

# Japan Kendo Kata, Meaning of

Kendo Study Site from はくどー / 佐々木博嗣- translated by Ted Imoto, 09/21/2017

## Forward

Japan Kendo Kata #1 thru #10 explained herein is not intended to describe the detail of actual Kendo Kata that you can learn by reading the instruction manual, seeing on YouTube, or by attending at Kendo Kata seminar. But it is to present here the real meaning of each Kendo Kata explained in Kendo Study Site by はくどー庵/佐々木博嗣, Sasaki Hirotsugu sensei.

Sasaki Hirotsugu sensei categorizes Kendo Kata into the three groups based on the contents and purposes; namely, "It teaches **waza**," "It teaches **reason/principle**," and "It teaches **the way of truth/goal**."

When Kendo Kata is looked at from the standpoint of thoughts and ideas for the cut, it may be categorized into the three cases; namely, "Cut to **kill life for justice**," "Cut to **kill waza for mercy**," and "Cut to **kill heart for courage**."

In the old days, the fight and winning the war was **justice** for the clan because they gained more farmlands meaning more food to produce and share with their peoples. Therefore, to win justice, they studied not only their enemies but also themselves and all the situations to prepare for the win.

### 1. Japan Kendo Kata #1: Tachi no Kata (太刀の形), Ippon-Me (一本目)

In the Ippon-Me, **Uchidachi** (打太刀, a role of a teacher) is teaching **Shidachi** (仕太刀, student) the importance of the basic Kendo's **Ma-Ai**, by choosing "Men Nuki Men" waza both staring from Morote-Jōdan (諸手上段) stance. We learn Ma-Ai of **Issoku Itto** as a basic distance using the Shinai tip as a guide. However, the original meaning of Ma-Ai is a relative distance between the two competitors in confrontation not to be measured by the position of the **Kensaki** (剣先).

Moreover, Uchidachi makes Shidachi to take a basic Furikaburi (振りかぶり, swing up overhead) move from Kendo Chudan stance with good composure. The posture, not to be confused as a stance called "Migi-Jōdan," but it is a basic posture of Furikaburi for Shōmen Uchi (正面打ち, straight Men strike). Uchidachi takes an official Kamae called "Hidari-Jōdan" in this case "**Morote Hidari-Jōdan** (諸手左上段)." The mutual Jōdan postures symbolize **Sei** (正, **the justice to kill**).

Uchidachi observes that Shidachi moves three steps forward with good **Kigurai** (気位, confident state of mind), and stops at correct **Ma-Ai**. Then, Uchidachi goes for Men strike in a big motion to show a fatal power cut, **Kikioroshi** (切り降ろし) including Shidachi's hands. This action is "Cut to kill life for justice."

Shidachi retracts his hands, takes a **Mikuru Ma-Ai** (move body just enough to pass **Kensen** a paper-thin distance in front of his face), and evades the cut; immediately responds with Men counterattack and wins (kills Uchidachi). Uchidachi takes one small step back on left-foot with the tip of Kensen to Gedan position. **Sasaki Hirotsugu** (佐々木博嗣) sensei says. The act of this small step stepping back by Uchidachi is considered a kind of pantomime for his death, just like you will see in Chambara play that dead Samurai walks away sometimes from the seen to continue the play.

Shidachi assumes Uchidachi is fatally wounded on the ground, but not sure of his death. So, Shidachi shows **Zanshin** by placing **Kensaki** at his face as he makes a small step back. And then, Shidachi shows his winning posture with a big Morote Hidari-Jōdan expressing that his justice is done when Uchidachi steps back the second time.

**Hanshi Inouye** (範士井上) sensei says the action is not merely showing his winning posture but expresses his repentance and prayer because claiming your justice and taking one's life is not necessarily righteous. Let us look at the Kendo Kata #2 next searching for one's conscience regarding this aspect.

### 2. Japan Kendo Kata #2: Tachi no Kata (太刀の形), Nihon-Me (二本目)

In the Nihon-Me, Uchidachi is teaching Shidachi the importance of Kendo's **Seichūsen** (正中線, True Mid Line), by choosing "Kote Nuki Kote" waza both staring from Chūdan stance. The Seichusen is not a line like a word implies. It defines the standard position such as where you should be, where you are facing, how is your Ma-Ai concerning front/back /left/right, and knowing your stance concerning how it should be to your opponent.

