“a physical path to self-mastery”
The Concept of Iaido is…

to discipline the human character through the application of the principles of the Katana.
Welcome IAIDO student,

Congratulations on your decision to begin or continue your IAIDO training with us at Castle Rock IAIDO. We are confident that you will very much enjoy and benefit from our traditional, Japanese sword-drawing program.

This supplementary Student Handbook will help you assimilate to the program faster and will also accelerate and deepen your learning of this powerful, traditional martial art. Train diligently, but do not place any unrealistic expectations upon yourself, and you shall gain the most value out of your training here.

MASAGATSU AGATSU! True victory is victory over oneself!

Sincerely,

Sean Hannon
DOJO CHO (道場長)
Castle Rock AIKIDO & IAIDO
The Purpose of Practicing Iaido 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 Iaido,
To hold in esteem human courtesy and honor,
To associate with others with sincerity,
And to forever pursue the cultivation of oneself.

This will cause one to be able
To love his country and society,
To contribute to the development of culture,
And to promote peace and prosperity among all people.
What is Iaido?

Iaido (pronounced ‘ee’- ‘eye’- ‘doh’) is a traditional Japanese martial art associated with the smooth, controlled movements of drawing the sword from its scabbard, striking or cutting an opponent, removing blood from the blade, and then replacing the sword in the scabbard. Most students who study IAIDO use an unsharpened sword (IAITO). Some advanced practitioners of Iaido use a sharpened metal sword (SHINKEN).

Because Iaido teaches the use of actual metal weaponry, it is almost entirely based on the teaching of forms, or KATA. Iaido’s emphasis on precise, controlled, fluid motion, it is sometimes referred to as “moving Zen.”

IAI = “Drawing the sword”

DO = Way / Path

IAIDO = The way of drawing the sword
The designation of “sword-drawing technique” as a distinct BUDO (martial) form, IAI-DO, was made only in the 20th century. But the essence of IAI-DO, a non-combatative discipline engaged in for the individual’s spiritual cultivation, is clearly a product of Edo-period thought (1603-1868).

IAI-JUTSU, the classical sword-drawing art practice for combative purposes, was contained in the curricula of hundreds of martial traditions that existed prior to the Edo-period. For the KENSHI (sword practitioner) who specialized in IAI-JUTSU, the sword was to be drawn quickly and struck accurately onto the target. During the peaceful Edo period some of the RYU (schools or styles) that featured IAI-JUTSU died out, but the majority continued to function, while new ones emerged. The socially privileged Edo-period warriors continued to wear DAISHO (the combination of long and short sword), and as long as the sword served as the symbol of the warrior class, there were those warriors who saw a use beyond the practical for sword-drawing techniques. These visionaries were responsible for employing the sword as a spiritual instrument, using it in a manner distinctly different from that of IAI-JUTSU; these men were the pioneers of the disciplines that are called IAI-DO.

Orthodox tradition claims the original essence of IAI-DO to be the product of the genius of HOJO JINSUKE SHIGENOBI, more popularly known as HAYASHIZAKI (or RINZAKI) JINSUKE.

There are all sorts of ideas as to the details of his life, but most of them are pure fiction. In the 20th century, in order to bring prestige to IAI-DO, JINSUKE’s name has been accorded a high place of honor among devotees of this BUDO form.

Only a few facts are definitely known about HAYASHIZAKI JINSUKE. He was born in Sagami (present Kanagawa Prefecture) in the mid-16th century. That he had combat experience is unproven, but the BUJUTSU TAIHAKU SEIDEN, an Edo-period manual, states that he spent seven years, from 1595 to 1601 studying swordsmanship. He then devised a system of sword-drawing techniques that he called BATTO-JUTSU, a term equivalent to “IAI-JUTSU,” and gave his style the name JUNPAKE DEN.

To test himself and to establish his teachings, JINSUKE toured various provinces in MUSHUGYO fashion. He gathered many disciples. When he was 73 years of age (around 1616) he toured for the second time then disappeared; no one ever heard of him again. HAYASHIZAKI JINSUKE’s influence on swordsmen was great; during the Edo period more than 200 RYU primarily concerned with sword-drawing techniques emerged, stimulated by his teachings.
The successors to HAYASHIZAKI JINSUKE embodied their teachings under the name SHIN MUSO HAYASHIZAKI RYU, generally subsumed today in the MUSO SHINDEN RYU. JINSUKE’s successors can be traced with certainty through the 11th headmaster. Thereafter, a split in the RYU developed, and one segment terminated with the teachings of NAKAYAMA (HAKUDO) HIROMICHI, the 16th headmaster; the other segment claims continuity in its teachings down to the present, and 19th headmaster, KONO MOMONORI. Modern exponents of the MUSO SHINDEN-RYU generally regard the line that ended with NAKAYAMA HIROMICHI as the true centerline of the RYU.

