

# **A GUIDE FOR PRACTISING AIKIDO**

Some Notes for Study

*“This is called perception of the nature of things.  
Soft and weak overcome hard and strong”*

*Lao Tsu*

Sekiya Sensei drafted his Notes for Instructors in 1979 in England in a handwritten version and expanded certain sections in the late 1980's in Japan in a typed version. The present edition has been transferred to digital media and formatted by members of Ireland Aikikai.

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A Dawns Wind Production

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There should be no force, no physical strength in Aikido. Even older people can cope with and overcome strong opponents using *maai* and the body movement called *taisabaki*. Some of the textbooks say that if you can lift 5 kg (or 50 kg - it does not matter), then it is possible to throw an opponent. Thus, many people develop too much physical strength. In any case the body deteriorates physically: it will deteriorate even more quickly and to a greater extent if the principle of 'no force' is forgotten.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This section contains three essays. One called AIKIDO NO KOKORO (Heart of Aikido) was given by Yamaguchi-shihan in England in 1976. The second one was given by Yamaguchi-shihan for the Spring Special Training at the Hombu Dojo in 1986. The third is by Taisen Deshimaru and is about the seven principles of Aikido.

At this time among students of Aikido, there is much debate about ‘hard’ versus ‘soft’ styles. Yamaguchi-sensei’s comments on “giving up reliance on power” are especially relevant to this issue. If you are using muscle in your technique you will not be able to learn to blend with *ki*. If your muscles are hard you will find it difficult to move and also to be aware of and feel your opponent’s movement. Being able to feel your opponent’s movement and to blend with it is extremely important for taking *ukemi* properly and safely. It is necessary to feel your opponent’s movement to respond with an appropriate technique. Doing a set form by yourself as *tori* – without paying attention to *uke*’s movement, or ‘throwing yourself’ as *uke* misses the point of *Aiki* – it is a dead end.

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**Excerpts from:                      AIKIDO NO KOKORO (Heart of Aikido)**  
**By Yamaguchi Shihan - 1976.**

O-Sensei regarded the spirit as its most important element. The word *Aiki* expresses something out of which all other things come into being. The founder placed the highest importance on love, and taught that it is the source of all things. *Aiki* contains within it both the principles and the means for realizing this love. It is through practicing the techniques of Aikido that we come to understand fully the principles of *Aiki*. And conversely, it is in our practice of techniques that we express the spirit in a tangible form. It is, therefore, essential that the spirit and the techniques should not be separated. The spirit is given expression through techniques and the techniques are given a spiritual form by their execution.

In his lifetime, O-Sensei would often say to us that he was still learning and making progress every day, and he would not stop learning until the day he died. We were often puzzled when he told us that the techniques which we had learned the day before were faulty. Of course there was no fault at all: but if one is serious in one’s efforts to make progress, then yesterday’s techniques can be said to be faulty when looked at from today’s perspective, although at the moment they were being taught they were not faulty. With this outlook, I hope that you and I can practice every day of our lives.

Practice in its true meaning is a discipline through which one strives for perfection (though perfection cannot be said to exist). The original meaning of the two Chinese characters for the word *keiko* (practice) was to reflect upon the nature or qualities of our ancestors.

One must approach one’s Aikido practice with a fresh approach and a fresh attitude of mind. In Japanese we express this concept by the term *shoshin*, which means the heart of the first time. This is the most important thing to have in order to learn the way. One might think of *shoshin* as something pure, innocent, almost childlike in its naivety. Learning the actual techniques takes much time, but gradually with the passage of time (it may take many years) you will be able to execute the techniques as if they were part of you. So although it seems that one is practicing the same techniques over and over again, day by day, if you practice with *shoshin*, with the fresh approach of the beginner, your spirit will become deeper and your technique will gain depth and substance.

Each practice is serious and belongs only to the time it took place. This idea can be expressed by using the Japanese term taken from the tea ceremony: *Ichigo, ichiye*, which means that you regard the person in front of you as someone you are meeting for the first time and possibly the last time in your life. This means that when you face your practice partner you should always do so with the feeling that this is the first and last opportunity you will have to engage with him.

The idea of being content to die at any time, if one has lived with seriousness of purpose, is linked with the spirit of *Aiki* of valuing all things and all men. O-Sensei had always said that the real value in Aikido

lay in the real love and appreciation of all things, both visible and invisible to the human eye; mist, mountains, people, animals, plants, air, light, - everything. It is not easy to understand or attain this attitude in a short time. But if we practice hard we shall make progress day by day.

Before I met O-Sensei, I had tried other martial arts but, although I enjoyed them, I did not feel any deep interest in any one of them. This was because although the spirit *seishin* (pure heart) was emphasized, I had a strong feeling it was somehow isolated from the art itself. When I met O-Sensei I was very surprised and thought it strange that someone like him could exist in this present age. I had previously practiced *budo* with the thought that to win was the only aim, but with O-Sensei I was introduced to a completely new world.

I should now like to give some simple explanation of the basic techniques which we have been practicing.

What you must remember is that the most important thing in Aikido is that *Aiki* is *kokyu*, *irimi*, and *tenkan*. This is the fundamental principle in Aikido.

As for *kokyu*, the most generally understood meaning of the word among Japanese is simply breathing: inhaling and exhaling, this is biological breathing. But *kokyu* is not only this: in the martial arts the word describes very simply the essentials of things. One's relationship to one's partner or the relationship between one's body and mind. In this sense, the true *Aiki* prevents separation of the body and the mind. This can be extended beyond the techniques to include relationships with other people.

In the case of *irimi-tenkan* one can think of two meanings: there is the *irimi-tenkan* which is visible to the eye in the movement; but the second meaning is something very spiritual and invisible. In the latter sense *irimi* indicates entering into the feelings of the partner, entering into his mind. *Tenkan* means changing, drawing out power and converting it to beauty, a qualitative change. This is what we might call the spiritualization of technique. Just as *kokyu* is composed of two elements meaning to inhale and exhale, so too *irimi-tenkan* contains two elements, but they are both expressions of the same thing, like two sides of a coin. Nor is the method of *Aiki kokyu* something apart: it should work within all techniques. Seen like this *Aiki* is a basic principle of education: it can make the weak strong and the evil good.

We must learn with the greatest accuracy the basic techniques: the *kanetsu-waza*; *ikkyo*, *nikyo*, *sankyo*, and *yonkyo*, and the *nage-waza*; *shiho-nage*, *kotegaeshi*, *irimi-nage*, and *kaiten-nage* which are essentially just three: front and rear, right and left, upper and lower.

These proceed from one source but they are expressed in slightly different ways –

<i>Irimi-tenkan</i> is <i>jodan</i>	(upper)
<i>Kotegaeshi</i> is <i>gedan</i>	(lower)
<i>Kaiten</i> and <i>shiho</i> are <i>chudan</i>	(middle)
<i>Kaiten</i> is also <i>ushiro</i>	(behind)

There have been many books written on Aikido, but all I know is upper, lower, front, back, left, and right. All these techniques have a cohesive power whether they are *omote* or *ura*, *uchi* or *soto*.

If we look at them in this kind of way, Aikido is very dynamic. *Irimi-tenkan* means change or transfer from front to rear or vice-versa. Between right and left there are innumerable points: likewise between front and rear.

One views this from the general to the particular and from the particular to the general; one thinks of things from the opposite point of view. This is very important. What it means is that *if a strong man depends on his strength during techniques, he shall never understand them well*. In these circumstances even if one possesses strength one must deny it. It is an important part of Aikido that the very weak can learn to move and can succeed. If this precept is understood you can discover in yourself the ability to move. *The strong man who relies upon his strength cannot make his discovery* - whatever he does. Conversely, the weak man, in a certain sense, has the advantage. There is an old saying that "he who lives by the sword dies by the sword". Those who depend on force shall be destroyed by force. Thus when practicing Aikido this 'reversed spirit' is very important. One has a natural tendency to follow the inclinations of one's own character no matter what happens. But when studying the way, you must once and for all destroy such bad habits. You must discard not only the bad points of your character, but also the good points. If you do not do so, your eyes cannot be opened in a true

sense. Only after you have eliminated the good and the bad points of your character will you be able to, through practice, realize the truth. This is something which is connected with achieving liberation in a real sense. Aikido is thus one of the roads to liberation.

There are innumerable techniques which spring from the basic techniques and they occur spontaneously just when the moment is right.

The true techniques are the ones you have learned thoroughly and then forgotten. In this method of practice, one does not only learn techniques such as *suwari-waza*, *tachi-waza*, and *hanmi-handachi* in their outward forms, but various techniques emerge naturally from basic movements such as sitting, standing, and walking.

O-Sensei often said “All techniques are one”. If you knew what the one was, he would demonstrate a great number of techniques and still say that all techniques are one. In the beginning, I found this very difficult to understand but gradually I came to understand it. In this, my previous knowledge was a hindrance and prevented me from doing many things. It is only quite recently that I realized that all things are linked: as O-Sensei said – one. [This is a difficult concept both to translate and to comprehend. The Japanese word used by Yamaguchi-sensei suggests that all techniques arise out of the same basic foundation, rather as the molecules making up a mass may expand and contract and even assume different forms, and yet are essentially of the same matter.]

Yamaguchi Sensei  
1976

### Lecture by Yamaguchi-Sensei for Spring 1986 Special Training at the Hombu Dojo.

#### *Practice of Aiki Natural Posture*

To attain Aiki natural posture, you must maintain with your whole body *kokyu* (breath) from your center of gravity. You must maintain *kokyu* through the center of your body.

During your entire movement, if you consciously think, you will lose your way. You must not consciously think. All through nature, there is no separation of mind and body. If you do not separate mind and body, your center (*tanden*) will become full of spiritual *ki*. Then, after that, when striking out, the body can move freely. This is Aiki natural posture training.

If at the instant of any touch by the enemy, you instantly throw the enemy away, then this is natural. When you have this natural working of the body, then power comes out. In *Aiki-kokyu* and *irimi-tenkan* techniques, this power comes out and is realized.

If when doing technique, you are disturbed by irrelevant things, self-conscious thoughts and doubts in yourself, then you cannot do this natural movement. It is very important that you are not disturbed.

