

A Guide for New & Prospective Students

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THE CONCEPT & PURPOSE OF KENDO

The Concept of Kendō

The concept of kendō is to discipline the human character through the application of the principles of the katana.

The Purpose of Kendō

The purpose of kendō is:
to mold the mind and body,
to cultivate a vigorous spirit,
and through correct and rigid training,
to strive for improvement in the art of kendō,
to hold in esteem human courtesy and honor,
to associate with others with sincerity,
and forever pursue the cultivation of oneself.

This will make one be able:
to love his/her country and society,
to contribute to the development of culture
and to promote peace and prosperity among all peoples.



*Figure 1: The kanji for dō, literally “the way”. The All Japan Kendō Federation’s *Concept and Purpose of Kendō*, as well as the *Mindset of Kendō Instruction*, embody the concept of dō.*

The Concept & Purpose of Kendō was established March 20, 1975, by the All Japan Kendō Federation.

THE MINDSET OF KENDO INSTRUCTION

Significance of the Shinai

For the correct transmission and development of kendō, efforts should be made to teach the correct way of handling the shinai in accordance with the principles of the sword.

Kendō is a way where the individual cultivates ones mind (the self) by aiming for shin-ki-ryoku-ichi utilizing the shinai. The “*shinai-sword*” should be not only directed at ones opponent but also at the self. Thus, the primary aim of instruction is to encourage the unification of mind, body and shinai through training in this discipline.

Rei-Hō – Etiquette

Emphasis should be placed on etiquette to encourage respect for partners, and nurture people with a dignified and humane character. Even

Note: The *Concept and Purpose of Kendo* and the *Mindset of Kendo Instruction* were established by the All Japan Kendo Federation in 1975 and 2007 respectively.

in competitive matches, importance is placed on upholding etiquette in kendō. The primary emphasis should thus be placed on instruction in the spirit and forms of rei-ho (etiquette) so that the practitioner can develop a modest attitude to life, and realize the ideal of koken-chiai.

Lifelong Kendō

Students should be encouraged to apply the full measure of care to issues of safety and health, and to devote themselves to the development of their character throughout their lives.

Kendō is a “*way of life*” that successive generations can learn together. The prime objective of instructing kendō is to encourage the practitioner to discover and define their way in life through training in the techniques of kendō. Thus, the practitioner will be able to develop a rich outlook on life and be able to put the culture of kendō into use, thereby benefiting from its value in their daily lives through increased social vigor.

The Mindset of Kendō Instruction was established March 14, 2007, by the All Japan Kendō Federation.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Kingston Kendo Club and congratulations on deciding to take an interest in the study of Kendo. Kendo is a rigorous and demanding martial art with emphasis on both physical and mental discipline. This guide is meant to give you information on some of the very basics of Kendo such as the equipment used by a beginner, rules and formalities of the dojo, and the terms used in a Kendo class. If you have any further questions which are not answered in this booklet, please be sure to ask!



COVID-19 PROTOCOLS & ROWAN'S LAW

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

The club has enacted Covid-19 protocols to help keep everyone safe. By following these protocols we can continue to practice kendo while mitigating the risks of covid (re)infection.

1. Masks must be worn at all times.
2. All members, visitors, and prospective students must self-screen before attending.
3. If you have any symptoms, e.g., coughing, sore throat, fever, runny nose, loss of taste, prolonged (new) headache, etc... *you may not enter the building or participate in practice.* **You must receive a negative result on a Covid-19 test, or be free of symptoms for 24 hours before being allowed to enter.**

ROWAN'S LAW

As of 2019 [Rowan's Law](#) is in effect for all amateur sport & recreation in Canada, including Kendo. Rowan's Law aims to minimize the dangers of concussion in sport as well as raise general awareness of concussion as a preventative measure.

The Ontario governing body for kendo, [Kendo Ontario](#), has provided guidelines for concussion awareness in accordance with Rowan's Law.

All club members are *required* to read the "Concussion Protocol" information package. Also, all club members that are or will be participating in fencing practice with armor must read the "Pre-Bogu Concussion Education" information package as well as sign and submit to the the club the confirmation form.

The Concussion Protocol can be found [here](#).

The Pre-Bogu Concussion Education package can be found [here](#).

CLASSES AND FACILITY RULES

CLASS LOCATION

Classes are located in the upstairs dojo at Tallack's Martial Arts, 2777 Princess St. Please enter through main door on Princess St. Parking is available on the East side of the building.



Figure 2: Tallack Martial Arts. "P" indicates parking and "E" is the entrance.

FACILITY RULES

1. Food is not permitted in the building.
2. Please bring water in a resealable container.
3. All footwear is to be removed in the entryway of the building.

DOJO FORMALITY

The following rules are centered around general dojo etiquette. In this context, dojo specifically refers to the practice area.

