



Halifax Kendo Club

Terms Used In Kendo

A variety of words and phrases for Kendoka to understand



1 Terminology

The following is a listing of some of the more common terms in Kendo. The list is by no means exhaustive, but it is extensive enough to cover the majority of terms and terminology a **Kendoka** should require.

When a definition has a term in **Bold Font**, this term appears in this listing as its own entry. Terms which are in *Italics* are direct translations from the original Japanese language.

1.1 Counting in Japanese

The following is a list of the English numbers one through ten in their equivalent Japanese. Following that are the Japanese terms to enumerate counting, namely “first”, “second”, and “third”, etc.

- **Ichi** : One
- **Ni** : Two
- **San** : Three
- **Shi** : Four
- **Go** : Five
- **Roku** : Six
- **Shichi** : Seven
- **Hachi** : Eight
- **Kyuu** : Nine
- **Juu** : Ten

- **Ipponme** : First
- **Nihonme** : Second
- **Sanbonme** : Third
- **Yonhonme** : Fourth
- **Gohonme** : Fifth
- **Ropponme** : Sixth
- **Nanahonme** : Seventh

1.2 Courtesies and Commands

The following is a list of the common courtesies and commands used in a **Kendo Dojo**.

1.2.1 Courtesies

- **Arigato Gozaimashita** : “Thank You” (for practicing with me)

- **Domo Arigato Gozaimashita** : “Thank You” (very polite context)
- **Onigaishimasu** : “Please” (practice with / teach me)
- **Otagai ni Rei** : “Bow to your peers”
- **Sensei ni Rei** : “Bow to the Sensei”
- **Shomen ni Rei** : “Bow to the Shomen”

1.2.2 Commands

- **Hajime** : Begin / Start
- **Kamae-To** : Assume your Stance.
- **Men-Tore** : Take off Your **Men**.
- **Men-Tsuke** : Put on Your **Men**.
- **Mokuso** : Meditation
- **Osame-To** : Put away your Weapon.
- **Seiza** : Assume Seiza, the Formal Sitting Position.
- **Seretsu** : Line up.
- **Sonkyo** : Assume Sonkyo, the Formal Crouching Position.
- **Yame** : Stop.
- **Yasume** : Break / Rest Period.

1.3 Common Terms

The following is a list of general **Kendo** terms.

- **Ai** : (prefix) “Balanced”, (suffix) “Integration”
- **Aite** : Opponent
- **Ai-Kakari Geiko** : Both **Kendoka** perform **Kakari Geiko** simultaneously.
- **Ashi** : *Foot*
- **Ashi-Sabaki** : Footwork.
- **Ayumi-Ashi** : “Walking” Footwork
- **Bogu** : Kendo Armor. See **Men, Kote, Do, and Tare**.
- **Bokuto** : Wooden Practice Sword.
- **Chikama** : A distance that is shorter than **Issoku Itto**
- **Chisai** : Small
- **Chisai Waza** : Small Techniques.
- **Chudan no Kamae** : Mid Level **Kamae**. The “*Kamae of Water*”.
- **Chudan Hanmi no Kamae** : A variant of **Chudan no Kamae** while using the **Kodachi**.
- **Daito** : The Long **Shinai** used in **Nito no Kamae**.
- **Dan** : Step or Level.
- **Datotsu** : Strike or Thrust.

