group and very close to the grading panel, nowhere to hide! Luckily the training/support/patience from my club in the months up to the grading and the chance to refine and practise over the previous two days helped a great deal. I even remembered to breathe this time! Sadly I couldn't stay for the third day but very much appreciated the two I could attend.

**Claire Vilday**

### Day 2

The second day of the BKA Summer Seminar focused on *seitei* and preparation for those grading in the afternoon. The *yondan* students and above moved to the upstairs *dojo*, unless they were assisting with the training of the lower grades. The *yondan* and above group then separated into those grading, who were instructed by *Oshita sensei*, and those not grading were instructed by Hopson *sensei* and West *sensei*, assisted by the *rokudan sensei*.

The main focus, in addition to correcting technical errors, was on understanding where and how the opponent moves which is important in order to make your performance of the various *kata* look convincing. In addition to practice as a group, with individual help, this was demonstrated by individuals being asked to perform in front of the group and the *sensei* showing how this could be improved by awareness of the movements of the opponent/s throughout the whole form. West *sensei* emphasised that when starting a form and walking towards or into a group of opponents, they are enemies and this should not be like 'walking into the supermarket'. One of the students then commented "Sensei, you have obviously not been to a supermarket where I live!" This I think summed up the friendly nature of the morning session, which was instructional, enjoyable and helpful towards a deeper understanding of *iai seitei gata*.

The afternoon session was taken up by grading and free practice.

**Dick Grainger**

### Day 3 (the last day)

On the third and final day of the BKA Summer Seminar the attendees were divided into their usual groups, but with the focus shifting to *koryu* for all but the *mudan/shodan* grades. *Oshita sensei* took the *nidan* and *sandan* students, with *yondan* and above (my group) being looked after by *Morita sensei* and Mansfield *sensei*.

After some initial confusion regarding where in the building we were supposed to be training (for some reason an *aikido* practice was already well underway in the hall we were sent to...) the *sensei* quickly divided us into separate *shinden* and *jikiden* groups. *Morita sensei* continued with his attempt to educate us on some of the more conceptual aspects of *iaido*, immediately gathering us around to explain that properly understanding the situation and movement of the opponent is fundamental to performing each *kata* correctly. Following this a few students were picked out to demonstrate in front of the group, allowing *Morita sensei* to point out various important details that need to be considered. Over the course of the morning we ran through the first two sets of *kata*, permeated throughout by detailed explanations and analysis, along with some interesting forays into the history of *eishin-ryu*. In particular *sensei* devoted some time to illustrating the major differences found among the style's more unusual branches, such as the *shimomura-ha* and *yamanouchi-ha*.

After a brief lunch break the afternoon was given over to the annual *koryu* 'Goodwill *Taikai*'. Four courts were run simultaneously, with competitors divided into pools for each grade. As people were knocked out they were drafted into various supporting roles, with the high grades filtering down to sit as judges for the junior groups. Once all the matches were over, the finalists in each category took to the floor together to decide the overall winner. This year victory was awarded to Oliver Bischoff from Germany, representing the *muso jikiden eishin-ryu*.

Once the *taikai* was over, all that remained was to hand out prizes to the competitors before the seminar was brought to its official close. Following a few final words from the *sensei*, we all began our journeys home, resolved to apply the knowledge and insight we had gained over the last three days in preparation for next year.

**Christopher Grainger**

This was my second seminar of the year with the BKA since I began training in *iaido* just over a year ago. What I found particularly useful and interesting was not just the highlighting of areas where I/we needed to improve on or focus, but the explanation of the consequences of doing a particular action wrong. For example, in *nihon-me ushiro*, it was highlighted that the consequence of applying too much forward weight to the initial rise from *seiza* will result in having to pause/stop mid-way through to regain balance before rotating. For someone at my level (*mudan*), explanations of what the ultimate impact of a mistake to the remainder of a *kata*, rather than a simple pointing out that I have gone wrong, was what for me distinguished this seminar.

**Neil Clark**





# A Moral Dilemma ?

A few weeks ago, towards the end of a class, a student told me that he would like to ask a philosophical question. Obviously I said I would do my best, as always, to offer an answer and, intrigued, I asked what the question was.