All evidence indicates that HAYASHIZAKI JINSUKE may have taught only a kind of “quick-draw” technique. His choice of the word “BATTO” (literally, “striking sword”) to describe the sword in action affords a clue, for the term “BATTO” includes the implied meaning “to strike instantly” with the sword. Thus, JINSUKE’s method differed little from the older systems of IAI-JUTSU, many of which also used the term “BATTO-JUTSU.” It also appears that JINSUKE may have taught that his system of drawing the sword was to be used only in a limited way during combat, that is, only as a defensive art useful in meeting the attack of an assailant. If this is so, his method differed from the older IAI-JUTSU systems, which were offensive and defensive systems as the situation demanded.

In the hands of HAYASHIZAKI JINSUKE’s successors the MUSO SHINDEN-RYU underwent both technical and philosophical changes to a degree that greatly reduced its original combat effectiveness. These changes are further evidence of the social forces working in the daily lives of Edo-period citizens. These forces were reshaping the role of the warrior in that society, and in fact were challenging his very special social position. With this, the Edo-period warrior was reduced to being a warrior in little more than name.

Two of the technical characteristics of the MUSO SHINDEN-RYU method of sword-drawing indicate that its exponents introduced combatively inane mannerisms. The first of these characteristics shows that the MUSO SHINDEN-RYU teachings included techniques of drawing the sword that were not suited to the battlefield. SEIZA, a starting posture for many of the techniques of the RYU, was for the classical BUSHI (warrior and/or samurai) of pre-Edo times, a position from which he rarely expected to draw his sword. From the point of view of attacking, SEIZA is a “dead” posture, as is TATE-HIZA, in which the swordsman sits on his left foot, which is tucked under his buttocks, and raises his right knee. The pre-Edo warrior much preferred IAI-GOSHI, a low-crouching posture in which right knee was raised; this kept him off damp or soiled surfaces and afforded him instant mobility and great speed in drawing his sword to meet an emergency. But SEIZA is well-suited to an urban, peaceful way of life, and in the Edo period the warrior, as well as other citizens, frequently used that posture. Thus HAYASHIZAKI JINSUKE’s original teachings led to the establishment of the ZASHIKI (seated etiquette) sword-drawing technique, the product of a peaceful age.
Related to the SEIZA posture is the second of the technical characteristics of the MUSO SHINDEN-RYU that indicate that its teachings were primarily intended as a spiritual discipline rather than as an effectual combative form. All exponents of this school or RYU disregard the fact that even the Edo-period warriors, serving in peacetime, wore the DAISHO. When seated, the manner of wearing the sword in the MUSO SHINDEN-RYU requires that the ODACHI (long sword) be positioned in the sash with the cutting edge upward, so that the TSUBA (hand guard) is in front of the centerline of the body at the height of the navel; the normal manner of inserting the KODACHI (short sword) in the same sash, also cutting edge upward, is thus made impossible. Even if it is considered that the ODACHI had been removed, as was required of warriors when entering or occupying certain structures, the MUSO SHINDEN-RYU is curious, for it does not train the exponent in the use of his KODACHI; in reality, even when the ODACHI was removed a warrior always retained his KODACHI.

In the standing posture adopted by exponents of this RYU, again only the ODACHI is worn; this too does not conform to the warriors’ custom of wearing the DAISHO. But even if this breach of custom is admitted, the position of the ODACHI, when the wearer assumes a standing posture, quickly leads to an unpardonable breach of etiquette. Because the wearer’s scabbard (SAYA) just abruptly outward behind him as his left side it will inevitably cause SAYA-ATE, the knocking of the scabbard against some person or object as the swordsman moves. Inadvertently committed SAYA-ATE was a dangerous breach of etiquette and was to be scrupulously avoided. For when SAYA-ATE occurred, the warriors code of ethics regarded it as an insult answerable by recourse to the blade. Even before the sound of the SAYA-ATE died away, the offended man might draw his sword and cut down the offender behind. In the fully combative tactics of the SHINKAGE RYU (BISHU YAGYU) the technique called “SAYA-ATE” was a deliberate act providing the swordsman with a calculated chance to be “insulted” and to cut down his “offender” with a swift and well-directed stroke of the sword.