Always, while doing techniques, if you believe that trying hard with your own force will win over your partner, then you are making a mistake. On the contrary, in fighting there is a balance with the partner. If you are making wasted effort in unnecessary movement and trying hard, then you do not understand. If you think that you are using correct technique and doing the correct thing, then you don't even try to notice that the situation is bad. When I see people with this character, I am sorry for them.

In old times, martial arts masters expressed that natural form is important. In the *Shin Kage Ryu* style of sword they explained in detail that the stance/posture to have at the time of killing is ‘no stance’. “Not having a stance is alive” is what they teach in *Shin Kage Ryu*. To take a stance (*kamae*) is bad.

Miyamoto Musashi advised sternly, the heart, mind, and body must be in a natural stance. If you plant your feet you will lose the natural stance, so don't do that. Those old master's words are important words since they were learned through many experiences on the battlefield.

Anyway, Aiki natural body is, in Aikido, a technique that comes out of the source. If your true consciousness of self arrives, then true technique will be the result. This is how I think. How do you think it will be?

Now about *ikkyo*, this training is most important. In the *Itto Ryu* style of the sword it is said “cut at the same time and both will die”. In *Itto Ryu*, in the case of both cutting at the same time, you always win by using *kiri otoshi* (literally cutting down) technique. *Kiri otoshi* is the winning technique. In *Itto Ryu* when even a new student could understand this, then right away he would be given a *menkyo* (certificate of rank), it was said. This *kiri otoshi* technique has a thousand million variations. It is the best one to use. *Ikkyo* is the same as *kiri otoshi*. In Aikido, *ikkyo* is the same as *kiri otoshi* and has the same importance. It is very important. At this time especially, this *kiri otoshi* is the important thing for training and study.

In a circle, horizontally and vertically, the theory of *Ito Ryu* style sword *kiri otoshi*, *omote* and *ura*, a thousand million variations. In *ikkyo* and *nage* throwing, there are many many variations. I hope after you train these will become clear.

Yamaguchi Shihan

1986

The following essay by Taisen Deshimaru gives insight into the nature of *budo*:

### The Seven Principles of Aikido

By Taisen Deshimaru

*Bushido*, the way of the *samurai*, grew out of the fusion of Buddhism and Shintoism. This way can be summarized in seven essential principles.

- 1) *Gi*: the right decision, taken with equanimity, the right attitude, the truth, when we must die we must die. Rectitude.
- 2) *Yu*: bravery tinged with heroism.
- 3) *Jin*: universal love, benevolence towards mankind, compassion.
- 4) *Rei*: right action – a most essential quality, courtesy.
- 5) *Makoto*: utter sincerity, truthfulness.
- 6) *Meiryō*: enlightened clarity
- 7) *Chūgi*: devotion, loyalty.

The way of the *samurai* is imperative and absolute. Practice, in the body, through the unconscious, is fundamental to it, thus the enormous importance attached to learning of right action or behaviour.

*Bushido* has influenced Buddhism and Buddhism has influenced *Bushido*: the elements of Buddhism found in *Bushido* are five:

- 1) Pacification of the emotions
- 2) Tranquil compliance with the inevitable
- 3) Self control in the face of any event
- 4) A more intimate exploration of death than life
- 5) Pure poverty

Before the Second World War, *zen* Master Kodo Sawaki used to lecture the greatest masters in the martial arts, the highest authorities in *budo*. In England martial arts are confused with the arts of war but in Japan there is only: The Way. In the West the martial arts are a fashion, they have become an urban sport, a technique, and have none of the spirit of the way. In his lectures Kodo Sawaki would say that *zen* and *budo* have the same flavour and were the same thing, and in both *zen* and *budo*, training counts for a great deal.

“How long do you need to train?” many people ask. “How many years do I have to practice Aikido?”. The answer; “Until you die”. They’re not very happy with this answer because they want to learn fast, some think once is enough. “I come once and I understand” they say. But the *dojo* is not a university. In the *dojo* you practice until you die. *Zen* and *budo*.

Taisen Deshimaru

The above three essays give much to consider about the nature of Aikido.

## 2. FOOTWORK: CORRECT WALKING

*Standing:*

1a)



1b)



1c)



1d)



a) Bad example: Feet are too wide apart.

b) Bad example: Body leans backwards too far.

c) Good example: Feet are together at the heels.

d) Good example: The body is straight, centred on a vertical line (1), and on horizontal line (2). This posture must be maintained when standing and moving.

In examples a) and b) the feet are too wide apart and the body leans over backwards too far. This results in a partial loss of stability when standing.

In example c) the body is centred on a straight line, at the heels. The same is true of example d). The feet should not deviate from the horizontal line unnecessarily; nor should the upper body deviate from the horizontal axis, both when standing, standing in *hanmi* and when walking.

*Walking:*

In *hanmi* and when walking the weight is put on the front foot: the back foot comes up naturally, without any rigid tension, rather like a *bokken* swinging. As the back foot is brought forward the knees almost touch (see examples below). Thus, when facing an opponent, your power is concentrated over a narrow front and not dissipated too widely. When moving, as the weight goes on to the front foot you should feel yourself sinking or becoming low (*shizu-mu*). This is especially important in *irimi* and in swordwork.

2a)



2b)



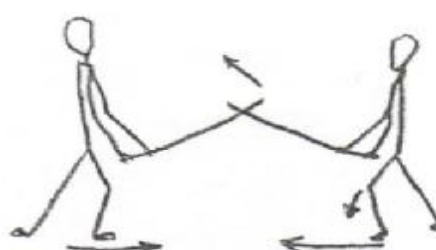
2c)



2d)



2e)



In b) the knees almost touch and the body is as low as in a) and c).

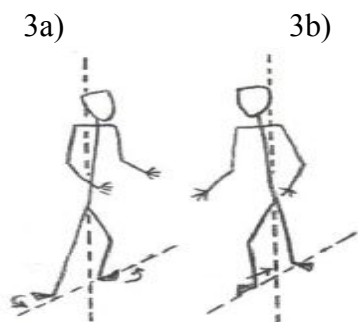
In d) the feet are too wide apart.

*Uke* attacks and cuts with *bokken*.

*Tori* enters. *Tori* must be low and should sink as he blocks *uke*.

When cutting with a sword, for both *uke* and *tori*, the power starts from the hips, and comes via the front knee and not from the back. Relax the tension in the front knee and move forward with a feeling of *shizu-mu* - sinking. (Compare the initial movement in *katate-mochi irimi-nage*, below, page 13.) The back foot always comes up, i.e. it is not left behind creating too big a stride. It is always straight - on the horizontal axis (example 1d above).

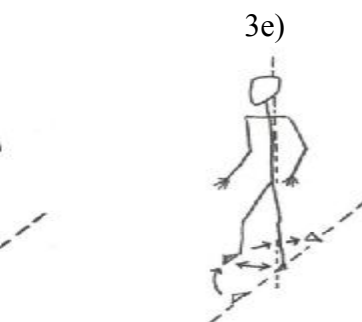
*Tenkan*:



3a) Turn on the toes,  
not on the heels.



3c) Keep same height,  
feet close to horizontal  
axis, knees together.

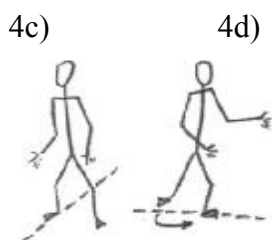
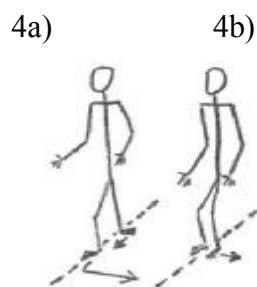


3e) Bad example: Feet are too wide  
apart as the turn is made.

*Tenkan* will work if the knees are almost touching (as in example 3c). The body must remain straight and upright, keeping to its imaginary vertical axis (example 1d), during the whole turn. If the knees and feet are not kept together in the turn there will be a tendency for the body to deviate from its vertical axis and lose its balance (example 3e).

*Hoko-tenkan*: a kind of *taisabaki*:

When going forward change direction at the same time as sinking, or cutting down, in the movement. The feet come together first, and then go to the side or in any other direction. The feet are also brought together during the various steps in *happo-giri*.

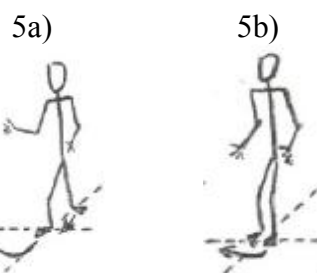
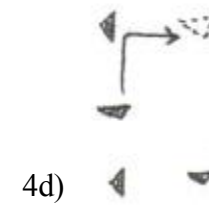


4c) Bad example of 4b):  
feet/knees are too far apart.

Bad example:  
4a) c)



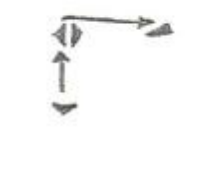
Good example:  
4b)



Bad example:  
5a) c)



Good example:  
5b)



5c) Bad example of 5b): feet/knees are too wide apart.

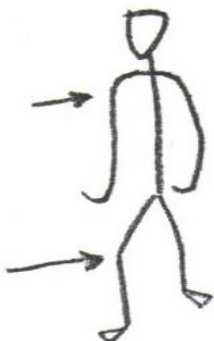


### 3. HEAVY HAND

Good example:

Shoulders are relaxed.

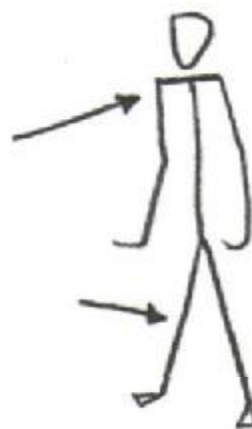
Knees are bent



Bad example:

Shoulders are hard and solid.

Knees are straight and tight. This will lead to a fruitless attempt to lift physically.



In the techniques and exercises with the heavy hand (*omoite*) *uke* and *tori* must learn to feel each other. Power originates in the hips and goes to the knees. Only when the knees are soft and relaxed can the hand become heavy.