"We're learning how to cut people up into pieces so how do you justify that morally?" he asked. I had never been asked this kind of question before so I thought about it and then offered, somewhat weakly, the suggestion that as we were never going to use the techniques we were learning against another person we would never have a moral dilemma.

Even as I found myself speaking I realised that it was not enough of an answer to this deceptively simple but deeply intelligent question. I would have to offer more, and to offer more I would have to contemplate my answer more deeply.

The question actually goes right to the core of why we practice *laido* and that can be different for all of us. For some of us, as can be the case in most martial arts, it may be purely a form of exercise that we find enjoyable and healthy. There is no doubt that *laido* offers physical benefits such as improvements of posture, balance and flexibility. It also offers mental benefits such as improving our inner calm, concentration, and awareness. There are even combined physical-mental benefits such as improved co-ordination skills and spatial awareness. All of these things are worthwhile in themselves and if we


gained nothing else they would suffice as a reason to practice our art. Just through developing these skills alone, passed down through the centuries by the *Samurai* and practised in modern *laido*, we can spend a lifetime of practice striving for the goal of '*Ki Ken Tai Ichi*' or 'Spirit, Sword and Body as one'.

But what of the more spiritual benefits and what of the mental imagery of cutting an enemy as suggested in my student's question? If we are not actually learning how to cut an enemy before they cut us then who are we imagining? And, more importantly, why are we imagining anyone at all?

Of course, others may have different views, but my own interpretation of this imaginary opponent is that the opponent is a symbolic version of oneself. In other words, I take this opponent, or opponents, as symbolic of destroying our own ego. This aspect of *laido* concerns the ongoing attempt to perfect our character and our minds. As time goes by it is a fact that our bodies will slowly deteriorate but there is no reason – mental health issues permitting – that we cannot continue to improve our minds and characters. Our *Samurai* teachers of old would deal every day with the possibility that today could

be their last and from this we can learn that life is fleeting and that we must embrace each day as it comes. I believe that by understanding these concepts we can liberate ourselves from any fears of failure or even death itself because we understand and accept our mortality and humanity.

The more enlightened *Samurai* realised that adopting not just physical skills associated with swordsmanship but philosophical and spiritual development of the character ultimately led to the ability to project outwardly to any potential enemy such confidence and spirit that the enemy would be defeated before they made any attempt to attack. The enlightened *Samurai* would have won without even drawing the sword. This concept is known as '*Saya no Uchi no Kachi*' or 'Victory in the *Saya*' and it is this, combined with '*Ki Ken Tai Ichi*', that must surely be our ultimate goal.

To refer back to the original question asked concerning moral dilemmas, there can be no dilemma because *laido* is not about death – it is about life. 

**Mike Reilly-Fontaine**  
August 2009



# ACCIDENT/NEAR-MISS REPORTING – WHY DO IT?

By Donald Gordon H & S Officer, BKA

This is a good question! Accident and near-miss reporting are important for a number of reasons. I am confident that no BKA member wishes to deliberately harm others and the injured person will not be too pleased either. Activities may have to stop (at least while assistance is given) and there are financial considerations.

When calculating the BKA risk and consequently the size of our annual premium, our insurer will take a view of our accident reporting statistics. Where many serious accidents have occurred it is natural to expect our premiums to be high and rising. Where low, or no accidents have been reported it is also understandable that our insurers may view the BKA to be a high risk, i.e. through a suspicion of poor reporting. A strong defence when lobbying for lower premiums will be, 'we have a strong reporting system demonstrating that our significant accidents are low.'

We are all volunteers and I am certain we did not join our respective *Bu* to do paperwork – I didn't! Others may feel it is a paper (now electronic) exercise to please their NC or *Bu* officers – both are misguided thinking. Reporting should not be viewed as failure and no one should feel threatened by reporting an accident or near-miss.

So, where are we now? To anyone reviewing our past performance, it is obvious that our membership needs to apply a more professional approach to the investigation and reporting of near-misses and accidents.

Where low, or no accidents have been reported it is also understandable that our insurers may view the BKA to be a high risk, i.e. through a suspicion of poor reporting.