These and still other technical weaknesses, from the point of view of combat appear in many of the RYU founded during the Edo period. They are in some measure due to the martial ineptitude of the Edo-period warriors, and also to the great influx of commoners who participated in sword-drawing but knew nothing of the technical aspect of wearing and using the DAISHO. Thus, whatever the original sword-drawing techniques of HAYASHIZAKI JINSUKE may have been, over the course of years the teachings of the MUSO SHINDEN-RYU and many other RYU became truly only spiritual disciplines. The MUSO SHINDEN-RYU summarizes this kind of discipline as “the attainment of a way through which to cultivate a tranquil mind that will serve the possessor under all circumstances.” The MUSO SHINDEN-RYU teaches one to have no enemy in mind when training and to discipline oneself daily so that a new level of mental acuity can be achieved. Spiritual training is first and foremost; this is followed by training for general improvement of the body. The teachings of this RYU are an exemplary classical BUDO discipline and serve to indicate clearly the differences that separate a -JUTSU from a -DO form.
Nakayama Hakudō (1869-1958), also known as Nakayama Hiromichi, was a Japanese martial artist and founder of the Iaidō style Muso Shinden-Ryu. Nakayama Sensei is the only person to have received both JUDAN (10th degree) and HANSHI (master instructor) ranks in Kendo, Iaido, and Jodo from the All Japan Kendo Federation. In addition, he held an instructor's license in Shinto Muso-ryu and a Menkyo Kaiden in Shindo Munen-ryu making him the 7th SOKE of that system. He was the 16th and last SOKE (head master) of the Shimomura-ha (branch) of Hasegawa Eishin-Ryu iaijutsu.

Nakayama was born in Kanazawa City, in Ishikawa Prefecture, circa 1873. He moved to Tokyo when he was aged about 19 years. In Tokyo, he entered the DOJO of Shingoro Negishi of the Shindo Munen-ryu. In time, Nakayama became a master of Shindo Munen-ryu KENJUTSU. He taught at the Yushinkan Dojo, near Korakuen in Tokyo, and he trained many of the top swordsmen of his day.

By the mid-1920s, Nakayama was one of the most famous swordsmen in Japan, and as such, he was made a leader of the committee that drew up the sword curriculum for the Toyama Military Academy. Therefore, he is considered by many to be the father of Toyama swordsmanship.

About Iwakabe, Monica Sensei

Iwakabe, Monica Sensei began her martial arts study in 1991 while Germany serving in the United States Army. After two years training in Shotokan Karate, she was fortunate enough to be transferred to Colorado where she began her training at Rocky Mountain Budokan with Iwakabe, Hideki Sensei. There, she continued her study of Shotokan Karate in 1993, took up Kendo (Japanese fencing) in 1998, and finally added Iaido to her martial arts resume in 2000.

She has had many opportunities to train with several instructors throughout the United States and Japan at AUSKF National Kendo & Iaido seminars, the Foreign Kendo Leaders’ Seminar, and many other venues. Iwakabe Sensei has successfully placed in several competitive tournaments on both the local and national levels.
The Iaido Dojo

In Japanese, DOJO means, “training hall” or even “place of enlightenment.” The DOJO is a place of learning. It is a place to respect, to take care of and to keep clean. A DOJO is a place to be made special for the practice of a martial art. It is important to remember that the place where Iaido is practiced becomes, at least symbolically, a DOJO. That place must be treated as a dojo regardless of whether that place be a gymnasium, a church or a even a person’s home. This is a part of BUDO tradition.

MANNERS: Manners are a vital part of human relationship. When we practice good manners we are showing respect for others, as well as, ourselves. Although the practice of a combat art which involves a real or imagined opponent may seem a strange place for good manners to prevail; the influence of the Japanese culture, where mutual politeness is a societal priority, is pervasive. Thus, the student of traditional Japanese martial arts such as Iaido should not only practice good manners but understand the reasons behind the specific behaviors. Proper manners are displayed through bowing (REI-HO), timeliness, communication, giving and receiving, cleanliness and following proper protocol when visiting other schools.

BOWING: Iaido is a part of BUDO. And, BUDO begins and ends with bowing (REI-HO). You will bow when entering and leaving the DOJO; greeting or saying farewell to your Sensei, senior or fellow students; and at the beginning or ending of your training session. Also, as an Iaido student, you will also bow to your KATANA (sword).