In the walking exercise, *uke* tries to lift *tori*. For it to be successful *tori* must be completely relaxed. If he is too strong at the knees and shoulders the heavy hand becomes impossible to attain (see example below).

*Uke* tries to lift.



*Tori* is completely relaxed and can move about easily.

Another *omoite* exercise is *katate-tori tenkan*. *Uke* again tries to lift *tori*. After executing *tenkan* and with back straight and legs widely spaced *tori* can bring *uke* to the floor with his weight focused entirely in the knees and with no strength in the shoulders, if the technique is successful.

1).  
*Uke* tries to lift.



*Tori* executes *tenkan*.

*tenkan*

2).  
*Uke* tries to lift.



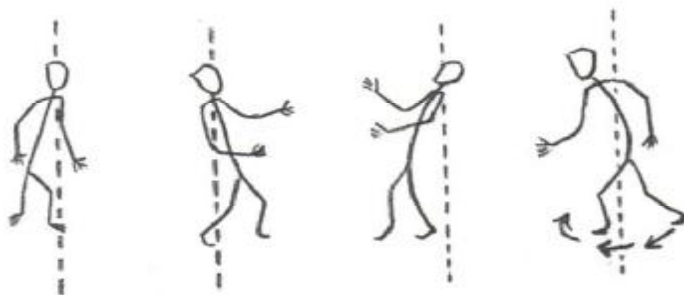
*Tori* slowly sinks to floor, bringing *uke* down with him.

In the above exercises, it is crucial that all the weight of the body is focused at the knees and that there is no strength in the shoulders. Examples of *omoite* in techniques can be found on p. 13 (*irimi-nage*) and p. 22 (*ryote-dori ryote-mochi shiho-nage*) and p. 26 (*ikkyo*).

#### 4. HOW TO GUIDE EFFECTIVELY WHEN ENTERING IN *IRIMI*

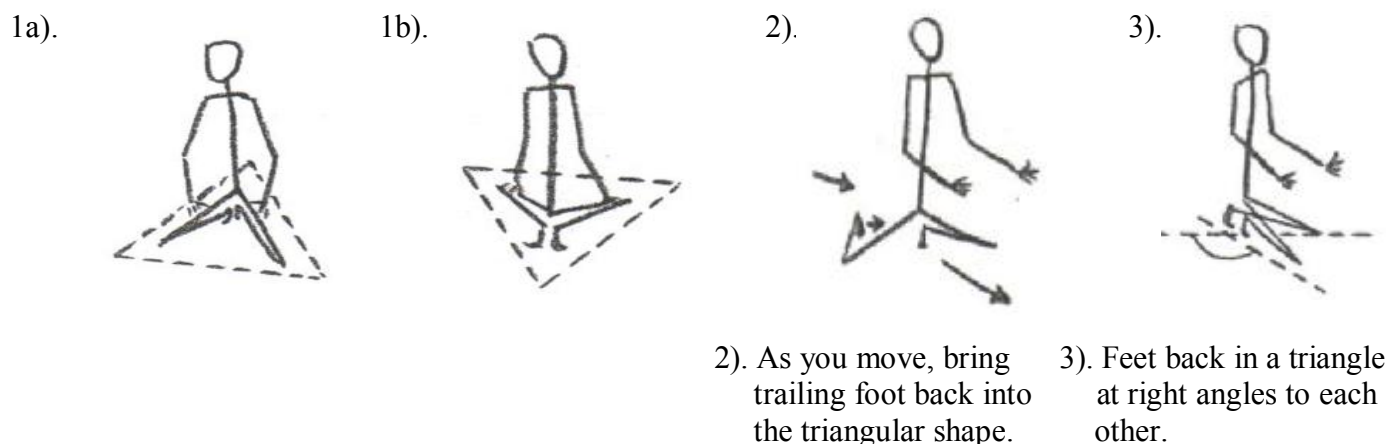
Find *uke*'s centre. Hold his neck at his centre. Stick to *uke*, behind him. Imagine something like a plumb line or vertical axis down the centre of *uke*'s body, no matter how bent or twisted *uke*'s body is. You must move *uke* round this line. The best example of this is *irimi-nage*. The successful execution of this technique depends on finding the opponent's centre and controlling him at it.

Examples:

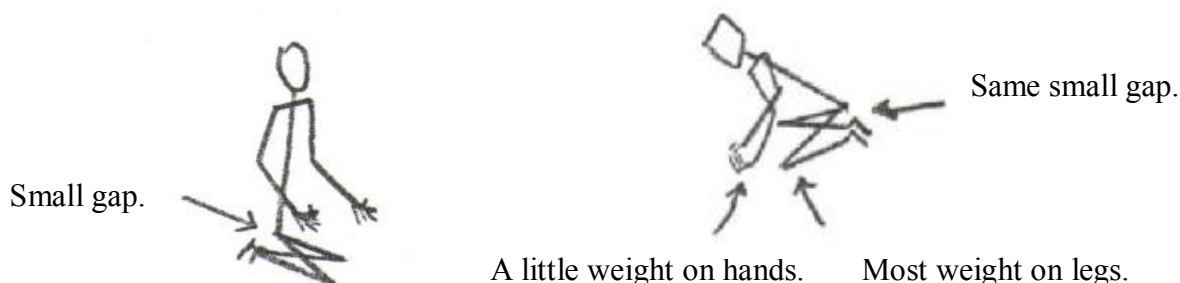


#### 5. *ZA-HO: SHIKO: KOKYU-HO:*

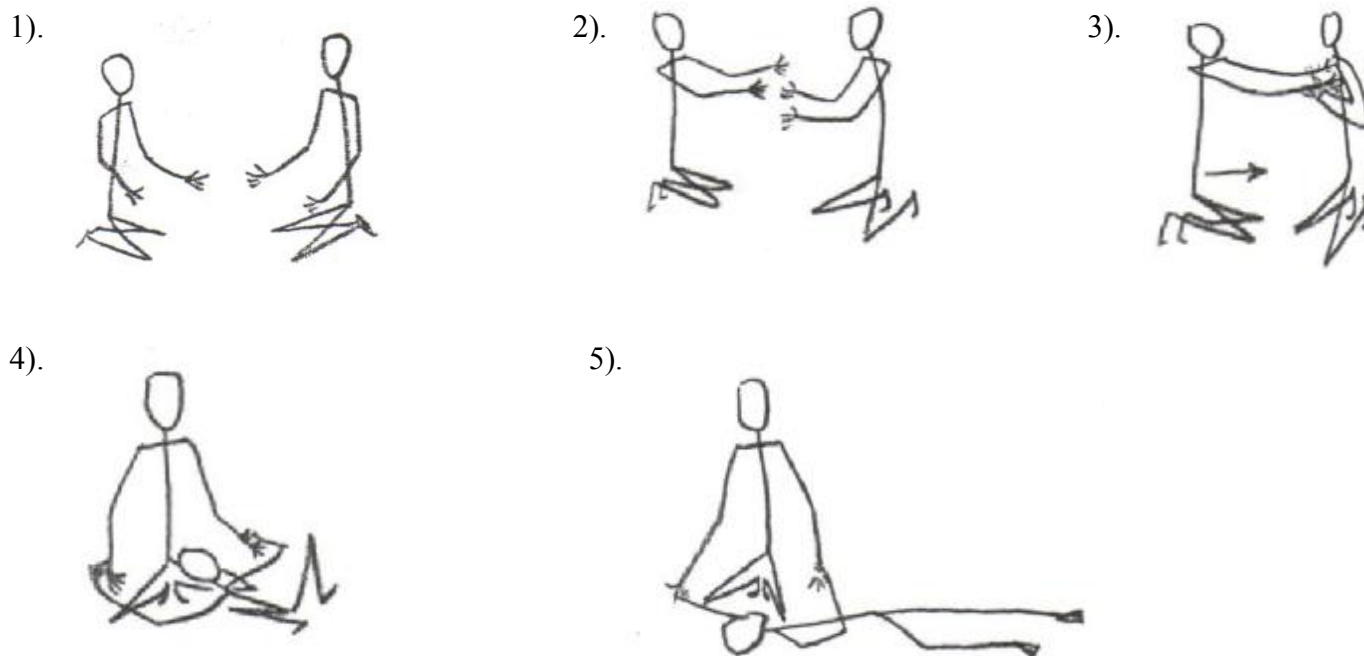
Keep your posture in *shumoku no ashi*: the legs and feet in a triangular shape.



Further explanations of *shumoku no ashi* are to be found in Section 6 (*irimi-nage*). When sitting there should be a small gap between the legs and the rear. Not all the weight should be on the heel. Have a sensation of pushing forward with the knees. When bowing, not all the weight should be on the hands. The body should be supported from the legs, not from the arms and hands, and there should be the same small gap between one's legs and rear. There should be space for two fists between the knees, and the toes should be just crossed or touching.



### *Kokyu-ho:*



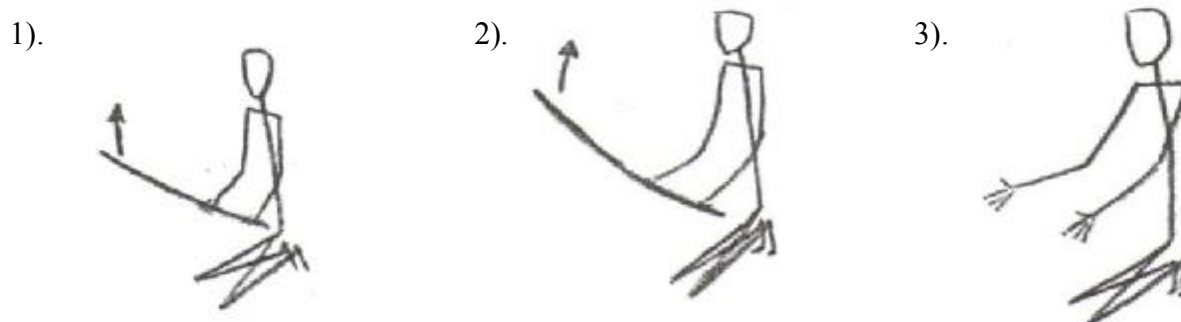
1). Sitting posture (1).

