

## **Instruction: What to expect as a beginner (ver. 1.0)**

### **GENERAL SCHEDULED TOPICS**

Rei, etiquette and Mitori Geiko	First session
Ashisabaki / Learning to walk correctly	1 <sup>st</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup> week
Suburi / Cutting for the first time	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> week
Receiving / Uchikomi	4 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> week
Tying it all together / Fumikomi and Issoku-ittou	8 <sup>th</sup> - ongoing
Bogu	As directed

These are approximations of the time required, some people progress more rapidly than others. Do not gauge your success in Kendo by the speed that you cover the material. This is not necessarily an inverse proportion ☺

### **PRELIMINARY STEPS AND PREMISES**

- Put on the Keiko-gi and Hakama properly; in the beginning training comfortable clothes that allow freedom of movement are appropriate
- The Shinai represents a sword (Katana, Ken); treat it with respect; do not step over it; when picking it up from the floor or placing it on the floor, drop the left knee and carefully handle it. It is not a toy
- Check equipment for damage before each practice, especially the Shinai. A splintered Shinai is dangerous, especially to your opponent. If it is damaged, ask your senior to repair it. It is always a good idea to have a spare Shinai with you
- Perform adequate stretching and warm up exercises
- Check your physical condition and health; hygiene; learn how to wash Keiko-gi and Hakama
- It is equally valuable to observe others practice (Mitori Geiko). Pay attention to others; show consideration when others are practicing

### **ABOUT THE DOJO**

- The term Dojo comes from Buddhism meaning "place to study," which originally referred to the platform Buddha meditated on
- Commit yourself to sincere training when entering the Dojo; really appreciate having a place to practice and people to practice with; maintain cleanliness; take care of your own belongings neatly (eg, shoes, clothes)
- Feel obliged to leave your shoes as close to the entrance as reasonable

Know the location of the shoumen. In other schools/dojos with a religious tradition, this may be referred to as the “kamiza” (Shinto) or “shizen” (Buddhist). Often times this was the location of a shrine. As we are a secular institution, we bow to the “shoumen” as a way of showing respect towards our practice and the tradition of Kendo. It has no religious significance. We have chosen specifically not to use “kamiza” or “shizen” so that our members may feel free to bring whatever religious tradition they choose to observe.

## **ABOUT REI**

- Rei is a way to pay respect and show acknowledgement
- Upon entry to the Dojo, enter then Rei. This is the way to pay respect to the Dojo and to commit yourself to a sincere practice.
- There are other appropriate times to use Rei, these will be discussed during practice.
- When entering we announce Shitsurei shimasu, and at leaving Shitsurei shimashita.

## **BASIC UNDERSTANDINGS**

- Make it a habit to Seiza quietly at the beginning and the end
- Always do warming up and stretching before you do Kendo
- Be punctual and prepared to lead
- Always value the basics
- Practice repeatedly and many, many, many times; practice with someone formidable
- Practice with proper attitude
- Practice with courtesy and respect
- Grasp the value of watching; humbly learn merits of others by observing
- Make a commitment to Kendo and practice with initiative
- Practice with determination
- Value graceful, elegant, dignified Kendo
- Be prepared physically and mentally, then practice with eagerness
- Know your capabilities and practice accordingly
- Everything you see and do can be insightful teaching
- Always consider ways to improve
- Bring a fresh attitude into each practice
- Be conscious of safety
- Be conscious of health and hygiene
- Do not overextend unreasonably
- Be unobsessed with winning, practice with the desire to study the principles
- For students, consider how school work and Kendo can be balanced

## **BENEFITS OF KENDO TRAINING**

- Physical conditioning, maturity of mind
- Etiquette, courtesy, morality, ethos, respect, empathy
- Concentration, focus, attentiveness, eagerness to learn
- Agility, dexterity, coordination
- Endurance, strength, perseverance
- Care of equipment, tools
- Promptness, reliability, accountability
- Orderliness, neatness