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You learn to position yourself squarely face to face against your opponent with proper Ma-Ai concerning the target to strike so that you will hit the target if you swing straight in the middle of your body. Uchidachi shows his Seichūsen cut to Shidachi not aiming at his Kote; otherwise, he would move his body slightly toward left for the Kote cut. Shidachi responds to it with “Kote Nuki Kote” waza with proper **Seichūsen**. Parrying Uchidachi’s Kensen by his body (**Mikuru Ma-Ai**, moving back diagonally left with his left foot and takes his **Seichūsen**) and then cut stepping forward.

The Chūdan stance symbolizes **Jin (仁, the heart of mercy/thought of caring and concerning others)**. The heart wishes to avoid conflict, though the Ki (気), the feeling, is not to defend nor escape from battle but to win by **Kigurai of Sen Sen no Sen**. Uchidachi notices his **Kigurai (気位)** in Shidachi’s Chūdan stance, and sees that he stops at correct MaAi. Therefore, Uchidachi chooses Kote waza to strike in a big motion, unlike in Kata #1, his cut is **Kiritsuke (斬りつけ)**, non-fatal cut of Shidachi’s arm.

Shidachi’s **Tai-Sabaki (bodywork)** facing Uchidachi with good **Kigurai (気位)**, parrying Uchidachi’s **Seichūsen** and taking his **own Seichūsen**, is the basic of basic for any martial arts. Taking advantage of this position, Shidachi gains control of the situation for the win and counters with the Kote strike in return. We know “Kote Nuki Men” is a more common Kendo waza than “Kote Nuki Kote.” The reason why the latter was chosen is to show this **Jin (仁)** concept.

Note Kata #1 takes an enemy’s life and win, but Kata #2 wins by disabling the enemy’s fighting spirit. Since Uchidachi stands there with the injured arm, Shidachi keeps the Chūdan stance with a good **Kigurai (気位)** as his Zanshin. **Hanshi Inouye (範士井上)** sensei says Kata #1 teaches “**Waza to win**” and Kata #2 teaches a beginning of “**Way to win.**” Kendo training changes from waza to way. Let’s look at the Kendo Kata #3 next to see how these concepts evolve.

### 3. Japan Kendo Kata #3: Tachi no Kata (太刀の形), Sanbon-Me(三本目)

In the Sanbon-Me, Uchidachi is teaching Shidachi the importance of the basic Kendo’s seme at **Chūchin (中心, the core center)** of the opponent, by choosing “Tsuki Nayashi-ire Tsuki” waza both staring from Gedan (下段) stance. In general, you see that we take the center of the opponent using Kensen in your **Seichūsen** for seme and press Shinai to the side to attack. The Kendo Kata #3 tells otherwise, teaching to use Nayashi move to keep Kensen and left hand always middle so that eventually opponent’s Kensen will go off-center.

However, there are two ways to take the center. One way is to make the center physically by pressuring center using Kensen. The second way is to choose the center, timing-wise, between the two moves. The latter is called “**Datotsu Chance,**” and there are three chances well known when to strike.

In Kendo Kata #3, Uchidachi thrusts Shidachi’s solar plexus, and Shidachi responds it by a “Nayashi-ire Tsuki.” This waza chance is called “**waza ga tsukita tokoro (技が尽きた所)**” catching the time between when Uchidachi’s waza appeared in shape and when the waza becomes effective; namely, this is **Ōji Waza (応じ技)**, and belongs to “**Go no Sen (後の先).**”

Shidachi parries Uchidachi’s Tsuki waza and counterattacks by “Nayashi-ire Tsuki.” Uchidachi blocks Shidachi’s counterattack with Migi-shinogi by stepping back with the right foot and tries quickly to restore his composure by stepping back with the left foot. Shidachi does not allow this move and immediately thrusts another Tsuki. This waza chance is called “**degashira (出頭),**” or “**Okorigashira (起こり頭).**” It catches the time between when Uchidachi is ready for a counterattack and when he goes for the strike (motion). This timing waza is **Debana Waza (出ばな技)**, and belongs to “**Sen no Sen (先の先).**”