2). As the hands and arms are raised, the toes rise and the body slightly rises at the same time. As you raise your hands/knees/lower body, you twist your thighs inwards slightly, as if in a slight screwing motion towards the knee-caps.

3) and 4). Cut your opponent, as you would when using a *bokken*.

### *Features of Kokyu-ho:*

The curvature of the arm during the exercise is the same as that of a *bokken* or sword. (See illustration below.)

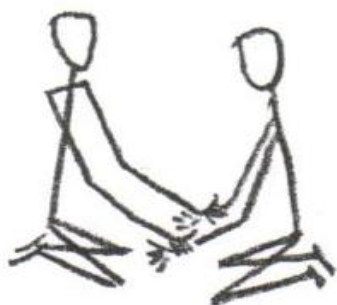


(Illustration 3 is same as 2 but without the sword.)

- The elbows are kept close to the body.
- The power comes from the inside outwards: the elbows should not be the widest point of the body. It is as if you are holding a sword and are ready to cut.
- The hand comes up to *uke*'s neck but cuts his centre, even though the hand is pointing upwards. (Illustration 3 at top of page.)
- Your *tanden* moves forward: power comes through and from the *tanden* even though contact is with the arm.

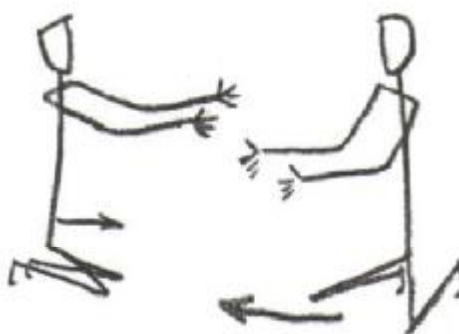
- The relation between the *tanden* and the arm is like an echo. As the echo is caused by a movement of air between the source and the wall which caused the echo, so there is a similar movement of air/spirit/*ki* between the *tanden* and the arm/fingertips. There is also a similar analogy in respect of timing. Thus, power from the *tanden* is almost instantaneously felt in the arms.
- You must feel as if you are wrapping up the opponent: his whole body, everything. You must invite *ki* from your opponent as you begin to make the move, as if by a kind of psychological pressure. Thus, your opponent is already unbalanced at the moment when contact is made. This is called *suikomi* (drawing *ki* – blending).
- When teaching or practicing, begin from the upright, curved-arm position. Partners should not resist each other with arms low, directly in front of the thighs. Begin with the form. When this has been learned, then *uke* can resist, but with arms in the fully-bent position.

1).



Wrong starting position.  
Arms are too low.

2).



*Tori* invites *uke*. This inviting of *ki* is called *suikomi*. Compare *tenchi-nage* and *ikkyo* (pp.17 and 26).

3).

Bad example:  
Hands held  
the wrong way.



4).



With practice  
*uke* resists with  
his arms bent.

5).

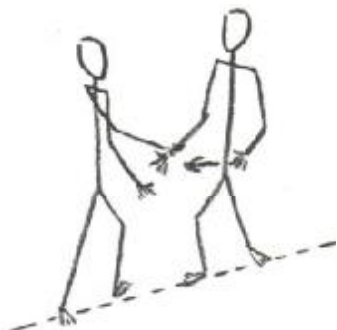


*Tori* (the thicker-lined figure in the example) cuts *uke*'s centre, even though hands are pointing upward. *Tori* has his hands in a position of gripping two swords.

## 6. IRIMI-NAGE

To teach *irimi-nage* one should begin with *katate-mochi* (*katate-dori gyaku-hanmi*). *Shomen-uchi* is too difficult.

1).



2).



3).



Twist *uke*'s hand.

4).

Hand laid gently on *uke*'s back: elbows in. Other hand twisted outwards.



4a).

Keep tension between 'cutting' away hand, and back of *uke*'s neck.



If you have a strong contact with *uke* here, open the body in a *tenkan* and lead *uke* away from you, into the space you have left. As he goes in to the space, attack his face with the leading arm.

You must keep *shumoko no ashi* here no matter where you turn.

4b).

Attack *uke*'s face with this arm.

Push *uke* into your armpit with this arm, keeping elbows down and in.



*Uke* should keep contact here.

5).



Release your "calling away" hand and step forward. Opponent goes 'under your leg'.

Keep *shumoku no ashi*.

In both types of technique, it is essential for *tori* to be close to, and keep contact with, *uke*.

Both arms in 4a) and 4b) should be completely relaxed and should drop to *tori*'s side as he throws *uke*. Though relaxed *tori* should be in *zanshin* and *uke* should keep contact even when on the ground.

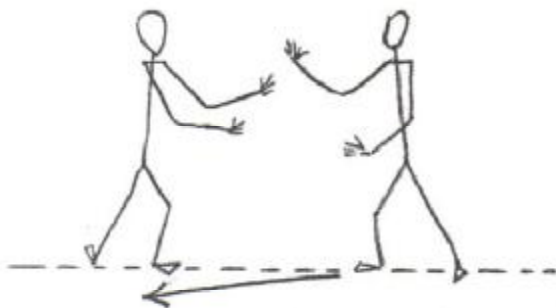
After your opponent has taken hold be ready to attack him with the other hand. Push towards him with your hips and *tanden*, but, as you go towards him deflect slightly and go behind him. As you bring in the hips turn your gripped hand over, as you would when drawing a sword. Keep this hand close to your *tanden*. Do not pull *uke*'s arm, as this will encourage him to react. Grip *uke*'s arm with your other hand (diagram 3 above) so that you can twist it outwards (diagram 4 above) in order to make *uke* bend his arm and lose his balance. As you move towards *uke* and deflect do this with a sinking feeling at the knees and *tanden*. (*Shizu-mu* cf. pp.7 and 8 above.) Gently lay your other free hand on the back of *uke*'s neck, keeping your elbow in, down and close to your body. As you grip *uke*'s hand and twist it, cut it away from you and *uke*, while keeping *uke*'s neck and shoulders close to your armpit. It is essential to balance the cutting of *uke*'s hand away from you and the focusing of your weight at your opponent's neck. (Compare Section 4, p. 10.) As you perform the movement, your opponent is mentally and also physically tossed or flicked away from you. This movement is like the action of a spring - *haneru*- caused by:

- 1) The action of cutting *uke*'s hand away from you . (In a moving, as distinct from a standing start, offer *uke* a hand, e.g. your left: as he comes to grasp it with the right hand, push that hand away with your right hand.)
- 2) And getting behind your opponent at the same time as 1) and finding his weakest point (Cf. Illustrations 3 and 4 above and Section 5). When *uke* is off balance release your grip of his hand and step forward cutting down. *Uke* goes 'under your leg'. There is no need to cut in a big circle. When you step through to throw your opponent, the power of the throw comes from the hips and not from the arm. The technique is finished with *zanshin*: the correct posture guarding against another possible attack.

There should be tension, or 'sticking to each other', between *uke* and *tori* throughout the technique. It is this tension, particularly focused in the wrist which *tori* is grasping or guiding (see Illustrations 3 and 4 above), which causes the body movement between *uke* and *tori*. The tension is not purely physical but is an example of *omoite* (heavy hand) (above p. 9), and a combination of attitudes called *hari* and *yurumi* (see below, p. 16). If *uke* has a particularly strong contact with the 'cutting' or grasping arm (3 and 4 above), then you can use the *tenkan* method. Open your body, by doing *tenkan*, but still keeping tension between the back of the neck and the 'cutting' hand, described as *haneru* above.

SHOMEN-UCHI IRIMI-NAGE:

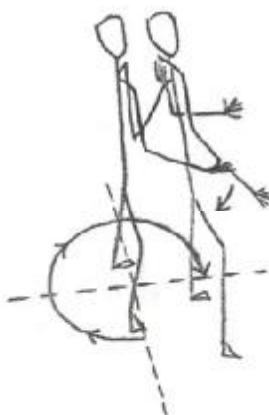
1).



2).

Heavy hand (*omoite*)

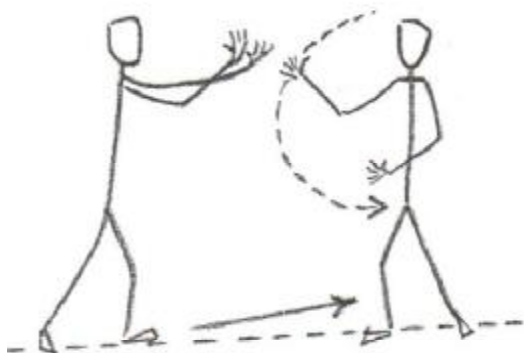
3).



*Tori* cuts down straight, in the same direction as *uke*'s line of attack (see Illustration 2 above). It is very important to maintain the 'sticking hand' on the wrist (Illustration 2). Otherwise you will try to pull *uke* round. When you cut away with the arm it is important to let *uke* go himself, and then find and spin him round his centre line. When you are behind *uke*, execute *kunoji*, a 270 degree *tenkan* and throw *uke* as in 4, 4a, 4b and 5 on page 13 above.

YOKOMEN-UCHI IRIMI-NAGE:

1).



2).



Approach *uke* with crossed arms. Use the outside arm at *uke*'s elbow, keeping your shoulder soft. Cut *uke* away in a soft sliding movement so that your balance is not disturbed. (Illustration 2 above). Cut *uke* away from your centre line. As you are already quite deep behind *uke*, a small cut is sufficient.

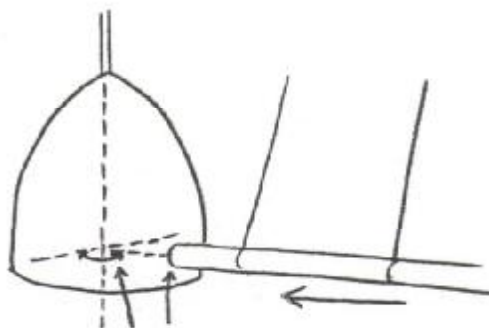


### General features of *irimi-nage*:

Always keep *shumoku no ashi* in your movements. *Shumoku no ashi* is a right angle between your front leading foot and the side of the trailing foot. The word describes the angle at which a striker hits an Eastern-type bell.



