

Important Considerations for Seiteigata Iaido Forms

The following document was distributed at the ZNKR Central Iaido Seminar in Japan in 2010 as a means of clarifying certain aspects which are not currently specified in detail in the ZNKR Seitei Iai Manual. Oshita Masakazu Sensei, Iaido 8th dan, kindly taught these points at the Iaido Seminar in Okehampton, UK on 26th November 2010. I was allowed to translate this document with Oshita Sensei's invaluable help but originally we decided to omit those points which are already detailed in the ZNKR Seitei Iai Manual in case any readers wondered if these points had been changed in some way. I have since then become inclined to translate the entire document for various reasons. Naturally some of these points are difficult to understand without having them demonstrated but I hope that the majority of them are clear and simple. I should also add that at this point I have endeavoured to provide a more direct translation. This of course nulls any additional meaning given at the central seminar itself and so I would recommend reading both versions of this document. More reason and detail (some of it in contrary to the points in this document) have of course been conveyed at seminars since this document was released. I leave it to the reader and their sensei to decide how much to take on board.

I have attempted to maintain the format of the original document for no other reason than the fact that I dislike re-interpretations. All mistakes in this translation are my own for which I accept complete responsibility.

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1. Saho (Reiho) – Closing Reiho

- Removing the sword – “Move the sword forwards to the right slightly” is written in the manual but many people push this forwards too much.
- Picking up the sword – Without stopping, quietly lift the sword to the centre and stand it in front of you. At this point it has never been taught that you have to bring it to 45 degrees so please do not teach this.
- Sageo sabaki – use and move the sageo as is appropriate in your koryu

At 8th dan examinations even in the koryu exam, Seitei reiho must be used.

2. Nihonme - Ushiro

- a. The way in which one stands both the feet onto the toes and ball of the foot depends on the grade (this is the same for Ipponme – Mae).
- b. The enemy is not sitting directly behind you, they are sitting to the left of your shomen.
- c. It is important that the left foot fumikomi and nukitsuke is synchronised. (At the point of fumikomi, your body should be correctly facing the enemy)

3. Sanbonme – Ukenagashi

- a. The left foot should be driven to a position inside the right knee with the toes pointing outwards slightly.
- b. At the point indicated above, the toes of the left foot should be aligned with the right kneecap.
- c. When the parry is made, the feet should more or less form an 'I' (Japanese katakana “i” shape).
- d. From the deflection into the cutting of the kesa, the flow of the form should ensure that the deflection is properly made, the kensen is not

swung around, and the cut is made in one continuous flowing motion without stopping at the apex of kaburi.

- e. The drawing up of the sword (nukiage) is actually before the kensaki leaves the koiguchi
 - f. The above means that the actual deflecting movement takes place just as the kissaki leaves the koiguchi and the right foot moves inside the left foot to form a Japanese “i” shape.
 - g. At this point of deflection the body is facing to the left of the shomen.
4. Yonhonme - Tsukaate
- a. From iaihiza and as the hips are raised, the left foot should be stood completely in line behind the left knee.
 - b. After the thrust to the rear opponent, use the turning of the body to make a hikinuki action; pivot on the left knee and return the left foot to it's original position; at this point the hips should be completely facing the front opponent; in doing this the sword should naturally draw out into furikaburi
(Don't make a new and separate hikinuki action)
5. Gohonme - Kesagiri
- a. While making the upward cut through the enemy's body from the wakibara, make sure that you do not turn the sword in the opponent's body before the body exits from the shoulder.
 - b. The kensen rotates once the sword exits the opponent's shoulder.
6. Ropponme - Morotezuki
- a. After the first draw, when moving into chudan, make sure the left hand is in front of the navel. This movement will naturally move the sword into a chudan position with the kissaki at throat height (this means that there is no special meaning in dropping the kissaki to throat height).
 - b. The thrust from chudan is performed without a pause and in one action.
 - c. The movement of hikinuki on the sword is without making a distinctive action, that is to keep the kensen at the suigetsu height (without dropping) and lift the sword from the tsukagashira into a position above the head, thus the kaburi is made with a natural hikinuki action.
 - d. All three opponents are on the same line.
 - e. As the body is turned, move the left foot over to the left.
 - f. A movement through ukenagashi is made as the hips turn while hikinuki is made.
 - g. As the kaburi is made through ukenagashi, the feeling should be to lift the tsukagashira first.
- Regarding “fumikae”
The foot movement for 6, 8 and 10 are all different. The position of the enemy in each form is different and thereby the transitional foot movement will also be different.
- 6: Ropponme (Morotezuki) – all three opponents are on the same line.
8: Hachihonme (Ganmenate) – the rear opponent is approximately standing one body width to the left of the centreline (when facing the rear).
10: Jupponme (Shihogiri) – the four opponents are standing in four different directions (detailed explanation required).
7. Nanahonme - Sanpogiri
- a. When applying kizeme to the front opponent, facing the front do not draw forwards too much.

- b. When cutting the opponent from above the head to the chin, ensure that the cut is not made with too much circular movement (from above to below).
8. Hachihonme - Ganmenate
- Make sure that you move one body-width to the left when preparing to thrust the rear opponent.
 - When thrusting to the suigetsu of the rear opponent: ensure the sword is horizontal when the right fist is on the hip and make the thrust with equal power in the left hand; by squeezing the grip the kensen should, with the correct alignment of the body, thrust into the centreline.
(Once the thrust is made, the right hand should be lower than the kissaki and the right hand slightly in from the right side)
9. Kyuhonme - Soetozuki
- Differently to other forms, when performing chiburi, use a feeling of opening to the right and cutting in the direction of the blade. When the chiburi is complete, the position of the right hand should be to the right front diagonal and not at the same height as the left hand.
10. Jupponme - Shihogiri
- Regarding "hitoemi"
 - The logic of hitoemi – After striking the front right opponent with the flat of the tsuka and with the body facing in that direction, it is unavoidable to thrust the rear left opponent by moving the left foot to the left and thus turning the body into hitoemi.
 - The state of hitoemi (posture) – From the point of turning from the first opponent (right front) to the second opponent (left rear), the feet are arranged in something like an inversed Japanese 8 (" / \ ") such that the body is nearly completely side on. At this point the body is roughly now facing the position of the final (4th) opponent. When the thrust is made, the right foot is pointing to this front left diagonal.
 - Before the last opponent, do not stop in wakigamae. This is not the taking of wakigamae as much as it is the going through wakigamae in one continuous action.
11. Juipponme - Sogiri
- When bringing the sword up through ukenagashi into furikaburi it is permitted to draw the left foot back slightly.
 - When drawing the sword out (kizeme point) the direction of the draw should be in the direction that the sword is set in the obi.
 - When performing the horizontal cut across the opponent's abdomen, with the body facing the front bring the sword onto the left hip so that it is horizontal, cut through the opponent's waist (through approximately 180^o) horizontally.
12. Junihonme - Nukiuchi
- When bringing the sword up above the head, ensure the right fist follows your own centreline and the sword remains within your own body width*.

(*Authors note – for safety, this should be done with adequate sayabiki and a turning of the body so that one does not cut under the left arm).