You should greet your instructor for the first time by saying, “OHAYO GOZAIMASHU” (translates to “Good Morning!”) or whatever salutation is appropriate at the time. At the beginning of practice, you should say “ONEGAI-SHIMASU” (translates to “Please help me.”) bowing to your Sensei or other students, and at the end, you should say, “ARIGATOU GOZAIMASU” (translates to “Thank you very much!”). Your Sensei or SEMPAI (senior student) will show you how to bow properly.
TIMELINESS: There are two facets of punctuality that one should cultivate as a part of proper manners. The first is coming to class on time. Unless a student has communicated to their Sensei or their DOJO manager, preferably in advance, that they would be late for reasons of having to work late or some unavoidable circumstance, a martial art student should be on the floor well before the start of class. A good reference is to either be there before your Sensei or at least 15 minutes before the official starting time. If the student has informed their Sensei or DOJO manager that they may be late to class, they should enter the DOJO without disrupting the class. Your Sensei or SEMP AI will show you how to enter when late.

The second facet of timeliness is financial. A martial art student should always pay dues or seminar fees within a timely manner. Within a timely manner, means paying earlier or no later than the due date.

COMMUNICATION: When a student becomes ill, needs to work late or be absent from the dojo for a period of time, it is considerate to inform their Sensei or DOJO manager. A Sensei considers their lesson plan carefully in response to the students they expect to be present at class. When referring to your instructor in the past or present use their last name and then the title “Sensei”, i.e. Jones Sensei. Do not just use their last name without any title. You should also refer to senior students as Mr. or Mrs. along with their last name or using the Japanese reference –san, i.e. Mr. Jones or Jones-san.

GIVING AND RECEIVING: An exchange of money, equipment, supplies or certificates and awards should also be done with proper etiquette. It is customary when paying dues to your Sensei or DOJO manager directly to place the payment in an envelope and indicate on the envelope what the payment is for. You should always give and receive items with two hands, and say “Thank you” when the exchange is made. If you are given a gift, you should give a gift or thank you card in return. The nature of the assistance or gift received will determine the proper level of response. A martial art student should always be keenly aware of their indebtedness to those who help them grow towards their goal.

CLEANLINESS: It is very important for all students of martial arts to be clean and well-groomed. One’s uniform should be cleaned and odor free for every class. The uniforms should be ironed and hemmed to a proper length. The student’s body should also be clean, especially hands and feet. Remember, the outward appearance is a reflection of the inward condition of the heart. A sloppy uniform and a stinky body do not reflect self-discipline or self-respect, much less respect for others.
VISITING ANOTHER DOJO: Prior to attending another dojo, ask your Sensei’s permission to train at another dojo. You or your Sensei will also need to ask the visiting dojo’s Sensei for permission to train at the dojo. Be sure to offer and be prepared to pay a fee for the day, week, etc., that you will be training. To avoid any confusion, it is highly recommended the visiting dojo is affiliated with AUSKF or IKF. If allowed to attend the visiting dojo, sit or line up at the lowest end of the class and obey the instructor whether he is right or wrong according to your own Sensei. Be sure to make a good impression, using good manners and training hard as you are representing your own dojo. Never volunteer your rank, unless the instructor asks. Upon returning home, be sure to send a card, letter or a gift depending upon the time you spent at the school.

If you make a move to another dojo, follow your new instructor’s teaching rather than holding on to the ideas taught by your former instructor. You must keep the former teachings to yourself and just continue to practice them on your own. This is proper manners even if your new instructor is a lower rank than your former instructor. When you become acquainted with the members of the new dojo, don’t brag about your past training, your former instructor or fellow students – just train hard.

The longer you practice martial arts, the more natural these manners should become. They should extend into your life outside the dojo, such as your home and workplace whenever applicable. It is the awareness and practice of these manners, as well as, the physical training, that effects the betterment of your character. This improvement is the ultimate goal of martial arts training.
Anatomy of the KATANA

- **TOSHIN** (length of blade)
- **MUNE** (back or spine of blade)
- **KOIGUCHI** (Scabbard Mouth)
- **TOSUKAGASHIRA** (hilt of handle)
- **TSUKA** (sword handle)
- **SAYA** (scabbard)
- **HA** (blade edge)
- **SAGEO** (cord)
- **KURIGATA** (cord’s attachment)
- **KOIJIRI** (end of scabbard)
- **TSUBA** (hand guard)
- **KISSAKI** (tip)
- **MUNE** (back or spine of blade)
Anatomy of the KATANA