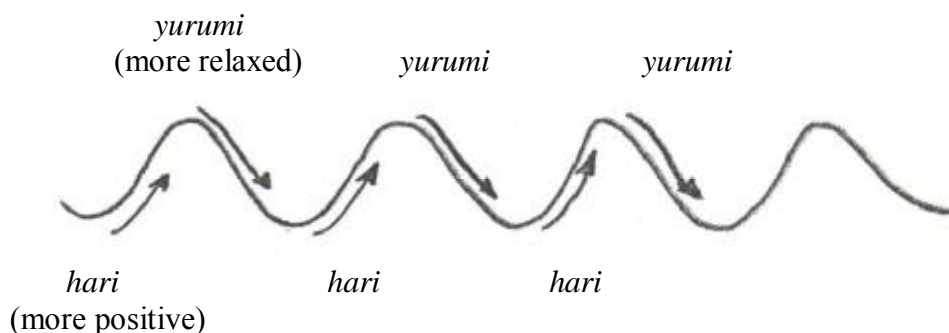
Keep a right angle here,  
no matter where you move.



A right angle here.

Direction of travel.

Maintain a balance between *hari* and *yurumi*, a kind of wave cycle involving relative tension and relaxation.



*Hari* is always blended with *yurumi/irimi*. Both can occur at the same time: both are like different sides of the same coin. *Yurumi* is essentially softer contact, relaxed and 'sticking': *Hari* is relatively more positive and leading.

Both are evident in:

- *Swordwork*: When you raise the sword there is *hari*; when you cut down there is *yurumi* and *hari* when you finish, but are ready to defend again.
- *Kokyu-ho*: especially when the opponent is quite strong. *Yurumi* is at the beginning as he attacks: *hari* is when you enter/*irimi* with power from *tanden*: this blends into *yurumi* as you fell your opponent: this again leads into *hari*, as you are aware of possible counterattack.
- *Ikkyo*: *Yurumi* is when you invite your partner: *hari* is when you turn him against himself. This again is *irimi*: as the opponent blends with it it becomes *yurumi* and then *hari* as you maintain *zanshin*.
- *Irimi-nage*: Again, *yurumi* is when you invite your partner: *hari* is when you push forward with *tanden*. This is also *irimi*. *Yurumi* is when *uke* follows your lead and is turned against himself. *Hari* is when you are in *zanshin* keeping contact with an opponent who might attack again.



The heavy hand (Section 3) is thus very important when entering, for *yurumi/hari* does not involve strength against strength, though *hari* is a more positive leading movement, coming after *yurumi*. If you are too physically strong you will fix or rivet your opponent to the ground and not allow him to follow his own natural path. You can only do this latter thing if you are physically weak. If you allow him to follow his natural path you can then lead and unbalance him, keeping him unbalanced until the end of the technique.

## 7. *TENCHI-NAGE*

Movement of *tori* from *ryote-dori ryote-mochi*:

1).



2).



4).

Hand sticks to side.



Elbow attacks *uke*'s chest and chin.

5)



Hand cuts *uke*'s neck (*kesagiri*).

6).



Arm turns inwards and downwards.

Move forward or move round *uke*, looking down his back.

Begin in *ai-hanmi*. Lower posture. Cross hands at the forearms (Illustration 2 above). As your opponent comes to hold, separate arms and cut in towards *tanden* with one and upwards with the other. Cut the neck with one hand and arm as in *kesagiri*. The other hand goes to the side (Illustration 4 above). When cutting the neck, the handblade which cuts is turned inwards and the arm turned downwards and inwards. You must keep your elbow sticking to your opponent's neck, cutting down continuously (Illustration 5 above).

- To do the technique from standing, cut upwards with one arm and turn inwards to your *tanden* with the other. The turning inwards is very similar to the beginning of *katate-mochi irimi-nage* (Illustration 2, p. 13) and drawing a sword. To do the technique from a moving start, as *uke* comes towards you, imagine you are lifting a large heavy weight, like a bag of rice, turning and spinning round as you lift it (Illustrations 1, 2 and 3 above).
- When cutting up with your elbow and *tegetana* (Illustrations 4, 5 and 6 above) cut back with the other arm (see Illustration 5). Keep this hand at your side as *uke* is off balanced and stretched. Show strong *hari* as you unbalance *uke*: *yurumi* as he falls.
- When cutting down at the conclusion of the technique, you must not push the collar bone with the arm. Rather, open your body more, drop the elbow, enter and then cut up to a horizontal position (see Illustration 6 above: *tori* moves round). As you cut down your aim is to attack your opponent's back foot.
- When you are practising against a tall *uke*, you must make him as tall as you are. So you begin with your arms level with the lower body (*gedan*). Cut back with the *chi* hand, making it a heavy hand. Lift *uke* with the *ten* hand (*teगतana*) as you turn (Illustrations 3 and 4 above).
- An alternative is a moving *tenchi-nage*, where you keep straight, invite your *uke*; step backwards and forwards in a wave motion. As you step back, keep your arms straight and positive, shoulders supple and elbows close to the body. This method of 'sucking in' is called *suikomi*.



As *uke* comes and makes contact step back and forward: as you cut down, raise your arms slightly in a wave motion.

## 8. *SHIHO-NAGE*

For this technique *uke* must be soft and relaxed round the shoulders. If *uke* is too tight round the shoulders accidents can occur when *tori* is inexperienced and cannot control *uke* properly.

a) Bad example:



Arm is in wrong position. The back is not stretched and the shoulders are too tight.

b)



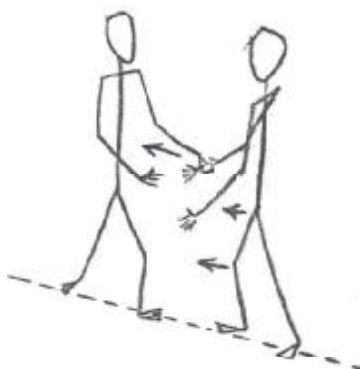
Good example:

The arm is behind the head. The back is stretched.

If this arm is held far from his shoulder *uke* should follow *tori* round to gain the correct position.

1). Good example:

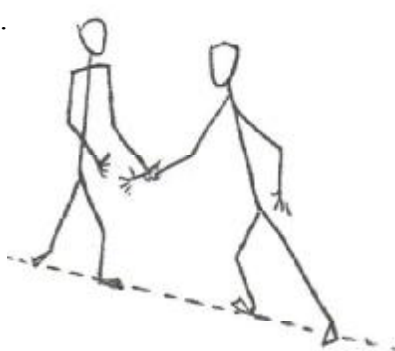
Move forward from *tanden* to hand.



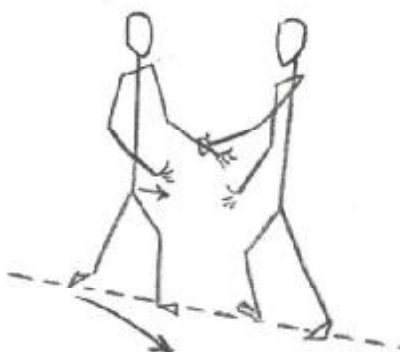
2).

Bad example:

Too far apart. *Tori* too unbalanced. No pushing from *tanden*.



3).



*Atari*: move forward from *tanden* and then deflect (*soreru*).

4).



Stretch *uke*'s arm as you deflect him.

Bring *uke* into a triangle as you extend him.

5).

Keep your elbows low, together and relaxed.



Keep *uke*'s arm stretched out.

Do not raise arms above head. Keep low.

6).



*Tori* cuts *uke*'s "centre line" (dotted vertical line) in a *kesagiri* movement.

### SHIHO-NAGE FROM KATATE-MOCHI:

When *uke* grasps the hand, immediately attack (*atari*) with hand and *tanden* (Illustrations 1 and 3 above). Do this even if *uke* is pushing or pulling. *Atari* (push forward) just enough to let your opponent feel *hari*. Once you have contact avoid *uke* directly. Rather deflect him outwards (Illustrations 3 and 4). Stretch *uke*'s arm in the same direction as the line of deflection. This is especially important if *uke* is tall. (5) Stretching *uke*'s arm applies equally to *tenkan* and *irimi shiho-nage*. Do not pull, but open your body and push, keeping *uke*'s arm stretched during the whole turn. Keep your body low and do not raise arms above your head. Make sure you turn sufficiently and face and cut *uke*'s centre. As you cut down you must mentally cut down with the non-holding outside hand. Even if this hand is not being held you must still use this other hand - as a feeling. Your aim is to cut your opponent under your feet. As *tori* cuts down, *uke* must follow him round (see above p. 19). He must not just sit down in an *ushiro ukemi* but must watch *tori* for a chance to counterattack and escape. He must not 'give' *tori* his back and should jump over his own arm (Saito Vol. 3, p. 67) only when the technique is executed very quickly.

You must remain soft and relaxed throughout the technique but especially in stages 5 and 6 above. If you are strong and stiff then *uke* will tend to resist and become strong and stiff also, as in Illustration a) above. If *uke* is strong there are 3 ways to fell him.

1).

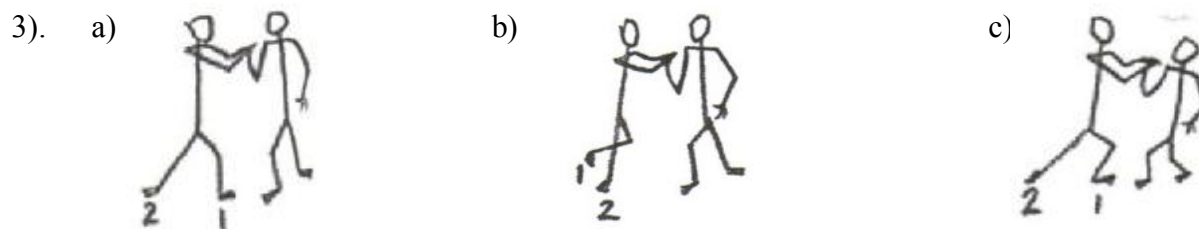
Drop *tanden*.