Uchidachi, whose will to counterattack, was nullified by Shidachi’s intensive seme, steps back, and Shidachi chases him not allowing his MaAi, and places Kensen to the center of his face. This waza chance is called “**itsuita tokoro (居着いた所).**” It is catching the time between when Uchidachi is unconsciously retreating and when he becomes conscious of the situation; namely, this is **Sensei-no Waza (先制の技)**, seals intent to strike, and belongs to “**Sen Sen no Sen (先先の先).**”

Kata #3 also teaches the basic principles of Kendo for the attacking and defending. The **Gedan (下段)** stance symbolizes **Yu (勇, courage)**, state of mind and body that has full spirit and a strong heart to face any situation without fear.

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However, the heart becomes wild and vulgar if appeared on the table. The real courage, the heart of **Yu**, is “**Fudōshin (不動心, immovable heart)**” that can handle any tasks calmly with good composure. Also, the Gedan (下段) stance is considered as “有構無購,” “無心の構え,” or “自然の構え,” Kamae of being and non-being, Kamae of mindlessness, or natural Kamae. And there is no thought of fight or not to fight, or no feeling of win or lose.

When Uchidachi reaches to a proper Ma-Ai, starting both from the Gedan stance, he quietly starts raising his Kensen toward Chūdan stance to test Shidachi’s “**Fudōshin**.” Shidachi reacts naturally to his move and follows this motion like Uchidachi’s shadow. This movement, like a shadow, is used as seme with his Ki (気). The moment Shidachi makes Chūdan stance naturally following Uchidachi’s move from Gedan, Uchidachi trusts Shidachi’s “Fudōshin” with a Tsuki waza knowing that this is a chance “**itsuita tokoro**.” If Shidachi makes an unnecessary move with this thrust, his Kendo skill needs improvement. However, he maintains “Fudōshin” and reacts with “Nayashi-ire Tsuki” counterattack aiming at Uchidachi’s heart. Uchidachi barely blocks his Kensen with right/left footwork and tries to counterattack, but Shidachi’s counterattack continues with “Fudōshin” with the second Tsuki by his body. Therefore, Uchidachi retreats unconsciously, Shidachi chases without delay, not allowing Uchidachi’s Ma-Ai, and Shidachi finishes the match with his Kensen at Uchidachi’s face without striking, called **Katsujinken (活人剣, win to help alive)**.

Hanshi Inouye (範士井上) sensei says this Kendo Kata #3 teaches training of Kendo that leads from **Waza (技)** to **Way (道)** and the difference between **Kendo as sports competition** and **Kendo as Budo (武道)** or **Bushido (武士道)**. If Kendo training is ultimately for this winning without striking the opponent as in the Kendo Kata #3, it is interesting to know that thoughts and ideas that all the lifetime training of Kendo leads not to protect us with the waza but to protect others. Nakayama Hiromichi (中山博道) sensei saddens over the fact that Kendo Kata nowadays is not correctly communicated in this aspect.

## Addendum 1

The Kendo Kata #1 to #3 was introduced by the former Ministry of Education to a high school under the old system of education in Japan in 1911 (明治 44 年). Note that Uchidachi and Shidachi take the same kamae, Jōdan, Chūdan, and Gedan, respectively, for the Kata #1, #2, and #3. The Kendo Kata #4 to #10 was introduced by former Dai-Nippon Butoku-Kai (大日本武徳会) in 1912 (大正 1 年), and unlike the Kata #1 to #3, they take different kamae in the Kata #4 to #10.

The kamae is distinguished by **In (陰, the shade)** and **Yō (陽, the sun)**. This **InYo theory (陰陽説)** comes from the conception “there is a shade where light is,” and they are not absolute, but relative. For example, the candlelight in the daytime is **In (陰)**, but the candlelight in the night time is **Yō (陽)**. When this theory is applied to Kendo kamae, you might think Jōdan is **Yō (陽)**, and Gedan is **In (陰)**. But this is mistaken. One that moves up from the bottom side is **Yō (陽, the sun)**, and one that moves down from the top side is **In (陰, shade)**.