- **KISSAKI** (Tip)
- **HAMON** (Temper Line)
- **SHINOGI-JI** (Blade Flat)
- **SHINOGI** (Blade Ridge)
- **MUNE** (Back or Spine of blade)
- **YOKOTE** (Tip Separator Line)
- **HADA** (Grain)
- **HAMON** (Temper Line)
- **HA** (Blade Edge)
Anatomy of the KATANA

- HABAKI (metal wedge holding the blade tight)
- SEPPA (Upper spacer)
- TSUBA (Hand guard)
- SEPPA (Lower spacer)
- FUCHI (metal cap on handle)
- MEKUGI (peg holding tsuka to Nakago)
- SAME (Rayskin)
- TSUKA Ito (Handle Wrap)
- MENUKI (Handle Ornament)
- TSUKAGASHIRA (end of handle)
Anatomy of the HAKAMA

There are five pleats (YOSEHIDA) on the front of the HAKAMA and one on the back.

1. JIN (Benevolence)
2. GI (Obligation/Humanity)
3. REI (Politeness/Manners)
4. CHI (Wisdom)
5. SHIN (Faith)
6. SEI (Sincerity)
Recommended TSUKA and Blade Length

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<th>Height (cm)</th>
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* Please note that this is a recommended chart only. Please ask your Sensei for further advice.
In general, female practitioners are recommended to choose a blade length 0.05 Shaku shorter than men.

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HAKAMA Care & Folding

All students should learn how to properly fold their HAKAMA. It is the student’s responsibility to politely ask an instructor or SEMPAl to teach them the proper way to fold a HAKAMA. It is polite for a student to ask an instructor if he/she could fold the teacher’s HAKAMA after class. It is also a privilege to be allowed to fold an instructor’s HAKAMA especially if that person is a guest or visiting instructor in our dojo. Keep in mind that some instructors prefer to fold their own HAKAMA.

To fold your HAKAMA…

1. Align the front waist band with the base of the rear waistband (KOSHITA) and lay the HAKAMA face down on the floor.
2. Flatten and straighten the front pleats.
3. Fold in the sides of the HAKAMA, giving the HAKAMA an even, symmetrical width.
4. Fold the HAKAMA into thirds, starting at the bottom and finishing with the top. Longer HAKAMA may require an additional fold.
5. Using your hand, crease and fold the 1st third, followed by the 2nd third.
6. Place the HAKAMA with the back up. Take the long front HIM0 and fold in half.
7. Fold once more so the HIM0 have been doubled twice.
8. Repeat with the second HIM0 and cross diagonally.
9. Take the short back HIM0 and lay on top of the folded HIM0, bring under the point where the folded HIM0 cross so it is pointing toward the top of the HAKAMA.
10. Now bring the HIM0 diagonally downward over itself.
11. Wrap the HIM0 under so it is now pointing diagonally upward.
12. Lay the HIM0 on top of the folded HIM0 so it is pointing downward in the same direction as it started from.
13. Wrap the second HIM0 in the same way. If the HIM0 are too long double the ends back under.
14. Second method. Wrap the HIM0 in front of the HAKAMA instead of back as shown.
15. Fold the HAKAMA once more in half and tuck it under the HIM0.
16. You’re done. If your head is spinning, ask an instructor to show you.
IAIDO KATA: SEITEI IAI

As dictated by ZEN NIPPON KENDO RENMEI, a subdivision of the All Japan Kendo Federation

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<td>1</td>
<td>IPPONME</td>
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<td>NIHONME</td>
<td>USHIRO (Rear)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SANBONME</td>
<td>UKENAGASHI (Glancing Block)</td>
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<td>YONHONME</td>
<td>TSUKA-ATE (Striking with Hilt)</td>
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<td>GOHONME</td>
<td>KESAGIRI (Diagonal Cut)</td>
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<td>ROPPONME</td>
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<td>NANAHONME</td>
<td>SANPOGIRI (Three-direction Cut)</td>
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<td>GANMEN-ATE (Hilt thrust to the Face)</td>
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<td>KYUHONME</td>
<td>SOETE-TSUKI (Joined Hand Thrust)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>JUNIHONME</td>
<td>NUKI-UCHI (Escape and Cut)</td>
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夢想神伝流

IAIDO KATA: MUSO SHINDEN-RYU (KORYU)

