

## ABOUT KENDO

剣道

Kendo, the Way of the Sword, is an art derived from Japanese samurai swordsmanship. It is rooted in the traditions of Bushido, the code of conduct for the samurai. As a result, its practice emphasizes important values like courtesy, etiquette and humility. Kendo is an exhilarating art/sport that is demanding to learn, training the mind as well as the body.

Kendo equipment consists of the swords, uniform and armor. There are two types of wooden swords used. First, the *bokken* or *bokuto*, a solid wooden sword made of oak or another suitable hard wood and has a similar shape and balance of a real Japanese *katana* (sword). The *bokken* is used for basics and forms practice (*kata*). Second, the *shinai*, is made up of four bamboo staves and leather. The *shinai* is used for full-contact sparring practice. The uniform or *dogi* consists of woven cotton top called a *keikogi* and pleated skirt-like trousers called a *hakama*. The armor (*bogu*) consists of four parts: the helmet (*men*), the body protector (*do*), the gloves (*kote*), and the hip and groin protector (*tare*). Not surprisingly, modern kendo armor design is fashioned after that of the samurai.



Almost all Japanese martial arts have a set of *kata*. Kendo is no exception. *Kata* are pre-set sequences of motions which illustrate a single set of concepts and techniques in a pre-established setting, allowing the practitioner to delve deeply into these concepts. Kendo *kata* is always done with a partner. Repetitive practice of *kata* internalizes the lessons of the *kata* for the practitioner. Kendo *kata* are practiced with the *bokken*. There are ten kendo *kata* specified by the All Japan Kendo Federation.

**The goal of Kendo as a Martial Way is to discipline the human character through the physical, mental and spiritual application of sword training principles.**

### Basic Terminology

Kendo	剣道	the way of the sword
Dojo	道場	the training hall/area
Kiai	気合	projection of fighting spirit into a yell or cry
Shizentai	自然体	natural standing position
Maii	間合い	spacing; fighting distance between opponents
Keiko	稽古	practice sparring
Suburi	素振り	<i>shinai</i> swinging practice
Ashi-sabaki	足さばき	footwork

Kakari geiko	掛り稽古	all-out attack practice
Kata	型	a series of set movements and techniques that teach proper form and timing; in kendo, this is done with a partner using bokken
Zanshin	残心	follow-through of a strike; mental & physical alertness against an opponent's attack
Ki-ken-tai-ichi	気剣体一	The central concept of kendo: spirit/mind, sword, and body must all move as one

### Etiquette Useful Phrases

Onegai-shimasu	お願いします	I make a request of you (to train with me)
Arigatou gozaimashita	ありがとうございました	Thank you very much (for training with me)

### Equipment

Shinai	竹刀	bamboo sword
Tsuba	鍔	sword guard
Bokken/bokuto	木剣・木刀	wooden sword
Bogu	防具	protective armor (collectively)
Men	面	head gear
Kote	籠手	gloves/forearm guards
Do	胴	body protector
Tare	垂れ	waist protector
Keikogi	稽古着	upper-body uniform
Hakama	袴	traditional skirt-like pants
Tenugui	手拭い	traditional hand towel



### Techniques

Uchi	打ち	strike
Waza	技	techniques
Men-uchi	面打ち	head strike
Kote-uchi	小手打ち	forearm/wrist strike
Do-uchi	胴打ち	body strike
Tsuki	突き	throat strike
Kirikaeshi	切り返し	continuous strikes of right & left <i>men</i> alternately
Tsuba-zeri-ai	鍔ぜり合い	close-contact fencing with the <i>shinai</i> crossed in a vertical position
Hiki-waza	引き技	stepping back technique
Debana waza	出鼻技	technique to execute a strike as your opponent is about to strike

### Reference Resources:

\* There are many more resources out there; this is a starter list.

Donohue, John J. *Complete Kendo*. Tuttle Publishing, 1999.

Ozawa, Hiroshi. *Kendo: the Definitive Guide*. Kodansha International, 1997.

Sasamori, Junzo and Gordon Warner. *This is Kendo: The Art of Japanese Fencing*. Tuttle Publishing, 1964. (A little outdated, but the explanations of history & traditions are great!)