

## The methods of using the sword of Shinkage-ryu-kenjutsu and the Contemporary Kendo: The techniques of the body for manipulating a bamboo sword

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### 1. Introduction

Nowadays the Japan Kendo Federation guides practitioners to develop mind and body through competing of *Yuko-datotsu* while they practice kendo. *Yuko-datotsu* is defined in the *Match and judge rules*. The main contents are as follows: “showing the fullness of spirit”, “appropriate posture”, “striking the zone of an opponent that are permitted by striking the part from tip of the *Shinai* (the bamboo sword) to around 30 centimeters, while imaging to cut along *Hasuji* (a line that connects a back and edge of Japanese sword)”, and “expressing *Zanshin* (Preparation for a counterattack)”.

To cut along *Hasuji* means to manipulate the *Shinai* as *Nihonto* (Japanese sword). Therefore, this author thinks that for the improvement of the quality of modern *kendo*, it is important to reexamine how to manipulate the *Shinai* along *Hasuji*.

The purpose of this study is to clarify techniques of the body for manipulating a *Shinai* through examining *Toho* (the methods of using the sword) in *Shinkage-ryu kenjutsu*, which was founded by Kamiizumi Hidetsuna, and systematized in the sixteenth century, the Edo era. The concept of *Toho* that was defined by Takeharu Kiyono(1927-2008), who did a deep research about *Onoha-itto-ryu-kenjutsu*. *Onoha-itto-ryu-kenjutsu* comprises the manipulation of *Mogi-to* (imitation-sword) such as a *Fukuro-shinai* (bamboo sword wrapped by leather). *Toho* of *Shinkage-ryu* has been handed down up to now. One of characteristics of *Shinkage-ryu* is to use the *Fukuro-shinai*. It is an alternative of Japanese sword to strike an opponent safely and forcefully. Thus, this study examines how to manipulate *Fukuro-shinai* from the following two viewpoints.

1. From the viewpoints of the relation between a practitioner and *Fukuro-shinai*.
2. When and how to manipulate the *Fukuro-shinai* against opponents?

### 2. Methodology

This is a historical study combined with fieldwork. By field work we gathered the information about *Toho* of *Shinkage-ryu* which is not sufficiently recorded yet and the information is related to core techniques and the training system materials. We also carried out interviews set at a place closed to leaders of the dojo of *Shinkage-ryu* in Chiba prefecture. The field work also contains participant observation (PO) about practices in the dojo, which is intended to obtain inside information.

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### 3. Results

(1) From the viewpoints of the relation between a practitioner and *Fukuro-shinai*.

First, acquire *Go-ka-no-narai* (the five important teachings) in manipulating a *Fukuro-shinai*. *Go-ka-no-narai* means: 1) To hold your body so as to present only one side to your opponent; 2) To hold your shoulder to be on a plane with your opponent's; 3) To make a shield of your own fists; 4) To extend your left arm; 5) To rest weight on a forward knee and stretch out a rear leg. *Go-ka-no-narai* reside in all techniques of katas in *Shinkage-ryu*.

(2) How to manipulate a *Fukuro-shinai* against an opponent, and how to time.

- 1) A *Shidachi* (winner in a kata) should give attention to a moment that an opponent try to strike by a bamboo sword.
- 2) A *Shidachi* and an *Uchitachi* (loser in a kata) should give attention to a moment that they stroke each other with using a *Fukuro-shinai*.
- 3) Practitioners should manipulate a *Fukuro-shinai* to cut along *Hasuji* each moment.

### 4. Discussion and conclusion

Regarding the first perspective in the result, we are convinced that *Go-ka-no-narai* are basic lessons that always manifest themselves when practicing each techniques of all katas in *Shinkage-ryu*.

Regarding the second perspective in the results, it is considered that 1) a reason giving attention to a moment is to control *Uchitachi*'s attack while manipulating a *Fukuro-shinai* to cut along *Hasuji*; 2) there are three types of conditions manipulating right *Hasuji* as follow: A. To make a body turn by centering on the backbone; B. To extend left arm; C. To grip tight a *Fukuro-shinai* as if wring out a towel; 3) there are three types of conditions controlling *Uchitachi*'s attack as follow: A. To catch the moment when *Uchitachi* tries to attack; B. To step forward earlier than *Uchitachi*; C. To advance towards the center of an opponent who moves.

The techniques of the body performing along *Hasuji* is to integrate the movement of a body, hands, feet, and *Mogi-to* such as *Shinai* or *Fukuro-shinai* into one. The acquisition of such basics and methods are determined by workmanship of *Jumonji-kachi* (the core technique of *Shinkage-ryu*), and a practitioner can gradually acquire such basics and methods by learning *Shinkage-ryu* training system.

In conclusion, there are techniques of the body that guarantee correct *Hasuji* in *Shinkage-ryu* even in case that a tool such as *Fukuro-shinai* changes *Shinai* in the modern kendo. Hence it is consider that practitioners can practice contemporary kendo with performing to cut along *Hasuji* by *Fukuro-shinai*.

**Key words:** Kendo; Kenjutsu; *Hasuji*; *Fukuro-shinai*; *Go-ka-no-narai*; *Jumonji-kachi*.

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