Relax. Lift the leg nearest to *uke* as you drop your *tanden* and *uke* falls. This is another example of *yurumi* (p. 16 above). When throwing breathe out, and then take another breath as you drop *tanden*. Throw perpendicularly.

Lift leg nearest to *uke* as you drop *tanden*.

2). Whereas in basic *shiho-nage* it is possible to cut straight down at stage 6 (Illustration on p. 20), if *uke* is strong you must use the *kesa-giri* cutting movement. But you must do this facing and moving forward, though in a circle, not stepping backwards.

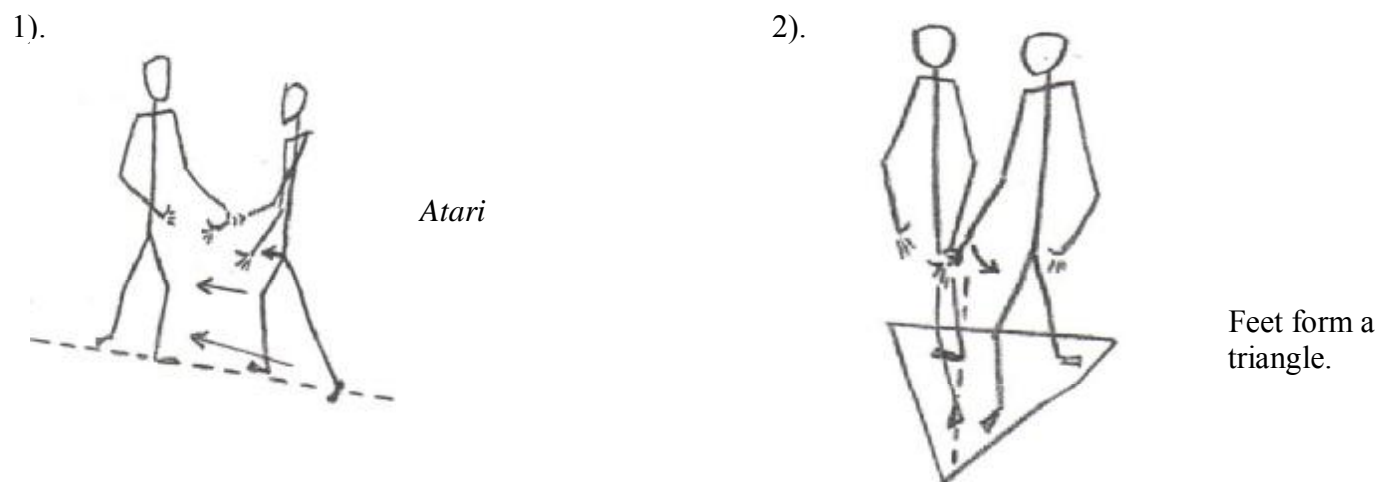


Extend your inner leg backwards and then immediately forwards - all this before *uke* hits the ground.

When holding down after throwing, open out *uke*'s arm away from the body, as you are holding. Press towards his centre with your leg and body, making sure you are at *uke*'s side.

#### KATATE-MOCHI TENKAN:

When you execute *tenkan* your feet should form a triangle with *uke*'s. They should not be parallel to his. Make sure you *atari* (push with *tanden*) before executing *tenkan* and that you turn your grasped hand in towards *tanden* as you turn. The same triangular relationship of the feet can also be seen in *irimi* after *soreru* (deflection) (See Illustration 4, p. 19).



#### YOKOMEN-UCHI SHIHO-NAGE:

If *uke* attacks with his right hand you will cut his neck on his left side with your right hand. Your left hand will guide his attack. Your right hand is thus used for *atemi*. So, as you should take up an attacking stance (*atari*) before *uke* attacks, you should give or offer him your left shoulder. Invite his *ki*. As *uke* comes in to make contact, switch feet, open your body and cut down *uke*'s centre. Stroke him down his arm from his neck, where you made the *atemi*, to his centre, along his attacking arm. If you stroke him down gently you can cut him effectively. Keep close to *uke* and enter deeply, turning your hips as you do so.

Note that when you cut down you are already beginning to enter and cut up again. The hips come round as the arm continues the downward extending movement and then upwards as you step through to complete the technique. Thus, there is no gap between *hari* and *yurumi*, but one blends into the other.

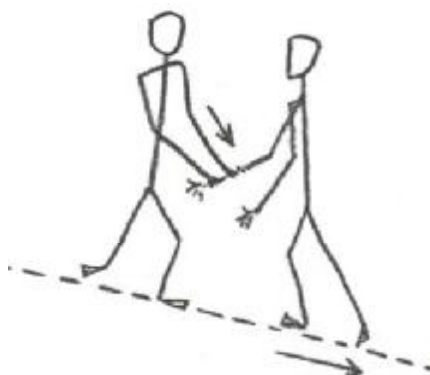
In *katate-mochi shiho-nage* the basic grip is at *chudan* level, centre to centre. You must stand on the same line. When you enter and grip with the other hand you must grip gently, otherwise there will be a strong reaction from *uke*. As you enter and deflect advance as if you were holding a spear (*yari*). (See *kokyu-nage*, p. 23.) This is especially relevant to *irimi* and *ai hanmi*.

There is a *jodan* (high level) variation, especially in *ryote-dori ryote-mochi*. Your left arm is above your shoulder level as you turn, of course keeping arms and shoulders completely relaxed. Your own head goes under *uke*'s arms, i.e. you sink as you turn. You must not lift *uke*'s arm too high. This variation is especially relevant to *tenkan* and *gyaku hanmi*.

In *katate-dori ryote-dori uke* might push down to *gedan* (low level). In this case *atari* and cut down and step back at the same time. At a neutral point (when *uke*'s downward force is extinguished) deflect him (*soreru*) and then raise yourself and throw. One can use this variation if *uke* is strong and holding downwards.

1).

*Uke* presses down.



2).

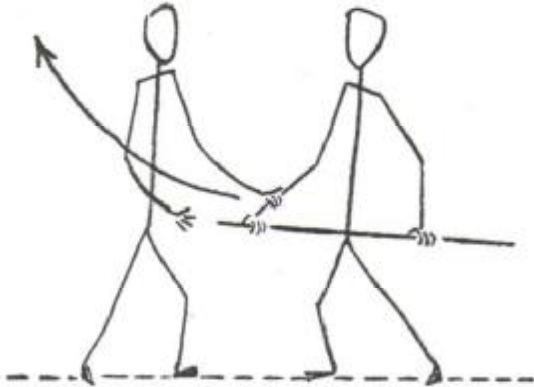


Push upwards when *uke* is ready to draw back.

## 9. KOKYU-NAGE

### KATATE-DORI GYAKU-HANMI:

1).



Wrong.  
Hand upward.



Right.  
Hand downwards.



As if holding  
a *yari*.

2).

Cut down.



Turn hips.

*Tsuki*  
at stomach  
as you project.

1. *Atari*, your hand positioned as if holding a spear (*yari*).
2. Advance from *tanden* and cut up (Illustration 1 above).
3. Cut neck down with a heavy hand. Simultaneously *tsuki* at the stomach with the other hand.
4. Project downwards not backwards.

### KATATE-DORI RYOTE-MOCHI:

Here *uke* may be holding more strongly. Stance should be as in *bato* (sword-drawing). Drop elbow and keep it close to body as you draw the imaginary sword. When you have drawn to the limit, turn your body round in a *tenkan* movement, keeping your arm in the same place. You can then draw the sword completely and cut down with hips (as in Illustration 2 above), attacking the side of the body with the other hand. This opening of the body has the effect of *suikomi* (sucking *uke* in to your movement), like in *tenchi-nage*. Here, it is in the other direction.

### UCHI-KAITEN:

Enter under the arm but *atari* to *uke*'s head after you have entered. Then cut down. If you do not, *uke* can attack you. *Soto-kaiten* similarly.



KATATE-MOCHI:

*Jodan*: You cannot push across *uke*, so you must push up and outwards. Turn, attacking *uke*'s head and cut down. (Compare *kaiten-nage*, Section 10.)

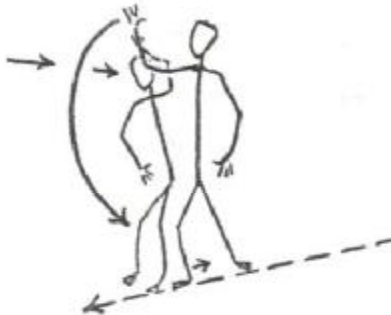
*Chudan*: Make your grasped hand heavy, open your body (*tenkan*) and cut down.

*Gedan*: As you open your body (*tenkan*), sink down and cut forward. This is called *shizu mu*, with *tenkan*. In this kind of *kokyu-nage*, generally, as you extend your hands you must curve them inwards. You must also use both hands, even if only one is held, as if you have two swords. This encourages fullest use of the hips.

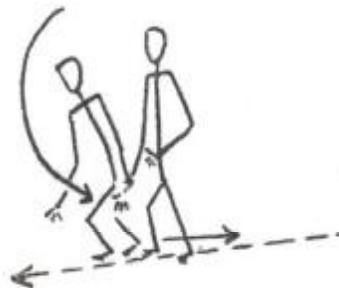
**10. KAITEN-NAGE**

1).

Be ready to attack *uke* after you turn.

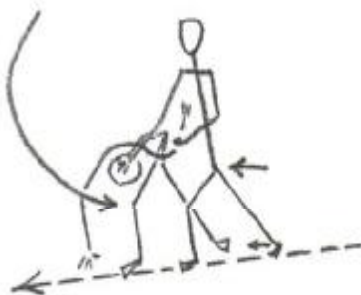


2).



Step back (inside foot).

3).



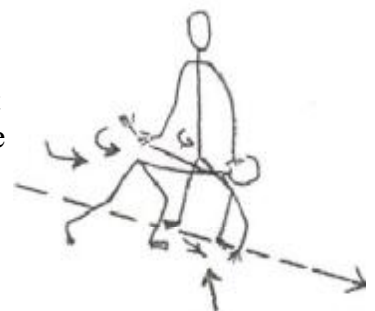
4).