To assist, the following information is provided to give the background to our approach:

**Hazard** – a hazard is a condition that may cause harm. This may be the equipment, flooring, control of an activity and/or control of people.

**Near-miss** – a near-miss is an incident that could have been an accident but does not harm anyone. Here are some examples of near misses:

a. If a *shinken* is used during training and another *laidoka* unexpectedly steps back into the line of cut (but stopped in mid-cut). Although the cut was not made and no one is harmed

the possibility of an accident is present – this is a near miss!

b. If a *shinai* is used with a splintered take and a *tsuki* attack is made. There is a significant risk that the *shinai* could enter the *mengane* and cause serious injury – a well spotted near-miss!

c. If a *Jo* strike to the chest is poorly performed (repeatedly and not checked by the coach), the *Jo* may pass close to the head. In this case a head injury may occur but if stopped before an accident – this is a near miss!

In each case the accident did not occur and if we take note and share the experience, we and others can be made aware.

**Accident** – there are many definitions of an accident – one is, 'an incident that causes harm.'

Bearing in mind the nature of our activities and the control measures we implement (through risk assessment), it is accepted that accidents will occur from time-to-time. However we should not view an accident to be an irritation to be ignored and labelled, 'an expected part of the training experience.' The problem with



thinking is (shown by experience) that simple accidents may quickly lead to unforeseen complications.

### Why do we need to report?

It is good practice to report 'near-miss' incidents and accidents where although no-one has been harmed the outcome could have resulted in an accident. In this way it is possible to learn so that we can communicate the information to other *dojo* and identify possible trends. The main reason is to ensure that our members are protected from harm, eg the old saying applies – 'prevention is far better than cure'.

### Accident investigation

Investigation can range from a simple chat with the injured party and any witnesses. More serious accidents may need the assistance of the BKA H&S Officer whereas a very serious accident may require an investigation by individuals external to the *dojo*. It should be borne in mind that where a Local Authority facility is used their Environmental Health Officer may carry out an investigation and should this be required, he/she will most certainly request a copy of the accident report and risk assessment.

### What next?

Following an accident investigation a report must be sent to the BKA

swollen and the hospital said I have blood poisoning. I would like to make a claim from the BKA insurer?'

'Dear BKA, following my accident my *dojo* leader reported to the BKA the next day. My doctor sent me to the local hospital for further tests and the hospital doctor said I will need at least two operations over the next 3 months. I would

like to make a claim from the BKA insurer?'

Our insurers will most likely take a dim view of the first two examples and it will be difficult for BKA officers to verify the details and the injured person will have difficulty proving that the injury occurred during a BKA training session. However, the third (where the correct procedure has been followed) should be viewed more favourably. With the first two examples, the question that our insurers will rightly ask is, "did this accident happen during a BKA activity?" The question the claimant must ask is, "how can I now prove it was a BKA accident?"

I expect the content of this article will not be news to our seniors. However, it does no harm to remind and it is important to inform our new members. ☞

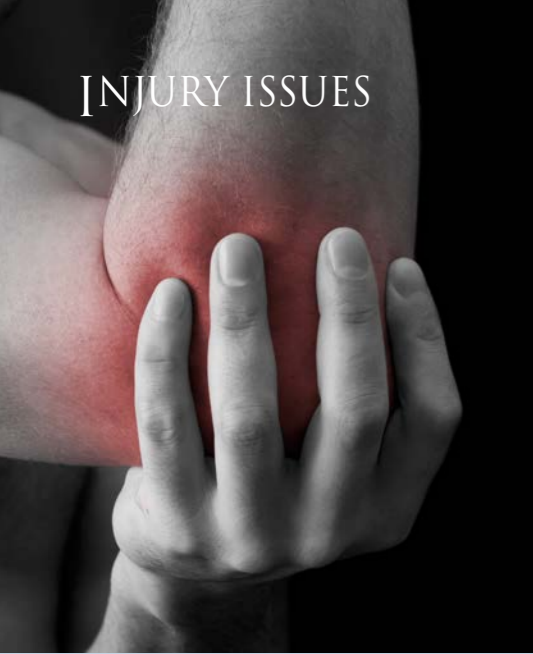
and it is advisable to keep a *dojo* record. It is simple to do and does not indicate a failure on the part of the *dojo* leader – indeed, the reverse is true. All *dojo* leaders are advised to have a book to register an accident and/or near-miss. You should keep a record of all accidents/incidents (whether major or minor) in your accident book and the book should be retained within your Club.