1. Please arrive 10–15 minutes before class to allow time to change.
2. Shoes are never to be worn inside the dojo; please remove them before you enter.
3. Always bow before entering and leaving the dojo.
4. Practice equipment such as a shinai or bokuto ought to be treated as though they are live weapons while in the dojo.
5. Do not step over shinai or bokuto; go around.
6. Horseplay or roughhousing is unacceptable in the dojo.
7. If possible always walk behind other kendoka who are lined up, standing or seated, adjusting their gear. If this is not possible, please make a small bow as you walk in front of them with your right hand extended slightly.
8. When the command is given to line up, please do so quickly. Students line up in descending order according to dan ranks. If equal rank then according to bogu, uniform, non-uniform, and age.
9. When the command to sit (seiza) is given, students sit from most to least senior in a “domino” effect, e.g., one assumes seiza following the more senior person beside them.
10. A series of commands will be given in order to conduct the opening (and closing) formalities of the class.

Note: Don't worry, you will be shown the correct procedure for all formalities used during practice.

| Ranking System in Kendo | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Unranked | New students |
| Kyu Grades | |
| 6th Kyu | |
| 5th Kyu | |
| 4th Kyu | Begin bogu practice |
| 3rd Kyu | |
| 2nd Kyu | |
| 1st Kyu | ~1 year (minimum) |
| Dan Level | |
| 1st Dan | Beginner phase |
| 2nd Dan | |
| 3rd Dan | |
| 4th Dan | Intermediate phase |
| 5th Dan | Sensei, ~15 years |
| 6th Dan | |
| 7th Dan | Advanced phase |
| 8th Dan | |

Table 1: Summary of ranks in Kendo. Belts are not worn to indicate rank however the system does follow the familiar “belt system”; kyu ranks are a series of “white belts” and dan ranks are equivalent to “black belts”.

Beginning and Ending Formalities

| Japanese | English |
|---------------|--|
| Seiretsu | Line up |
| Seiza | Assume seiza, the seated position |
| Ki o tsuke | Sit up straight (while in seiza) |
| Mokuso | Begin short meditation |
| Yame | Finish/end mokuso |
| Shomen ni rei | Bow to the shomen (symbolic dojo head) |
| Sensei ni rei | Bow to the sensei |
| Otagai ni rei | Bow to your peers |

Table 2: Beginning and ending formalities observed in a Kendo practice.

TERMINOLOGY

CARDINALS, ORDINALS, & BASIC PRONUNCIATION

| BASIC JAPANESE COUNTING, ORDINAL NUMBERS, & PRONUNCIATION | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Cardinals | | Kata & Bokuto Waza Ordinals | | | Basic Pronunciation | | |
| <i>English</i> | <i>Japanese</i> | <i>English</i> | <i>Kendō Kata</i> | <i>Bokutō Waza</i> | <i>Vowels</i> | <i>Voiced As</i> | <i>International</i> |
| One | Ichi | First | Ipponme | Ichi | A | ah | ɑ |
| Two | Ni | Second | Nihonme | Ni | E | eh | e |
| Three | San | Third | Sanbonme | San | I | ee | i |
| Four | Shi | Fourth | Yonhonme | Yon | I | ee (voiceless) | i̥ |
| Five | Go | Fifth | Gohonme | Go | I | ee (long) | i: |
| Six | Roku | Sixth | Ropponme | Roku | O | oh | o |
| Seven | Shichi | Seventh | Nanahonme | Nana | O | oh (long) | o: |
| Eight | Hachi | Eighth | — | Hachi | U | oo | u |
| Nine | Kyū | Ninth | — | Kyū | U | oo (voiceless) | u̥ |
| Ten | Jū | Tenth | — | — | <i>Combinations</i> | <i>Voiced As</i> | <i>International</i> |
| | | | | | AE | eye | ai |
| | | | | | AI | eye | ai |
| | | | | | EI | ay | ei |

The most useful part of this table for beginners is counting from 1–10 in Japanese as repetitions for various exercises are commonly counted in sets of ten.

Table 3: Basic Japanese counting, ordinal numbers, & pronunciation. Cardinal numbers indicate amount, ordinal numbers indicate numeric order. *Voiced as* gives an English term approximating the Japanese term, and *International* gives the International Phonetic Alphabet pronunciation.

CLASS COMMANDS

| Class Commands | |
|----------------|--|
| Japanese | English |
| Hajime | Begin |
| Yame | Stop |
| Kamae-to | Assume your stance |
| Osame-to | Put away your weapon |
| Sonkyo | Assume sonkyo, the formal crouching position |
| Yasume | Break/rest period |

Table 4: Common commands used during a Kendo practice.

NAMES AND LOCATIONS OF THE SHINAI & BOKUTO

The following will help you familiarize yourself with the names and components of the shinai (bamboo practice sword) and the bokuto (wooden sword) before your first practice(s).