Turn hips in.

5).

Hand turns at the same time as your hips.



Inside foot steps through.

In *uchi-kaiten*, after entering under your opponent's arm, having given *atemi* to his face to ensure your safe passage to his side, turn tightly and keep his arm extended as to be able to attack his head and neck (Illustration 1) (cf. *jodan* above). Cut down the side of his body, beginning forward, and as deeply as possible to reach the floor, cutting *uke*'s little toe.

As you cut down lower your body at the knees: maintain this low height as you project your opponent. One hand should rest lightly on *uke*'s neck: the other hand should be adjacent to his buttocks. This hand should follow *uke*'s rear (Illustration 5) as you project him with the hips *omote* or *ura*. If you find it difficult to project you can do *katagatame*, by dropping and cutting down the elbow.



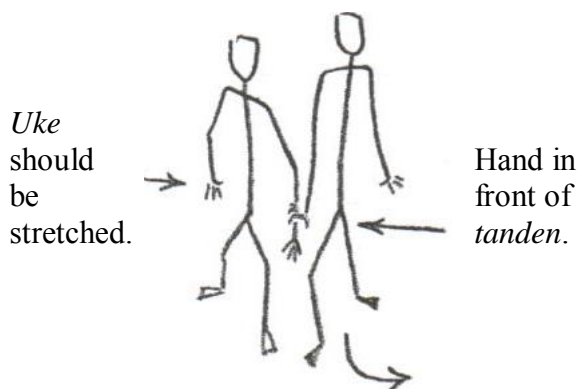
In *shomen-uchi* you must cut up as you block. Hands are not crossed but are in a two-sword position. Cut down with the outside of the wrist or arm, using *omoite* (heavy hand). When you have contact your body is already opening, since the technique involves *tenkan*. As you cut down lead *uke* round and complete the throw.



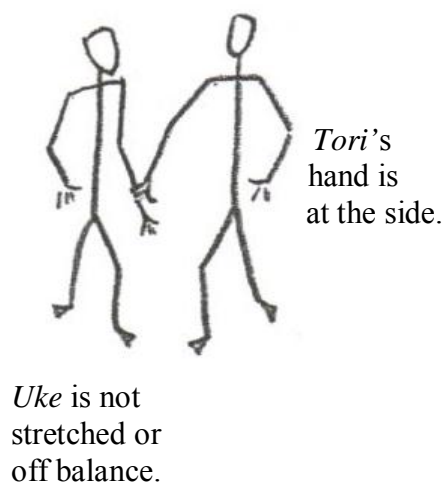
## 11. KOTE-GAESHI

The basic principle is the same whether from *katate-mochi*, *tsuki* or *shomen-uchi*. Your hand should be in front of you as you stretch out your opponent, not at the side. Keep close to your opponent and use the side of the body to slide *uke*'s hand down your leg and to the floor close to your centre. Keep low and throw *uke* from a low posture, the same level as that at which you cut down. When holding down, keep the *kote-gaeshi* grip. Cut the elbow down towards the head, holding the elbow inwards to the head. Make sure when you finish that you give *uke* no chance to counterattack. When doing the technique from *tsuki*, you must give *atemi* after side-stepping. When doing it from *shomen-uchi* you must have enough power and timing to do *ikkyo irimi*. Keep your posture relaxed, with ample time such that you could apply any technique. (Your ability counts for 60%; 40% you have spare, to do another technique if you so choose.) Apply the technique when *uke*'s natural movement stops. Do not cross arms when you cut *uke*'s attack down.

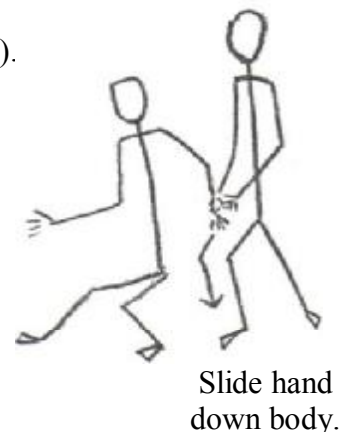
1). Correct



2). Incorrect



3).



When *uke* comes at you quickly you must lead him forward by *kokyu*. Then execute large *tenkan*, one way and then in the opposite direction. You must rely on movement and allow *uke* to 'swim', since you cannot rely on the close power of hips. You throw by cutting *uke*'s neck in a *kesagiri* movement.

## 12. IKKYO

### SHOMEN-UCHI IKKYO:

Begin in *ai-hanmi* (both *uke* and *tori* with right foot forward). As *uke* comes to strike, *tori* must lift both arms at the same time to blend with *uke*'s movement. There should be a feeling of suction (like a vacuum) to pull *uke*'s *ki*. You must draw *uke* towards you with a constant level of pressure (suction) from your centre. You must draw *uke* into your movement. If *tori* keeps good posture, then *uke*'s balance will already be broken from the first contact.



Turn forearm outward while raising arm in a screwing motion to deflect. Do not clash.

Back leg should be straight, or the hips will be weak.

The other hand should be 'alive'.

As the arm comes up, rotate your forearm outward to deflect *uke*'s strike without clashing. The forearm turns in a screwing motion. At the highest point the palm is turned out to face *uke*. The hand must become a *tegatana* (knife hand) so that there is a cutting and blending (sticking) on contact. You must stick to your opponent and not slip off his arm by cutting with the edge of the hand and not by grabbing. To cut and stick, you must be completely relaxed. If your muscles are hard you will not be able to cut and will clash or lose contact with *uke*.

As you raise up both arms together, it is important to stroke up gently against the elbow to blend with *uke*. Then you cut down. Be careful to cut down with good posture staying relaxed. The important thing is to blend with the elbow. The hand on the elbow is the most important.

The other hand must also be 'alive'. Do not leave it behind without 'feeling' in it. You must use your whole body.



*Tegatana* (knife hand) for cutting contact.

You must 'stick' to *uke* and not slip.

*Atari* (a noun) is the condition of making contact and blending *ki*. If done properly, *uke*'s posture will be broken and he will not be able to move. You must remain soft and flexible to blend this way. With *atari*, from the first contact, you will be able to control *uke*.



With *atari* (contact and blending), *uke*'s posture will be broken and he will not be able to move.

From the beginning, attack and control *uke*.



In *ikkyo* it is very important to keep your heels on the floor. If the front knee is stiff, it will force the back heel to come up which is bad. So keep your knees flexible.

When moving, your whole body – ankles, knees, hips, centre, chest, shoulders, and elbows – all must remain flexible for easy movement. If your muscles are hard or stiff, you will not be able to move or to feel your partner's movement.

Too much leaning.



*Uke* should be in front, not to the side.

If the front knee is stiff the back heel will come up.

Heel off the floor – bad example.

You must lift your arm to make contact along your centre line. Always move from your centre while leading with your hips. Keep *uke* in front of you – not to the side.



Push elbow to face.

Move in straight from the hips while cutting the arm down.

20% forward.

80% down.

Heel on floor.

*Atari* to break balance.

You must move forward with your hips and at the same time cut straight down with the whole body coordinated in the cutting direction. All the time pay close attention to *maai* (distance between you) as you blend with *uke*.

There should be a feeling of constant pressure as you move in smoothly. The back leg should be straight and the front knee flexibly bent. Do not push, but cut while attacking with the whole body. If you push only with your arms and lean forward, you will lose your balance.



Bad example – too much pushing.



Keep head straight – do not bend it forward.

You must extend forward from your centre with your back straight. When extending forward from your centre, you can cut your opponent. Your arms will stick to him and not slip off.

It is important not to have your feet 'planted' on the floor. If you become rooted to the floor, you will not be able to move easily.

After moving in and raising your arm to blend with *uke*'s strike, push the elbow to *uke*'s face and turn the arm over. By pushing the elbow to the face, *uke* is controlled and he can not move.



Push the elbow to the face with the arm vertical.

Cut the arm down with a gentle push downwards on the elbow, straight along your centre line. It is important to grasp *uke*'s wrist where the pulse is located.

Throughout your movement, do not hesitate.

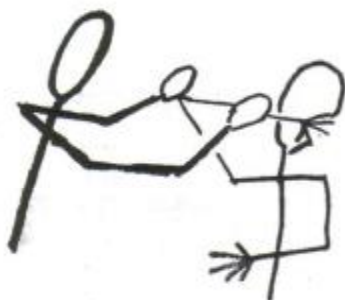


Gently push down on the elbow.

Grasp wrist where the pulse is located.



It is important that the hands come up vertically, as if holding a *bokken*, so it will be possible to cut down. If the hands are horizontal it will not be possible to cut. *Uke* should always be in front of your centre. Do not have *uke* off to the side, stay on your centre line.



Bad example, hands are held horizontally.

*Tori's* thigh should be close to the side of *uke's* chest. Leave no space between you while sinking down to pin *uke*.



Leave no space, stay close to side of *uke*.

Throughout your movement, be relaxed and calm. In this way, you can move freely with your whole body. As you finish, sink down to pin *uke* gently. Always be alert and ready – especially remember this at the finish.



As you finish, sink down to pin *uke* gently.  
Always be ready and alert.

When the partner is much taller and coming in very quickly to cut down, then delay a bit and let him cut down past you. Then you cut down on top of his arm (a feeling of ‘stepping on it’) before turning it over at the elbow, for *ikkyo*. It is important that the lower hand always attacks the opponent’s centre as you cut down.

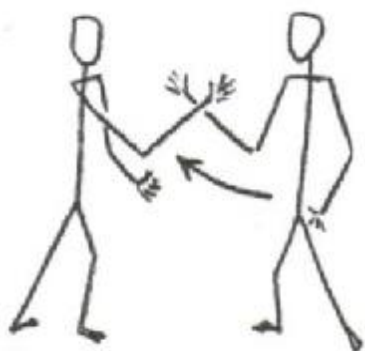
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General remarks for *omote/ura*, primarily with *shomen-uchi* in mind, though they are relevant to other ways of attacking:

Cut your opponent as you move forward. Do not *itsuku*: have your foot rooted to the mat and do all the technique from one position. If you cut down with your feet they will become ‘glued’ to the mat and you will not be able to move them easily.