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- **Datotsu Bu** : The portion of the **Shinai** that strikes are made with. (The upper 1/3 above the **Nakayui**; the **Monouchi**.)
- **Datotsu Bui** : Portion of the **Bogu** where one can attempt to land a strike.
- **De** : “Coming out”
- **Debana Waza** : Technique where one strikes as the **Aite**’s strike is being executed.
- **Do** : Abdomen target / protector
- **Dojo** : “Practice Hall”.
- **Fumi Komi** : Lunging footwork practice.
- **Gedan no Kamae** : Low Level **Kamae**. The “*Kamae of Earth*”.
- **Gedan Hanmi no Kamae** : A variant of **Gedan no Kamae** while using the **Kodachi**.
- **Geiko** : See **Keiko**.
- **Gi** : The traditional practice shirt.
- **Gyaku** : “Reversed” or “Opposite”.
- **Hakama** : The traditional practice pants.
- **Harai Waza** : Waza where one strikes the opponents **Shinai** to create a **Suki**.
- **Hasaki** : “Cutting Edge”
- **Hasso no Kamae** : Variant of **Jodan no Kamae** . “*The Kamae of Wood*”.
- **Haya Suburi** : Jumping **Suburi**. Also referred to as **Choyaku Suburi**.
- **Hidari** : Left (direction).
- **Hiki Waza** : Techniques where ones strikes moving backwards.
- **Hiraki** : verb, “*To Open*”.
- **Hiraki Ashi** : Circular side steps.
- **Hirauchi** : To Strike with the flat of the **Shinai** .
- **Huhree** : Korean equivalent of **Do**.
- **Ichi Dan Suburi** : One Step **Suburi**
- **Iri-Mi** : The Fundamental **Kodachi Kamae**: the action of stepping into your **Aite**’s **Maai**.
- **Issoku Itto no Maai** : Distance at which one can launch an attack (or evade one) in one step.
- **Ji-Geiko** : Free sparring practice.
- **Jin-Bu** : Portion of the **Shinai** below the **Monouchi**.
- **Jodan no Kamae** : High Level **Kamae**. The “*The Kamae of Fire*”
- **Joge Buri** : “Up-Down” **Suburi**
- **Kaeshi Waza** : **Waza** where one receives the **Aite**’s **Shinai** and then counter attacks.
- **Kakari Geiko** : All out sparring practice.
- **Kamae** : Stance
- **Katate** : “*One-Handed*”
- **Katate Waza** : One-Handed **Waza**.
- **Katsugi Waza** : “*Shouldering the Sword*” technique.
- **Keiko** : “*Practice*”, “*Training*”, “*Study*”. Interchangeable with **Geiko**.
- **Kendo** : “*The Way of the Sword*”.
- **Kendoka** : **Kendo** Student.
- **Kensen** : Tip of the **Shinai**
- **Ki** : “*Spirit*” or “*Mental Energy*”.
- **Kiai** : Expression of spirit through your voice. “*Energy Integration*”
- **Kigurai** : “*Noble Presence, Bearing, Pride, Dignity*”
- **Kihaku** : “*Spirit*”
- **Kihon** : “*Basic*”
- **Ki Ken Tai no Ichi** : “*Mind, Sword, and Body as One*”
- **Kiri Kaeshi** : Coordinated practice of **Shomen, Tai-Atari**, and **Sayu-Men** with an **Aite**.
- **Kisei** : “*Spirit, Vigor*”
- **Kobushi** : “*Fist*”.
- **Kodachi** : The Short Sword used in the **Nihon Kendo no Kata**.
- **Kohai** : “*Junior student*”.
- **Kokoro** : “*Spirit*” or “*Mind*”, “*Mental*”.
- **Kokoro no Kamae** : “*Spiritual / Mental Stance*”; A mindset or attitude.
- **Kote** : “*Fore-arm*” target, Glove.
- **Ma** : “*Space*”
- **Maai** : Distance or Forward (direction). “*Distance Integration*”.
- **Men** : Helmet, head target.
- **Metsuke** : “*Point of Observation*”. “*Enzan no Metsuke*”: Fixing your eyes on a distant mountain.
- **Migi** : Right (direction)
- **Monouchi** : See **Datotsu Bu**
- **Morote** : “*Two-Handed*”
- **Morote Waza** : Two-Handed **Waza**
- **Mu** : A prefix indicating the negation in the Japanese Language.
- **Mune** : Chest portion of the **Do**.
- **Mushin** : “*No Mind*”. In very basic terms, **Mushin** is acting on reflex alone; not thinking about what to do or the effects of an action.
- **Muhree** : Korean equivalent of **Men**.
- **Nakayui** : The leather tie on the **Shinai** 1/3 the length of the **Shinai** from the top.
- **Naname Buri** : **Joge Suburi** with the strikes angled at about 30° to 45°. Sometimes also mixed with **Hiraki-Ashi**.
- **Nuki Waza** : **Waza** where one dodges the **Aite**’s strike and counter attacks
- **Nidan Suburi** : Two step **Suburi**.
- **Nidan Waza** : Two Step technique.
- **Nihon Kendo no Kata** : “*The Japanese Kendo Kata*”. A set of formal movements which form the basis of modern **Kendo**.

