

TENSHIN RYU IAIDO

GRADING SYLLABUS

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Kneeling Forms – Seiza Waza

1. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza. In one coordinated movement draw knees together, both hands move to the Tsuka, rotate iaito outwards (cutting edge away from the body). Rise up and smoothly draw iaito out of the saya, step forward with the right leg, accelerate the iaito to perform nukitsuke. At this point the right knee and foot should be facing forward, the left knee down, left foot up on the toes and the leg facing straight back. Hips should be pushed forward and torso perfectly erect, Eyes facing forward to look at opponent. The right arm should be level with the shoulder the kissaki level with your own centre line, left hand should pull saya outward to expand the chest. This cut should be performed with focus and determination and should be stopped exactly without any shake or movement. The left knee travels forward to meet the right foot, at the same time raising the sword into Jodan no kamae, perform kirioroshi whilst moving the right leg forward. Rise into tachi, right arm moves iaito out level with the shoulder to the right, left hand moves to the saya. Perform chiburi, pause for zanshin, and swap legs by moving the left up to the right and the right then back. Perform noto, move front leg back in line with the other then take three small steps back maintaining zanshin.
2. Face hidari (left) in seiza to the Kamiza. This form is performed as in no.1 but the nukitsuke is performed towards Kamiza by rotating on the left knee. Feet do NOT change before noto.
3. Face Migi (right) in seiza to the Kamiza. This form is performed as in no.1 but to effect the nukitsuke the left leg rises and the rotation is on the right knee. Feet swap before noto.
4. Face ushiro (rear) in seiza to the Kamiza. This form is performed as in no.1 but to effect the nukitsuke, rise with the left knee, turn clockwise drop the left knee and raise the right whilst drawing the iaito smoothly. Feet do not change before noto.
5. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza. Bring knees together and raise left knee up, smoothly draw iaito vertically to perform a deflection, cutting edge facing rearward, protecting head and left shoulder. Right foot should be on its toes. Rise completely bringing right foot up to meet left and assume hasso no kamae. Pause, step back with the left foot whilst cutting yokomen. Pause for zanshin, right hand changes grip, the chiburi is performed by stepping all the way back with the right leg and sweeping the iaito round so it finishes facing straight back as in waki no kamae. Pause for zanshin. Perform gyaku noto whilst drawing the right leg back to your left.
6. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza. Bring knees together and rise, draw iaito straight up into jodan no kamae. Cut kirioroshi as legs splay apart and the body drops assisting the cut. Bring knees back together and rise, perform tenshin chiburi. Zanshin, and noto, resume seiza position.
7. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza. Begin as for no.1 form but after performing kirioroshi rise and step forward with the left foot and assume jodan no kamae, step forward and perform tachi kirioroshi, right foot forward, perform tenshin chiburi. Zanshin and noto. Step back five small paces.
8. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza. Begin as for no.1 but after nukitsuke jump in seiza to hidari kamae whilst performing kirioroshi. Chiburi is performed by spinning iaito 360 degree on your right side, take hold of the mune with the left thumb and forefinger, draw the iaito back sliding through the fingers until the left hand is holding the kissaki, take the kissaki through an arc to the koiguchi of the saya, moving the right hand forward, slide the iaito back into the saya whilst changing legs. Assume seiza again.
9. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza. Lunge out to the right at 45-degree angle whilst drawing the iaito into hasso no kamae, perform yokomen. Straighten posture and perform tenshin chiburi. Zanshin then noto. Assume seiza again.
10. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza. Raise left knee, hand on saya thumb on tsuba. Move out at 45 degree angle whilst drawing, perform tenkan taesabaki whilst cutting yokomen. Straighten posture and perform tenshin chiburi. Zanshin and noto whilst sinking on to left knee.

11. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza. Begin as for no.1 but after kirioroshi perform yoko chiburi. Zanshin and as noto is performed sink into tate-hiza, before the iaito is fully home in the saya draw again to perform nukitsuke and kirioroshi once more. Rise up to tachi and perform chiburi as for no.1. Zanshin and noto with feet swapped.
12. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza. Rise up to standing (kiba-dachi) whilst drawing the iaito upside down and perform one handed strike with the mune, move forward half a step in same stance whilst moving iaito into jodan no kamae, cut kirioroshi. Assume shizentai and perform tenshin chiburi. Zanshin and noto.
13. Assume seiza, facing Kamiza.(kaishaku) Smoothly rise to tachi whilst drawing the iaito, feet together and iaito held with both hands and resting on right shoulder. Pause, left leg steps out to the left whilst performing short kesa-giri. Reverse the grip of the right hand and sweep iaito round to your right whilst bringing the right foot to the left. Zanshin and noto.

Standing Forms – Tachi Waza

1. Face Kamiza. Start the form by placing the right hand palm up onto the tsuka, this is a peaceful gesture indicating that you do not wish to fight but are ready, rotate hand and grasp tsuka correctly. Perform nukitsuke by stepping back into migi shizentai, right arm level with shoulder kissaki on your own centre line, left arm pulling the saya outward to expand the chest. Slide left foot up to right whilst moving into jodan no kamae, slide right foot forward and perform kirioroshi. Pause, and then perform chiburi by taking the right arm out to the side, iaito in line with shoulder cutting edge facing forward. Move right arm across face with palm towards you and cutting edge facing up, allow arm to naturally swing through an arc and stop the iaito so the kissaki is on your centre line. Slide left foot up to right and slide right foot back. Zanshin and noto. Take three small steps back.
2. Face hidari to Kamiza. Peaceful gesture, Slide left foot forward and slightly back start to draw the iaito, pivot on balls of feet and perform nukitsuke towards Kamiza. The rest of the form is as in no.1 but the feet do not swap.
3. Face Migi to Kamiza. Peaceful gesture, Slide left foot back and round whilst drawing iaito into nukitsuke towards Kamiza. The rest of the form is as in no.1.
4. Face ushiro to Kamiza. Peaceful gesture, left foot steps across your own centre line begin to draw, pivot on balls of feet and perform nukitsuke towards Kamiza. The rest of the form is as in no.1 but the feet do not swap.
5. Face Kamiza. Step backwards with left foot and draw iaito straight up to form a deflection and protect head and left shoulder, step forward with right foot and perform kirioroshi. Zanshin, perform Tenshin chiburi and noto, take three small steps back.
6. Face hidari to Kamiza. Slide left foot forward and slightly back start to draw the iaito vertically, pivot on balls of feet and perform deflection towards Kamiza, then the same as in number five.
7. Face migi to Kamiza. Slide left foot back and round whilst drawing iaito vertically to deflect towards Kamiza, then the same as in number five.
8. Face ushiro to Kamiza. Left foot steps across your own centre line begin to draw vertically, pivot on balls of feet and perform deflection towards Kamiza, then the same as in number five.
9. Face Kamiza. Step forward with left foot then right then tuck left foot behind right, left shin touching right calf, whilst drawing iaito into reverse deflection. Left leg steps back to assume jodan no kamae, perform kirioroshi. Perform Tenshin chiburi and noto. Three steps back.
10. Face Kamiza. Step forward with left foot then right then tuck left foot behind right, left shin touching right calf, whilst drawing iaito into normal deflection. Push iaito forward and perform kirioroshi to 45 degree angle, perform Tenshin chiburi and noto. Three steps back.
11. Face Kamiza. Step forward on left foot whilst drawing iaito up and round into your centre, step forward with right foot and perform tsuka thrust in chudan. Withdraw iaito and assume jodan no kamae, perform kirioroshi, perform Tenshin chiburi and noto. Three steps back.
12. Face Kamiza. . Step forward with left foot then right then tuck left foot behind right, left shin touching right calf,

whilst drawing iaito with an underhand grip and performing half butterfly cut, stop the iaito when the right arm forms a square in front of you with the iaito pointing forward. Bring left hand up to tsuka, press down allowing iaito to spring up into jodan no kamae, left leg stepping back. Perform kirioroshi, Tenshin chiburi and noto. Three steps back.