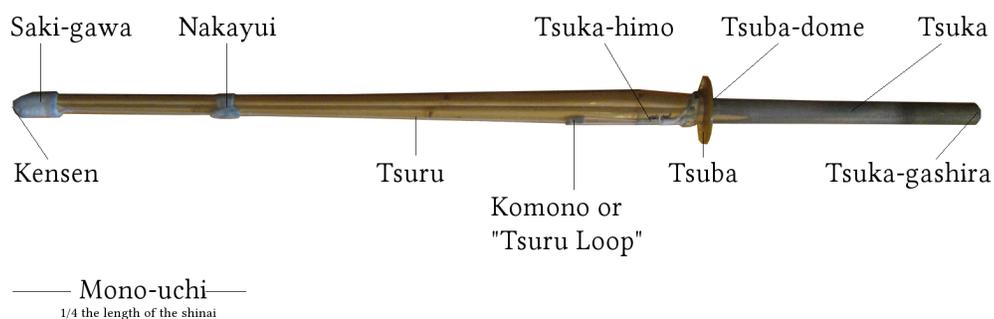


Figure 3: Names and locations of the shinai.

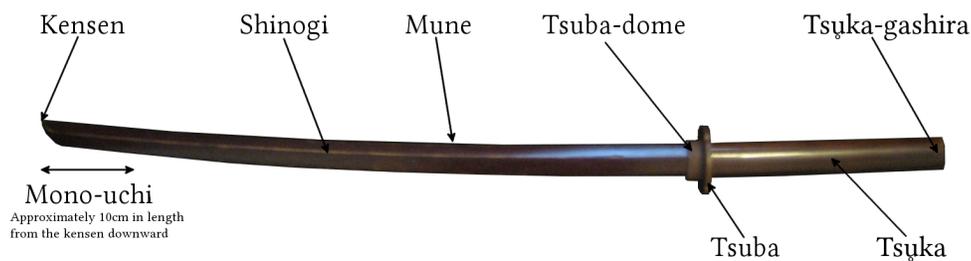


Figure 4: Names and locations of the bokuto.

WHAT'S NEXT?

TRYING A CLASS?

Your first week of classes is free and is considered your trial period to see if Kendo is what you are looking for. During this time you do not need to purchase any equipment or pay any fees. However upon joining, students will be required to purchase some equipment and pay the required club fees.

What to Wear?

If participating, please bring a change of clothes with you that you are comfortable wearing in a group, can move easily in, and don't mind sweating a bit in. A sweat suit, track suit, shorts and a T-shirt, or equivalent is recommended. If you wish to wear a martial arts uniform that you have from previous training, please do so.

If you have long hair it is recommended that you have it pulled back into a pony-tail (or equivalent) to keep it out of your way. If you do, please do so with an elastic.

FEES

New members. All members are required to be registered with and pay their Canadian Kendo Federation (CKF) membership fee of \$50. The CKF provides, among many other things, liability insurance to its member clubs which is required by the building we use for our practices. This fee is annual and paid to the CKF via their [website](#).

The quarterly club membership fee, \$105 for students or military and \$120 for everyone else, is required upon joining. Membership fees are due at the beginning of each quarter or can be paid in advance. If you join mid-session, your quarterly membership fee is adjusted to cover *only the remainder of the current quarter*.

Note: Please contact the club before hand to let us know you are coming. Interested students are welcome to watch any practice, but may participate only in beginner or mixed classes.

Start-up Fees at a Glance

Mandatory

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| CKF membership | |
| - youth | \$15/year |
| - adult | \$50/year |
| Club membership | \$105-\$120/3 months |
| Shinai | approx. \$40 |

Recommended

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Bokuto (Tachi) | approx. \$20-\$40 |
|----------------|-------------------|

Table 5: Summary of the "start-up" fees for new members of the KKC.

Club Fee & Equipment Cost Details

Club & CKF Fees

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| CKF membership | |
| - youth | \$15 (annual) |
| - adult | \$50 (annual) |
| Club quarterly membership | |
| - student/military | \$105 |
| - adult | \$120 |

Equipment Fees

| | |
|-----------|-------------|
| Shinai | \$40+ |
| Bokuto | |
| - tachi | \$20-\$40+ |
| - kodachi | \$20-\$40+ |
| Uniform | \$50-\$150+ |
| Bogu | \$300+ |

Table 6: Summary of the various club and equipment fees. Equipment costs are approximate.

EQUIPMENT

Shinai and bokuto. New members are required to purchase their own shinai. Purchase of a bokuto is encouraged, but not required for beginners. Shinai and bokuto both generally cost around \$40+ each.

Uniform. Uniforms may be purchased by the student whenever they wish to invest in one, but are not required for the first few months of practice. Uniforms range from \$50-\$150+.

Bogu. Bogu (sparring armour) may be purchased after the KKC instructors have decided the student has attained a firm grasp on the fundamentals of Kendo. This usually takes between 6 to 12 months of regular practice. New bogu will usually cost a minimum of \$300+.

Note: Bokuto come in two sizes. The long-sword (tachi) and the short-sword (kodachi). Both tachi and kodachi will eventually need to be invested in for learning kata, however beginners will use only the tachi.



QUESTIONS?

For further information please feel free to e-mail the club at kendokingston@gmail.com.