Where an accident may lead to an insurance claim the BKA should be informed as soon as reasonably possible. These examples do not relate to any past or present incidents.

'I had an accident over a year ago. I did not tell the *dojo* leader and an accident report was not sent. Can I now make a claim from the BKA insurer?'

'I had an accident at the *dojo* last night and being a macho type of person I did not report it to our *dojo* leader. This morning my whole arm was





# 5 TIPS TO AVOID Tennis Elbow

By Nigel Kettle *BSc(Hons)Ost*  
GOsC Registered Osteopath

## Seriously Painful

If you have ever heard anyone talk about Tennis Elbow then you surely know that it is not a pleasant situation. It can be rather painful. The good news is that it is possible to do some things to help prevent the injury.

It goes without saying – if you do not treat your body well, then you place yourself at a much greater risk for this type of injury as well as others.

This really is an injury that you should work hard to avoid, as tennis elbow can cause serious pain that is not just whisked away with a heating pad or ice pack.

### 1) Focus On Prevention

You should always focus on prevention as opposed to injury treatment. In this regard the first step is ensuring that you are getting the rest you need between practice. This means there is no reason that you should go out and practice for four hours, then turn around and practice for another two hours. No matter what you think, this is not a wise idea. A better idea would be taking the day off after you have finished so that you can give your arm the rest that it needs.

### 2) Get In Shape

Take some time to get into good physical shape. This includes ensuring that you strengthen your arms and back. If you ensure that your arms and back are in good physical condition you will have the muscle strength built up that will help you to prevent the injury. Failing to make sure you are in good physical condition can make you exceptionally vulnerable to problems.

If you have problems with getting into good muscular shape, you should talk to your instructor. If you do not then turn to the internet to help you develop a good exercise routine that will effectively allow you to strengthen these essential muscles. Seek advice as needed.


### 3) Playing After Extended Breaks

For those who do not practise for hours a day (most of us), it is important to pace yourself. This means not practising for four weeks does not give you the right to run out and practise for 4 hours straight. You must be careful not to suddenly practise extensively after long breaks. You should practise for much shorter periods after you have had a long period of time away from the *dojo*. Your arm is abused in the process of study and suddenly jumping in with both feet will put you at risk of wearing it out badly. Instead, go much easier on your body and work to get back to the practice that you prefer to do. Remember, pushing yourself to achieve the results that you want may seem like a great idea, but pushing too hard will leave you with an injury.