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- **Nito no Kamae** : A **Kamae** using two **Shinai**; the **Daito** and the **Shoto**.
- **Oji Waza** : Counter Attacking **Waza**
- **Oki** : Big.
- **Oki-Waza** : Big Techniques.
- **Okuri-ashi** : Sliding step footwork. The standard footwork in **Kendo**.
- **Omote** : Left side of the **Shinai**.
- **Rei** : “Bow”
- **Renzoku** : “Continuous”.
- **Sage-To** : Relaxed standing position with the **Shinai** held at ones side.
- **Sakigawa** : Leather Cup on the end of the **Shinai**.
- **San Dan Suburi** : Three Step **Suburi**
- **Seigan no Kamae** : A variant of **Chudan no Kamae** .
- **Sempai** : “Senior Student”.
- **Sensei** : “Teacher”.
- **Seme** : “Pressure”.
- **Shiai** : A **Kendo** Match where points are scored.
- **Shikake Waza** : Technique to Initiate a strike.
- **Shin** : “Mind”.
- **Shinai** : Bamboo Practice Sword.
- **Shoto** : The Short **Shinai** used in **Nito no Kamae**.
- **Shomen** : (1) The center or front of the **Men**. (2) The symbolic head of the **Dojo**.
- **Son Mok** : Korean equivalent of **Kote**.
- **Suburi** : “Swing / Strike Practice”.
- **Suki** : An opening (in ones defense).
- **Suri-Ashi** : Sliding ones feet as you step.
- **Sutemi** : “All or nothing”. Literally: “Body Abandoning”
- **Tachi** : The Long Sword used in the **Nihon Kendo no Kata**.
- **Tai-Atari** : “Bodycheck” or “Push”.
- **Tai-To** : Position with the **Shinai** held at 45° at your hip in preparation to assume **Kamae**.
- **Tare** : Waist Protector.
- **Tenegui** : Head Towel.
- **Tenouchi** : “Drying a Tea Ceremony Towel”. Balanced strength of hands at the moment you make a **Datotsu**.
- **Toma** : A distance that is longer than **Issoku Itto**.
- **Tsireum** : Korean equivalent of **Tsuki**.
- **Tsuba** : Thumb Guard of the **Shinai**.
- **Tsuba-Dome** : Rubber stopper that holds **Tsuba** in place.
- **Tsubazeriai** : The position when two **Kendoka** are in close proximity during **Keiko**, **Tsuba** against **Tsuba**.
- **Tsuka** : The handle of the **Shinai**
- **Tsuka-Gashira** : The very bottom of the **Tsuka**.
- **Tsuka-Gawa** : Leather covering the **Tsuka** of the **Shinai**
- **Tsuki** : Throat target.
- **Tsuki-dare** : Throat protector.
- **Tsuru** : String on the top side of the **Shinai**
- **Uchi Gomi** : Lunging and Striking Practice.
- **Uchiotoshi Waza** : Techniques for Striking the **Aite**'s **Shinai** mid-strike.
- **Ura** : The Right side of the **Shinai**
- **Ushiro** : Backward (direction).
- **Waki Gamae** : Variant of **Gedan no Kamae**
- **Waza** : Technique(s)
- **Yuko Datotsu** : “Effective Strike”.
- **Zanshin** : Follow through, Sustained Mental and Physical Alertness.
- **Zekken** : Name tag worn on the **Tare**.

(This list will be added to as time progresses. Check for updates. ☺)

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