13. Face Kamiza. Right hand goes to tsuka, pull tsuka and saya forward and then rotate round and strike down onto opponent's wrist. Draw saya back and perform nukitsuke, take half a step forward into jodan no kamae, perform kirioroshi, Tenshin chiburi and noto. Three steps back.
14. Face Kamiza. Right hand goes to tsuka, pull tsuka and saya forward and then rotate iaito round 180 degrees, draw iaito gyaku kesa-giri, turn blade over and perform kirioroshi. Tenshin chiburi and noto. Three steps back.
15. Face Kamiza. Right hand goes to tsuka, pull tsuka and saya forward to strike at opponent's solar plexus, draw saya back thus freeing the iaito, place mune on upper arm for guidance and strike ushiro with the iaito whilst pulling the saya forward so as to effect a scissor motion, assume jodan no kamae and perform kirioroshi to front. Perform Tenshin chiburi and noto. Three steps back.
16. Face Kamiza. Draw iaito straight up, cutting edge facing left, place left hand on the mune and draw iaito down to perform an assisted cut whilst moving into kiba-dachi. Perform tsuka thrust to mid section and retreat into jodan no kamae, perform kirioroshi. Perform Tenshin chiburi and noto. Three steps back.

Two man Kata Forms (Katana)

The purpose of these kata forms is to teach the essential principles of swordsmanship, that is, Speed, timing, and distance. To learn how to blend with an opponent, to understand his timing and to forestall him. To also gain an understanding of mushin and Zanshin. These forms are performed using a bokken (wooden sword) until a firm understanding has been grasped.

The kata begins with the opponents 5 steps from each other, they bow and walk towards each other, at the appropriate distance the iaito is smoothly drawn into chudan no kamae so the iaito's cross each other. Both practitioners then sink to a crouch keeping the back straight and focus on the opponent, then rise back to Tachi with iaito's still in contact, they then move to kamae-otoku.

The attacker (tori) only ever performs kirioroshi, it is essential that the attacks are made with speed and accuracy. The defender (uki) must ensure the counter cuts finish within half an inch of the opponent's head, so strict control is needed to avoid an accident.

1. From kamae-otoku raise iaito to chudan no kamae, tori steps back into jodan no kamae and performs kirioroshi, uki raises iaito into deflection over the right shoulder whilst stepping slightly to the left. After the cut has been parried uki adopts jodan no kamae and cuts kirioroshi to top of opponent's head. Then slowly move the iaito down the face to point at the eye of tori. Pause for Zanshin, uki then retreats into jodan no kamae and moves back into position and then lowers his iaito back to chudan no kamae.
2. From kamae-otoku raise iaito to chudan no kamae, tori steps back into jodan no kamae and performs kirioroshi, step across the centre line with the left foot whilst drawing the iaito straight up to deflect the incoming cut, spin all the way round so you are again facing your opponent, take hold of the iaito with both hands and perform kirioroshi to top of opponents head. Then slowly move the iaito down the face to point at the eye of tori. Pause for Zanshin, uki then retreats into jodan no kamae and moves back into position and then lowers his iaito back to chudan no kamae.
3. From kamae-otoku raise iaito to chudan no kamae, tori steps back into jodan no kamae and performs kirioroshi, the defence is the same as no.1 but with an extra cut to the opponent's thigh after the deflection.
4. From kamae-otoku raise iaito to chudan no kamae, tori steps back into jodan no kamae and performs kirioroshi, take small step with left foot then large one with right and drop onto left knee whilst turning the iaito horizontally (left hand pushes under the right) and push into the opponent's lower abdomen. Pull iaito across the abdomen until clear of the body and then place kissaki on the ribs to simulate a thrust through. To finish, rise up, keeping the iaito in front of you. Pause for Zanshin, uki then retreats into jodan no kamae and moves back into position and then lowers his iaito back to chudan no kamae.
5. From kamae-otoku raise iaito to chudan no kamae, push the iaito forward to thrust at the face of tori, he does the same (a see-sawing action) three times, on the third one tori raises his iaito into jodan no kamae and performs kirioroshi, take a quick short step with the right foot and then a large one with the left whilst turning the blade horizontal and pushing it into the opponent's upper chest(the idea being that the opponents force of cut will trap your iaito therefore doing more damage). Step up with the right leg and pull iaito across the chest and out . Pause for Zanshin, uki then retreats into jodan no kamae and moves back into position and then lowers his iaito back to chudan no kamae. Perform Tenshin chiburi and noto.