### 4) Remember Your Stretching

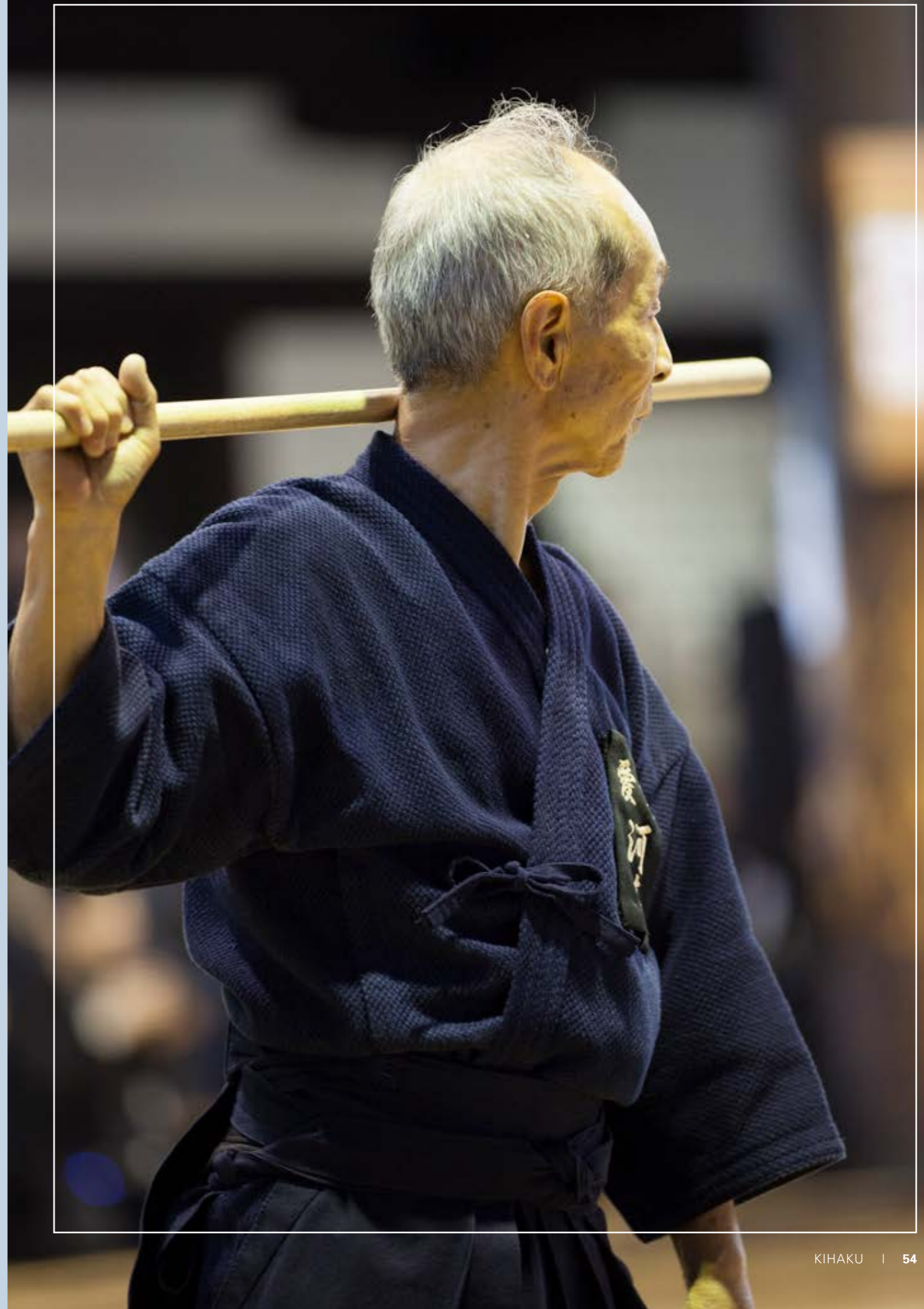
Always stretch before you start practice. In addition, you should stretch after you are done practising as well. This will allow you to keep the muscles surrounding the tendon as supple as possible. Often tense muscles can help factor into a tendon injury and will have you in pain quite quickly if you forget to stretch one day. A few minutes of stretching can go a very long way towards keeping you in good shape and injury free.

### 5) Reduce Repetition, Take Breaks

The last major consideration that you should take into account is the need to avoid continuously repetitive movements that drag on forever. If you are practising *nukitsuke* or *kirioroshi* then that is wonderful, but at the same time, you need to ensure that you stop on occasion to take a break. This will be quite helpful in working to avoid injury. If you are overworking your muscles without a break, you are unnecessarily putting yourself at risk of injury and you are not likely to enjoy the results. Taking care of your body is the primary thing that you need to be concerned with, not stressing over practising your cuts for another two hours because of the perceived benefits. The time you spend in the *dojo* will be much more effective with a few small breaks sprinkled into the day. 

In 1999, after studying for four years full-time at the British School of Osteopathy – the country's oldest osteopathic school – Nigel qualified as a registered osteopath with a 2.1 Bachelor of Science Honours degree.

In addition to having his own clinic in East Sussex, he works in private practices in Kent, Reigate and Epsom in Surrey. As a teacher, he is currently principal lecturer in Osteopathic Technique at Surrey Institute of Osteopathic Medicine, a Recognised Qualification (RQ) Osteopathic Degree Course based in North East Surrey College in Ewell.





[www.kendo.org.uk](http://www.kendo.org.uk)  
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