初伝

SHO-DEN Forms
Entry level KATA derived from OMORI-RYU

大森流

1. IPPONME SHOHATTO (Front)
2. NIHONME SATO (Left)
3. SANBONME UTO (Right)
4. YONHOME ATARITO (Rear)
5. GOHONME INYOSHINTAI (Moving forward and backward)
6. ROPPONME RYUTO (Attack-block)
7. NANAHONME JUNTO* (Ritualized Beheading)
8. HACHIHONME GYAKUTO (Reverse Grip Thrust)
9. KYUHONME SEICHUTO (Under-arm Thrust)
10. JUPPONME KORANTO (Crouching Tiger Walk)
11. JUIPONME NUKI-UCHI (Escape & Cut)
12. JUNIHONME INYOSHINTAI-KAEWAZA (Forward and backward-block)

* Note: Due to it’s context, JUNTO is never performed during tournaments, testing, or demonstration.
# IAIDO KATA: MUSO SHINDEN-RYU (KORYU)

**中伝**

CHU-DEN Forms
Middle level KATA derived from HASEGAWA EISHIN-RYU

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>IPPONME</td>
<td>YOKOGUMO (Trailing clouds)</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>NIHONME</td>
<td>TORAISSOKU (One-legged tiger)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>SANBONME</td>
<td>INAZUMA (Lightning)</td>
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<td>YONHONME</td>
<td>UKIGUMO (Floating clouds)</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>GOHONME</td>
<td>YAMAOROSHI (Wind blows down from mountains)</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>ROPPONME</td>
<td>IWANAMI (Wave breaks against rocks)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>NANAHONME</td>
<td>UROKOGAESHI (Fish scales)</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>HACHIHONME</td>
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<td>KYUHONME</td>
<td>TAIKIOTOSHI (Cascading waterfall)</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>JUPPONME</td>
<td>NUKI-UCHI (Escape and draw)</td>
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</table>
IAIDO KATA: MUSO SHINDEN-RYU (KORYU)

奥伝

OKUDEN Forms
SUWARI-WAZA (Kneeling KATA)

1. IPPONME    KASUMI
2. NIHONME    SUNEGAKOI
3. SANBONME   SHIHOGIRI
4. YONHONME   TOZUME
5. GOHONME    TOWAKI
6. ROPPONME   TANASHITA
7. NANAHOHNME RYOZUME
8. HACHIHNME  TORABASHIRI
IAIDO KATA: MUSO SHINDEN-RYU (KORYU)

奥伝

OKUDEN Forms
TACHI-WAZA (Standing KATA)

1. IPPONME         YUKIZURE
2. NIHONME         TSUREDACHI
3. SANBONME        SOMEKURI
4. YONHONME        SODOME
5. GOHONME         SHINOBU
6. ROPPONME        YUKIICHIGAI
7. NANAHONME       SODESHURIGAESHI
8. HACHIHONME      MONIRI
9. KYUHONME        KABEZOE
10. JUPPONME       UKENAGAESHI
11. JUIPPONME      ITOMAGOI (3-bon)
Time & Technique Requirements for Rank Promotion

Testing typically occurs only once or twice per year in Colorado. Other out-of-state testing opportunities usually occur several times per year. The examination system in Iaido is not structured on competition.

Your progression will be graded on the following criteria:

- Your ability to wear the uniform properly (GI top and bottom must be same color)
- Your ability to demonstrate good etiquette and manners
- Your ability to demonstrate your katas appropriate to your level
- The concentration and awareness or “Zanshin” you maintain throughout the examination
- Fluidity – Continuity of movement
- Time – Perform the exam within the 6 minutes permitted

You will be expected to know both the numeric name and descriptive name of each kata. Your Katana will be inspected prior to examination for serviceability.

It is also necessary to have completed the requisite number of hours of training and it is necessary that sufficient time has passed since the previous examination. Be sure to accurately record your hours of training in the dojo student log.
Iaido Ranking System & Testing Requirements for Ranks Under Black Belt (MUDANSHA)

Ikkyu / 1st Rank
- Minimum 45 hours +
- 3 seminars since last exam

Nikyu / 2nd Rank
- Minimum 45 hours +
- 2 seminars since last exam

Sankyu / 3rd Rank
- Minimum 60 hours + 4 seminars OR
- 45 hours + 2 seminars since last exam

Yonkyu / 4th Rank
- Minimum 50 hours + 3 seminars OR
- 45 hours + 2 seminars since last exam

Gokyu / 5th Rank
- Minimum 40 hours + 2 seminars OR
- 45 hours + 2 seminars since last exam