Each kamae is given a Chinese character **Hi (火)**, **Mizu (水)**, **Tsuchi (土)**, **Ki (木)**, and **Kin (金)**, respectively for Jōdan, Chūdan, Gedan, Hassō, Waki-gamae (=kamae). **Hi (火, fire)** wins **Kin (金, gold)**, **Mizu (水, water)** wins **Hi (火, fire)**, **Tsuchi (土, soil)** wins **Mizu (水, water)**, **Ki (木, tree)** wins **Tsuchi (土, soil)**, and **Kin (金, gold)** wins **Ki (木, tree)**. This theory is called **In-YoGoGyō Setsu (陰陽五行説)**. Therefore, Shidachi chooses Waki-gamae against Uchidachi’s Hassō to win in the Kata #4, Chūdan against Jōdan in the Kata #5, and Gedan against Chūdan in the Kata #6.

## 4. Japan Kendo Kata #4: Tachi no Kata (太刀の形), Yonhon-Me (四本目)

In the Yonhon-Me, Uchidachi is teaching Shidachi the importance of **Ai-Uchi Men** or **Ai-Men**, by choosing Waki-gamae for Shidachi against Hasso no kamae for Uchidachi. Both stances have common issues of not showing the length of the sword, especially Waki-gamae. Therefore, some instructors may say to make small three steps and strike from Tōma distance. However, this doesn’t seem right because you know your sword length; therefore, you go to your Issoku-Itto (Uchi-ma) distance and strike. Kendo technique with a sword is FACE attack by Kiritsuke (斬りつけ, first nonfatal cut). It is so crucial that you train this technique of Ai-Men learned in Kata #1 with **Mikuru Ma-Ai**, taking **Seichūsen** with **Hidari Shinogi**, and **Mikiri wo Tsukeru (見切りをつける, barely evade with a paper-thin distance)** to save you against opponent’s strike.

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After the Ai-Men, Uchidachi takes Chūdan stance, carefully stepping back with left-foot to make his Ma-Ai. This breathtaking move is similar to the movement you break up from Tsubazeriai. Shidachi stays with a good **Kigurai** (気位) without stepping back but focusing on winning the **Chūchin** (中心, the core center) for Datotsu chance. For this reason, Uchidachi, trying to win the center, reacts to **Makiosae, Surikomi-Tsuki** (巻き抑え, 擦り込み-突き). Shidachi catches the **Okori** (起こり) or the **Debana** (出ばな), use **Maki-Kaeshi Men** waza and win, parrying Uchidachi's sword and pulling him off balance. Here is the teaching of **not to retreat** as the principle of Kendo.

## 5. Japan Kendo Kata #5: Tachi no Kata (太刀の形), Gohon-Me (五本目)

In the Gohon-Me, Uchidachi is teaching **Oji-Waza, Men Suriage Men**, to Shidachi and the importance of **Kigurai** (気位) of **Sen Sen no Sen** (先先の先) when you use Oji-Waza. You learn Oji-Waza usually after you master **Ma-Ai, Seichusen-cut, Chūshin-seme**, and **Ai-Men** as you learned in the Kata #1 thru #4. Through vigorous training of Ai-Men, you also learn **Datotsu no Kikai** (打突の機会, a chance to strike) and attain technique of **Mikiri** (見切り, to evade cut barely at a paper-thin distance in front of your face).

Uchidachi aims Shidachi's face from Hidari Jōdan, and Shidachi points his Kensen to Uchidachi's left fist from Chudan (Heiseigan, 平晴眼). Uchidachi goes for Men strike like Kata #4. Shidachi evades with his body using **Mikuru-Ma** learned in Kata #4. He steps back a bit and at the same time, parries Uchidachi's sword with a **Suriage** technique using **Hidari Shinogi** (左鑓) and then immediately strikes Uchidachi's head. This waza is **Men Omote Suriage Men**.

Entire sword technique is first to destroy enemy's defense mechanism, **Ki** (気), **Ken** (剣), **Tai** (体) by **Kiritsuke** (斬り付け) technique, and then strike with a final blow by **Kirioroshi** (斬り下ろし) technique. The **Kiritsuke** is also referred to as **Shotachi** (初太刀, nonfatal 1st cut), and the **Kirioroshi** is referred to as **Ni no Tachi** (二の太刀, fatal 2nd blow).