6. The mirror image form, face opponent, step directly left and then right foot directly back into kiba-dachi whilst drawing the iaito straight up and horizontal over your head . Step forward with the right foot moving the iaito through an arc to deflect a cut to your head, move iaito on into jodan no kamae and strike kirioroshi. Tenshin chiburi and noto, step to the right to face your opponent again.. This kata should mirror your opponent with attention to the timing.
7. From kamae-otoku raise iaito to chudan no kamae, step back into waki no kamae, wait for attack, avoid the incoming kirioroshi by stepping slightly to the left, allow the cut to pass by, then quickly raise iaito to hasso no kamae and perform short cut to the wrists of the opponent. Raise iaito to face of opponent, then step back into jodan no kamae, regain position and lower iaito to chudan no kamae.
8. From kamae-otoku raise iaito to chudan no kamae, step back into hasso no kamae, avoid incoming kirioroshi by stepping slightly out to your right and performing yoho-giri (horizontal cut) to the neck. Bring iaito to the face of the opponent, then step back into jodan no kamae, regain position and lower iaito to chudan no kamae. Tenshin chiburi and noto.

Two man Kata Forms (Wakazashi)

The same principles apply as detailed for the Kata forms for katana, again all attacks are kirioroshi.

1. Wakazashi is held in front pointing down, avoid incoming cut to your left and forward reach out with left hand and take hold of opponent's right arm just above the elbow, grip tightly and lift (this will take the opponent off balance) wakazashi thrusts into abdomen, Bring wakazashi up to opponent's face. Step back into one handed jodan no kamae, move back in front of opponent and lower wakazashi to chudan no kamae.
2. This kata is the same as no.1 but the wakazashi thrust is to the throat.
3. Wakazashi is held in front pointing down, move to your left whilst raising the wakazashi and turning the blade over, parry incoming cut over right shoulder, perform one handed strike to the head. Bring wakazashi down to opponent's face. Step back into one handed jodan no kamae, move back in front of opponent and lower wakazashi to chudan no kamae
4. Wakazashi is held in front pointing down, move to your right whilst raising the wakazashi and parry incoming cut over left shoulder, perform one handed strike to the head. Bring wakazashi down to opponent's face. Step back into one handed jodan no kamae, move back in front of opponent and lower wakazashi to chudan no kamae.
5. As jodan cut begins thrust the wakazashi into your opponent's throat.
6. Wakazashi is held in front pointing down, as the cut commences move swiftly forward and thrust wakazashi into opponent's abdomen, place your left forearm swiftly onto opponent's chest and push (The timing of this move is critical and requires long practice to avoid injury). Step back into one handed jodan no kamae, move back and lower wakazashi to chudan no kamae.
7. Wakazashi is held in front pointing down, avoid incoming cut to your left and forward reach out with left hand and take hold of opponent's left arm, pull towards you and apply the arm lock, wakazashi thrust into the throat. Bring wakazashi up to opponent's face. Step back into one handed jodan no kamae, move back and lower wakazashi to chudan no kamae.
8. Swap hands with the wakazashi (now in left hand pointing down) avoid the incoming sword cut by moving out to your right an forward, slip your right hand over the opponent's left arm and grasp their right arm. In one continuous motion step in front of your opponent go under their arms so you finish up on the opponent's right side. (This move creates a very strong arm lock, it also traps your arm) with the wakazashi in your left hand thrust into the ribs of the opponent. Untangle your right arm and raise the wakazashi into the face of your opponent, Step back into one handed jodan no kamae, move back and lower wakazashi to chudan no kamae.

Unarmed Kata – to relieve the opponent of their sword.

From an attack from the front avoid the kirioroshi by stepping out to the right and forward, simultaneously place hands palm down, left on the mune of the blade, the right between your opponent's right and left grip on the tsuka. Push away and up so the iaito is level with the chest. Pull with your right hand and push with your left, the iaito comes easily out of your opponent's grip and the cutting edge is facing them for you to perform an assisted cut, step back into jodan no kamae and perform kirioroshi.