Rokkyu / 6th Rank
- Minimum 30 hours + 1 seminar
Rokudan / 6th Black
• Minimum 5 years since last exam
  (approx. 540 hours + 10 seminars)

Godan / 5th Black Belt
• Minimum 4 years since last exam
  (approx. 360 hours + 8 seminars)

Yondan / 4th Black Belt
• Minimum 3 years since last exam
  (approx. 270 hours + 7 seminars)

Sandan / 3rd Black Belt
• Minimum 2 years since last exam
  (approx. 180 hours + 6 seminars)

Nidan / 2nd Black Belt
• Minimum 1 year since last exam
  (approx. 90 hours + 5 seminars)

Shodan / 1st Degree Black Belt
• Minimum 3 months since last exam
  (approx. 48 hours since last exam + 4 seminars)
This is a list of Japanese terms, which you will frequently hear used in the DOJO. By studying their definitions you will gradually discover many facets of Iaido practice and philosophy. It is important to your practice that you have a basic understanding of them.

**Arigatou Gozaimasu**  
Thank you (present tense) / Arigatou Gozaimashita (past tense)

**AUSKF**  
The acronym for our national Iaido federation; stands for the All United States Kendo Federation (governs the Iaido community also)

**Bokken or Bokuto**  
Wooden practice sword

**Chiburi**  
The action of throwing off blood from the sword

**Dogi or Gi**  
A uniform used in Iaido and other martial arts

**Dojo**  
A place of martial arts training / A place of enlightenment

**Fumi-kae**  
A pivoting motion where the left foot move moves straight to the side before pivoting (such as in Ropponme)

**Fumi-komu**  
A pivoting motion where the left foot move moves straight to the rear and advances before pivoting (such as in the 3rd cut of Jupponme)

**Furikaburi**  
Overhead arm position prior to a cutting action

**Hajime**  
A command to begin

**Hakama**  
The traditional, pleated pants worn during Iaido practice

**Han-dan**  
Eyes half-closed

**Hasuji**  
The trajectory or path of the blade during a cut

**Iaito**  
The term for an unsharpened practice sword

**Jo-Ha-Kyu**  
The pace of “slow-medium-fast” / of gradually increasing speed

**Kamiza**  
The shrine-like portion of the training area usually located on the front wall

**Keikogi**  
The top shirt portion of the uniform used for practice

**Kihaku**  
Means “moving spirit”; to execute Iaido with a lively, connected intention

**Kesagiri**  
A body cut along the angle of the Iaido uniform lapel from collar bone to hip

**Koiguchi no Nigirikata**  
How to hold the scabbard opening
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Basic Terminology (continued)

**Sayabiki**  
The ability to see the end of the Saya (or Kojiri) on the right side of the body, parallel to the floor, following a proper drawing of the sword

**Seiza**  
Formal Japanese way of sitting on the floor; sitting with one’s knees pointed forward, buttocks on one’s feet and ankles

**Seme**  
Means to apply a sense or feeling of “pressure” to the opponent

**Sensei**  
Teacher / Instructor

**Shaku**  
A unit of measure frequently used in referencing the length of a blade on a Katana sword, approximately equal to 11.93 inches

**Shiken**  
The term used to describe a Katana with a sharpened blade

**Shomen**  
The front wall of the dojo where the KAMIZA containing pictures, calligraphy, and/or flags are displayed

**Shomen ni Rei**  
A command used to signal the formal seated bow by students at the beginning and end of practice meaning “Bow to the front!”

**Suwari Waza**  
Seated practice

**Tachi Waza**  
Standing practice

**Taijo**  
A command to exit the testing or competition area

**Taito**  
Placing the sword near your hip

**Tate-hiza**  
A traditional, seated position where the left foot is tucked under the buttocks and the right foot is placed aside the left knee

**Tameshigiri**  
The practice of cutting water-soaked rolled up Japanese mat with a sharpened, live blade or Shinken

**Tsuka no Nigirikata**  
How to hold the sword handle; a golf club-like grip

**Yame**  
A command to stop

**Yudansha**  
Any rank of 1st degree black belt or higher

**Ya-ya**  
a term meaning “a little bit”

**Zanshin**  
The state of maintained readiness, of not relaxing one’s gaze after a successful cut

**Zen Nihon Kendo Renmai**  
The name of the Japanese regulating organization of Iaido / “All Japan Kendo Federation”
Five Basic Ready Positions (GO-GYO NO KAMAE)