If you can do the **Mikiri** with a good composure against opponent's **Shotachi** to your face, and pull him off his **Setūsen** with the Suriage, you can feel it and use that Suriage motion as your **Shotachi**. Then this Oji Waza cut may be considered as **Ni no Tachi**, under this situation, although it is first. (Is this the reason that you don't usually run through your opponent's left or side after an excellent Oji waza?)

## 6. Japan Kendo Kata #6: Tachi no Kata (太刀の形), Roppon-Me (六本目)

In the Roppon-Me, Uchidachi is teaching Shidachi a **newly acquired seme that must come from mastering the Oji Waza** principle learned in the Kata #5. If you master the Oji waza **Men Suriage Men**, you don't feel scared of any attack you receive from your opponent. Therefore, you naturally gain a good composure need for Kendo, calm mind/heart, and serenity for Kamae, all of which become and appear as **seme** to your opponent.

In this Kata #6, Shidachi seems to start initiating the move, whereas, in all other Kata, Uchidachi starts moving, and Shidachi follows. What is happening here is: Uchidachi moves from **Chūdan** (Kensen at the chest to throat level) to **Seigan** (晴眼, Kensen at eye level) stance; therefore, Shidachi immediately follows and goes to Gedan stance from Chudan based on the **InYōGoGyō** theory learned in the addendum 1.

Uchidachi, with Chūdan and Shidachi with Gedan stance, move to their Ma-Ai. As Uchidachi is just about to seme in from Chudan, Shidachi starts raising his Kensen to pressure Uchidachi from Gedan with a stronger Ki-zeme (seme spirit). Uchidachi tries to suppress from the top, but can't stop Shidachi's sharply intense seme; therefore, he pulls his right-foot back to take his Ma-Ai and changes his Kamae to Hidari Jōdan.

Here, if Shidachi continues to press with the same Ki-Zeme, Uchidachi intends to strike from Hidari Jōdan, but Shidachi changes the seme just like the Kata #5, prohibiting Uchidachi's waza. Therefore, Uchidachi turns to Chūdan immediately pulling his left foot back, and tries to catch Debana Kote if Shidachi comes to Men strike. However, these anticipated moves are not made by Shidachi, who behaves calmly, pressuring him. Therefore, Uchidachi goes for a quick Kote strike. Shidachi parries this Kote Uchi with a small Suriage motion and strike back with Kote waza, **Kote Suriage Kote**.

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This Shidachi's seme teaches so-called "**Sansappō**, (三殺法, **3kill way**)"; namely, 1) Ki wo Koroshi, 氣を殺し (**kill Ki**), 2) Ken wo Koroshi, 剣を殺し (**kill Ken**) and 3) Waza wo Koroshi, 技を殺し (**kill waza**) and then strike. You may relate this method to kill Ki (氣, spirit), Ken (剣, sword), and Tai (体, body), where the Tai, in this case, is Waza that your body has acquired. Note that Kote cut in Kata #6 is to restrain its function by injuring, and Kote cut in Kata #2 is to intend to cut off Uchidachi's right arm. Therefore, Uchidachi, though suffering from the injury, undauntedly makes a big step back toward his left with his left foot. He attempts to counterattack after he takes his Seitūsen. However, Shidachi chases him immediately with Jōdan stance, takes his Setūsen, and doesn't allow Uchidachi's counterattack. Uchidachi acknowledges his defeat because he is off his Setūsen facing sideways and has no chance to recover his Kamae.

## 7. Japan Kendo Kata #7: Tachi no Kata (太刀の形), Nanahon-Me(七本目)

In the Nanahon-Me, Uchidachi is teaching Shidachi a higher skill level of the **seme to draw out your opponent** and win, so-called "**Kassatsujizai no Ken** 活殺自在の剣," as an application of the **Sansappō** (三殺法) learned in the Kata #6. The phrase "**Kassatsujizai no Ken**" means "Sparing or not sparing life is within oneself in the way of the Kendo. It's in his Te-nouchi (will) and heart."

In the Kata #7, Uchidachi pressures Shidachi with **Chūchin** (the core center) seme by stepping forward. Shidachi's seme takes advantage of his opponent's move to bring out his Men strike by pushing the sword forward and stepping back with his Kensen away from the center. Pushing the sword forward, stepping back a bit, and supporting the sword up from the bottom with the Kensen off the center simultaneously satisfy Uchidachi's instinct of success in seme-in for Men strike. Shidachi's move appeared as if Uchidachi killed his **ki**, **ken**, and **waza** to strike for the Men. Therefore, Shidachi, knowing Uchidachi is coming for the Men, can strike his Dō at his will. I (translator) think the reason Uchidachi steps out from left-foot in Ayumi-Ashi for the Men strike is to illustrate he is using Tsugi-Ashi as you can see if the two moves (his Seme and Men-Uchi) are put together. Here, I think, the Tsugi-Ashi (more like Ayumi-Ashi) move is separated into two parts to show the details of the Shidachi's movements as an actor from the standpoint of Uchidachi for the **Sansappō** (三殺法).

This Dō strike by Shidachi is indeed the "**Kassatsujizai** 活殺自在," because he drew out Uchidachi to strike Men so that he can strike Dō as he set up by the seme motions (剣前体後, sword front/body behind). He can cut through the Dō to kill or cut his skin or just cut the Hakama girdle. Uchidachi, who was thus defeated, faces Shidachi helplessly and returns to starting position harmoniously together with Shidachi thanking him for his mercy.

## Addendum 2

The Kendo Kata #8, #9, #10 is referred to as **Kodachi no Kata** (小太刀の形) #1, #2, #3 respectively. In our Kendo match, one application to use **Kodachi** (小太刀) is **Nitō-Ryu** (二刀流) waza that remind us of the famous name **Miyamoto Musashi** (宮本武蔵). One with a **Kodachi** (小太刀) has a disadvantage of Ma-Ai when compared to one with a **Tachi** (太刀, std. size) because of the short length (less than 62cm for Shinai). However, the one with a **Kodachi** has a chance to win if he can make the **Irimi** (入身) attack and penetrate within the opponent's bosom, avoiding the Monouchi portion of the sword. It takes great courage to get into this **Ma-Ai** with **Kodachi** (小太刀). **Kodachi no Kata** (小太刀の形) #1, #2, #3 demonstrates the fights of Shidachi who overcome this fear and attacks Uchidachi, and Uchidachi battles against the **Iri-Mi** (入身) attack. And this Kata #1, #2, #3 is said to have the meaning of **Shin** (真), **Gyō** (行), **Sō** (草) spirits respectively.

## 8. Japan Kendo Kata #8: Kodachi no Kata (小太刀の形), Ippon-Me (一本目)

In the Kodachi Ippon-Me, Uchidachi is teaching Shidachi a meaning of **Shin** (真) spirit. The Shin (真) is the heart of a keen, watchful mind that does not allow any mistakes. In Kendo terms, it is the attitude that immediately you cut fairly and squarely from the Kamae without any off-guard moment and not giving any chance to your opponent.

Uchidachi takes **Morote Hidari Jōdan** (諸手左上段). Shidachi holds Kodachi (小太刀) with right-hand and takes **Chūdan Hanmi** (中段半身) stance with the feeling to cut the opponent's fist diagonally. **Hanmi** (半身) is usually referred to as **right-foot Hanmi**, stepping right-foot out with your body turned to the side and facing your opponent.

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As Uchidachi moves forward, Shidachi moves with the **Shin** (真) spirit. As soon as Uchidachi reaches within his Ma-Ai, Shidachi goes to the **Irimi** (入見, extend Kensaki with right shoulder forward) seme to bring out Uchidachi's Men strike. Then he parries and strikes Men. He uses **Hidari Ukenagashi** (左受け流し) technique with **Hidari Shinogi** (左鑷) raising his hand high overhead while opening his body to the right. Technically speaking, the waza used should be **Migi SuriMukaeUke/Hidari Ukenagashi** (右すり迎え受け/左受け流し). This waza was once demonstrated by Nakayama Hakudo (中山博道) sensei once with Takano Sasaburo (高野佐三郎) sensei.