*Gedan no Kamae*  Sword tip is held pointing down toward an opponent’s knee

*Chudan no Kamae*  Hold sword in center position readiness; sword tip is held pointing up toward an opponent’s throat

*Hasso no Kamae*  Hold sword near shoulder readiness; sword is held near the practitioner’s face, tip points 45 degrees up and to the rear

*Jodan no Kamae*  Hold sword in upper position readiness; sword is held over head, tip points back 15 degrees; “fire” stance

*Waki no Kamae*  Sword is “hidden” behind practitioner’s hip, tip is pointed down

An Iaido student practices mat cutting (TAMESHIGIRI) with a live blade.
Iaido Warm Up Exercise Routine

Organize the line – “KIYOTSUKE REI” (Standing Bow)

1. **Neck Rolls** – (step out with the left foot, hands on hips, 8 count in each direction)

2. **Ankle Rotations** – (step one foot forward, on ball of foot, rotate in one direction for a 4 count, switch direction, another 4 count)

3. **Achilles Stretch** – (turn to the left, point both feet forward, lean forward and stretch the right achilles for an 8 count, then switch)

4. **Knee Circles** – (feet together, bend forward and hold your knees, circle your knees in one direction for an 8 count, then switch)

5. **Squats / Knee Bends** – (feet together, hand on knees, squat and gently bounce for a 4 count, then straighten knees, gently push back and bounce for another 4 count)

6. **Lunges** – (feet together, hands on hips, step out with your left foot and bring your arms forward to chest height, bend your left/front knee and spread your arms out to your sides, stand up and bring your hand back to the front, step back with your left foot and place your hands back on your hips)

7. **One Leg Stretch** – (spread your feet wide apart, place your hands on your thighs, turn your hips to the left and lift the ball of your left foot off the floor, bend your right knee, and gently bounce to an 8 count, then switch sides)

8. **Back Stretch** – (spread feet wide apart, hands on knees, dip left shoulder in toward floor for an 8 count, then switch for an 8 count)

9. **Forward/Backward Dive** – (feet shoulder width, hands on hips, bend forward, touch floor for a 3 count, on 4th count come up and put hands back on hips, then lean backward and reach up with arm for a 3 count, then hands back on hip for 4th count)

10. **Body Circles** – (spread feet wide, bend forward and reach with both hands to left ankles, on a 4 count gradually sweep hands in a circle across floor to right ankle, up over right, then left shoulder and back to left ankle, then switch directions for 4 count)
11. **Side Stretch** – (feet shoulder width, arms out to sides, on a 4 count, cross hands in front then back out to sides 1, 2, then bend to the left as left hand goes behind back and right arm reaches up and over 3, 4, then repeat to the right side with another 4 count)

12. **Arms Circles** – (feet shoulder width, swing arms in forward circle and come up and down on toes, then swing arms backward and come up and down on toes again 3, 4)

13. **Shoulder Cross** – (bring one arm across your chest and the other arm underneath and over the elbow, then count)

14. **Triceps Stretch** – (reach one arm up and over your head, support at the elbow with you other arm, then count)

15. **Jumping Jacks** – (regular jack out to side for 4 count, then jack with feet alternating forward and backward for another 4 count)

16. **Hand Press** – (prayer position and press down, then invert and press up with count)

17. **Turned Out Wrist Stretch (KOTE GAESHI)**

18. **Bent Up Wrist Stretch (KOTE MAWASHI)**

19. **Forearm Stretch (KOTE HARI)**

Organize the line – “ARIGATOU GOZAIMASHITA” (Standing Bow)
Counting in Japanese

One       Ichi
Two       Ni
Three     San
Four      Shi / Yon
Five      Go
Six       Roku
Seven     Shichi / Nana
Eight     Hachi
Nine      Kyu
Ten       Ju
Eleven    Ju-ichi
Twelve    Ju-ni
Twenty    Ni-ju
Twenty-one Ni-ju ichi
Suggested Iaido Materials & Martial Arts Reading

Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei Iai
English Version Manual
(latest version December 2009)

IAI: All Japan Kendo Federation DVD
Featuring Iai do Kyoshi 8th Dan, Noboru Ogura
Ask your school manager to purchase this DVD

Iaido Hongi Muso Shinden Ryu by Yamatsuta Shigeyoshi (English version)

In the Dojo by Dave Lowry (2006)
Weatherhill Boston & London

Additional Resources:

- BOOK: AJKF Iaido Shiai and Shinpan Regulations
Contact Information

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