## 9. Japan Kendo Kata #9: Kodachi no Kata (小太刀の形), Nihon-Me (二本目)

In the Kodachi Nihon-Me, Uchidachi is teaching Shidachi a meaning of **Gyou** (行) spirit. The **Gyou** (行) as in **Gyou-Sho** (行書) is the heart of a flexible mind that takes proper steps to meet the situation under **Shin** (真) spirit. In Kendo terms, it is the attitude that you cut fairly and squarely after prohibiting the opponent's moves and then pressuring the opponent to bring out his Men strike as in Kodachi Kata #1.

Uchidachi takes **Gedan** (下段) stance, and Shidachi takes **Chūdan Hanmi** (半身) stance. When mutually gets close to proper Ma-Ai, Uchidachi starts to bring his Kensen to the Chūdan stance. Shidachi suppress it down with the **Irimi** (入身) seme as if he is jumping into Uchidachi's chest area to take advantage of **Kodachi's Ma-Ai**. Uchidachi reacts immediately and opens to Waki Gamae to take his Ma-Ai, but Shidachi tries Irimi (入身) seme again. Uchidachi, therefore, changes to Morote Hidari Jōdan and strike Men. Shidachi parries and strikes Men. He uses the **Migi Ukenagashi** (右受け流し) technique with **Migi Shinogi** (右鑷) raising his hand high overhead while opening his body to the left. Moreover, he holds Uchidachi's right arm at the elbow from the top and shows Zanshin with his Kensen aimed at Uchidachi's throat. Technically speaking, the waza used should be **Hidari SuriMukaeUke /Migi Ukenagashi** (左すり迎え受け/右受け流し).

## 10. Japan Kendo Kata #10: Kodachi no Kata (小太刀の形), Sanbon-Me(三本目)

In the Kodachi Sanbon-Me, Uchidachi is teaching Shidachi a meaning of **Sō** (草) spirit. The **Sō** (草) as in **Sō-Sho** (草書) is the heart of detached mind that opens Kamae to let opponent try first. In Kendo terms, it is the attitude that wins fairly and squarely without cutting after making the opponent do whatever he wants to do and defending each situation.

Uchidachi takes **Chūdan** (中段) stance, and Shidachi takes **Gedan Hanmi** (下段半身) stance without the feeling of kamae. As Uchidachi moves forward, Shidachi moves boldly suppressing the **Sen** and go for the **Irimi** (入身) seme; therefore, Uchidachi immediately goes for Men strike using **Morote Migi Jōdan's Furikaburi** (振りかぶり). Shidachi parries this Motodachi's attack using **Suriage/Suriotoshi** (すり上げ/すり落とし) techniques and tries again with the Irimi (入身) seme; therefore, Uchidachi can't go for Men, so quickly goes for Dō strike. However, Shidachi parries his attack again using **Hidari Shinogi Surinagashi/ Surikomi** (すり流し/すり込み) technique, and presses his sword at Tsubamoto and hold his right arm at his elbow from the side and locks his upper body. Therefore, Uchidachi pulls back to escape, and Shidachi continues his seme following his steps and shows **Zanshin** with Kensen aimed at Uchidachi's throat. Shidachi goes back to the starting position from the left foot.

### Postscript

I think Nippon (Japan) Kendo Kata, established in 1912, is surprisingly expressing the thoughts and ideas of peaceful Japanese cultures despite wars going on at that time. Today, the concept of Kendo and the purpose of practicing Kendo are well established by All Japan Kendo Federation along with this line of the meaning of Nippon (Japan) Kendo Kata.

Today's Kendo has tendencies to learn the techniques as a competitive sport, and the original thoughts, ideas, and purpose are somewhat under a taboo. We need to continue Kendo practice to reach the levels that we can appreciate this Kendo Kata so that we can hand down proper Kendo and Kendo Kata to our new generation.

These thoughts and ideas about the above Kendo Kata are based on my (author's) studies and design, so please allow there may be some errors or incomplete concepts. I hope it arouses more interest in the Kendo Kata and learns the true meaning.