A test for *itsuku*:

1).



2).

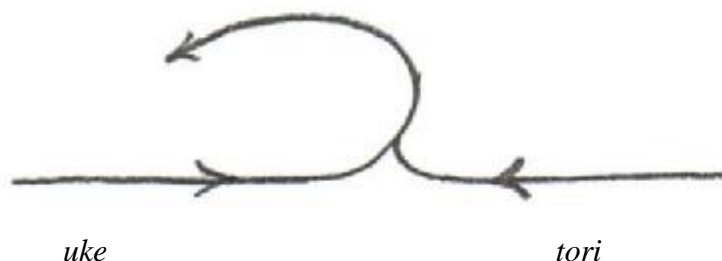


3).



You must be able to raise your leading foot as you cut *uke* (as in 3).

You must invite your opponent's *ki*, especially in dealing with a tall opponent. This is called *suikomi* and is similar to *yurumi* (cf. *irimi-nage*, p. 16 above). Lead the opponent into you, inviting his *ki*. It is a wave-like movement and requires supple hips and shoulders. The energy goes upwards and over as in a sword movement.



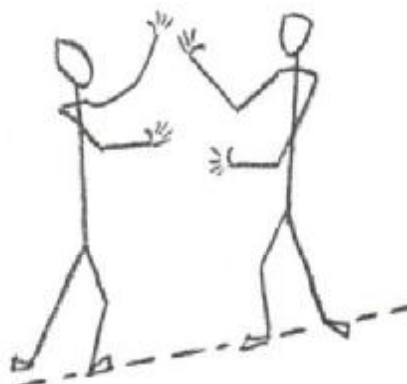
Cut straight down.

This contact with *ki*, described above, is called *kirimusubi* (cutting blending). If you have a sticking contact with your opponent, you can follow his movement and protect yourself. If you do not stick, and slip off contact, then he can easily strike you. As *uke*, if you stick you can take good *ukemi*. If you lose contact, it is dangerous and you are open to being cut.

After the initial blending contact with *uke*, you must turn the arm over. The other hand, the non-guiding hand, attacks the chin and leads *uke*'s *ki* inwards and upwards with the thumb. So, as contact occurs, strike (*atemi*) at *uke*'s chin with this hand. Slide this hand down the arm with the thumb folded in. At the elbow turn the hand over, keeping the thumb where it is and roll the hand over the elbow. There is *yurumi* as the hand goes up the arm; *hari* as the hand grips and goes over the elbow. The folded thumb on the elbow is in the same position as when you hold a *bokken*. The thumb is a guide for turning the elbow over. The same gentle sliding movement is also important for *nikyo*.

*Hari* is a sending of *ki* outwards, *yurumi* is a suction of *ki* inwards. To have a flow of *ki* in this way you must remain relaxed without hard muscles.

1).

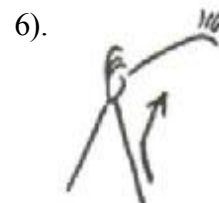
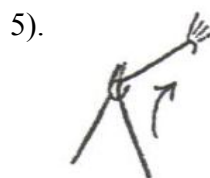
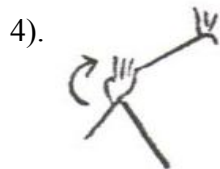
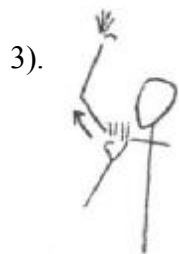


2).

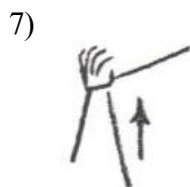


This hand attacks  
*uke*'s chin.



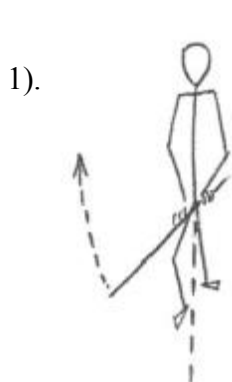


Hand slides  
up arm from  
armpit to elbow,  
thumb inwards.



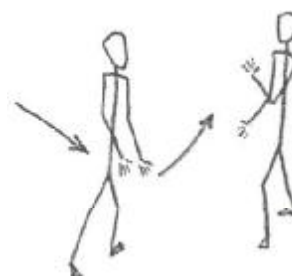
At elbow, leave thumb where it is and roll hand over elbow,  
pushing through *uke*'s head and towards his back foot continuously.

- Start attacking from your actual stance, as in the *mugamae* starting posture for *kesagiri*.



hip turn

*Mugamae* (literally 'no stance'). It is also called *otonashi no kamae* or 'no sound' stance.



In *ikkyo* attack begins here.

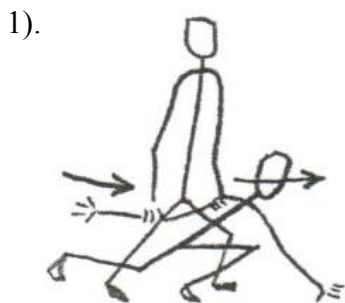
The feeling must be that you have already begun  
to attack your opponent even when you are in  
the position opposite. Further, when you begin  
from a posture similar to *mugamae* you must be in  
such a position that you have enough time in  
your feeling/*ki* to complete the technique.



In the technique there is *atari* (contact) and blending of *ki*. So you must adjust yourself to the strength of your opponent. If your opponent is stronger than you thought, you might have lost a chance (*suki*); there is a gap and you must allow your opponent to close it (*matomeru*). So *atari* involves flexible contact with your opponent's *ki*, and timing. It also involves a mental attack on his centre. You should always be alert for this and learn to feel with your body. So, in e.g. *suwari-waza shomen-uchi ikkyo*, when you cut down you are aiming at your opponent's *tanden*/centre, no matter where his centre is. When you face your opponent he is your enemy. You must attack him spiritually and physically, as well as controlling him with *ki*.

- *Maai* (timing and distance) involves exactly the right distance and timing your move exactly. When you have *kirimusubi* (cutting contact) it must be possible to cut your opponent's head and enter properly with your body. Even if you have no hand contact you should be able to cut your opponent's head. If *maai* is correct your technique will be precise and accurate. It will also be something unique to yourself, i.e. something you will have worked out for yourself and not learned solely from instructors or textbooks. *Maai* is even more important than footwork, in that correct footwork and handwork will be of no avail if you do not have correct *maai*. *Shomen-uchi* is most important for this.

Project your opponent from *tanden* (centre) and move straight towards his centre. When you project forward there must be a feeling of blending from the top (*noru*) – and not clashing. *Noru* means 'climbing on top of or mounting on top of'. The initial contact must be with a heavy hand (*omoite*). There is always *katsu* (victory) when blending.



Good: *Tori* is straight.



Bad: *Tori* is too far away and bent forward.

The projection here should be similar to *tsuki* with a *yari* (spear) (cf. Section 9, page 23 above). As you go through the technique, breaking your opponent's balance, controlling him towards his feet, as in *kesagiri* (diagonal cut), you bring him to your hips.



Bring *uke* to hips.



Bring *uke* to your hips.

To do this you obviously attack his hand and elbow, but your main attack is his centre, and your aim and concentration must be on attacking uke's back foot. Just as the rear big toe must be firm when you defend, so you must attack the rear big toe when you are *tori*. If you aim for this the cut down will be deeper.

The best way to practise *ikkyo* is to begin with *suwari-waza shomen-uchi*. Then one can go on to *tachi-waza* and/or vary the attacks.

SUWARI-WAZA SHOMEN-UCHI: Relevant in some places to *tachi-waza*.

How to attack:

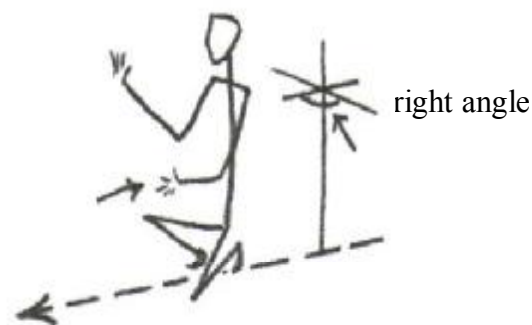
1). Bad

Too sideways.



2). Good

*Uke* is square to *tori* and is using one hand to protect himself.



*Uke* must use both hands, as if he were cutting with a sword. The non-striking hand must guard against a *tsuki* counterattack. In example 1 above, *uke* lays himself open to an attack on his back with a kick from the side.

Shikko in shomen-uchi ikkyo:

You must do this without placing too much weight on the knees. (One may practise the technique from a deep squatting posture: on the toes but without the knees touching the mat at all.) So you must 'knee-walk' with your toes. To do *shiko* with weight on knees is stable, but you are unable to move quickly. At the point of *kirimusubi* cut your opponent's centre and move with the hips, not with the arms. This is an important feature of *suwari-waza shomen*. If you do not enter far enough only your hands will go: your body will remain behind. Keep a straight back, and *tori* must attack as well as *uke*, i.e. *tori's* attack forces *uke* to protect himself. Keep a heavy hand (*omoite*).

Hold down.



*Tori's* right hand stretches *uke's* arm and twists inwards i.e. towards *tori*.

Knees extended at opposite ends of arm.

*Uke's* palm faces upwards.

Your hips rise slightly and you breathe out as you hold down. You must control the elbow even when you are on the ground. Squeeze the elbow inwards towards you (*tori*) and then outwards towards *uke*'s hand. Do not raise *uke*'s wrist as you pin down the elbow as it is dangerous. If you hold the arm flat, you can press on it with your body weight and it will not be dangerous. Rather, it will be good for the arm as it will stretch the muscles and ligaments.

### IKKYO URA

Enter in with both hands at the elbow. Keep your own elbow close against your body as you rotate the arm over. Always move forward with your hips as you make contact (*atari*). Lead the partner down in a spiraling motion by pushing from behind the elbow along the line of the forearm from the elbow to the wrist.

There are two ways after the initial spiral to bring the partner down. One way is as you bring the partner down, to extend the circle out at a tangent into a straight line, as in *sankyo omote*. The other way is to continue the circle pushing the elbow into the floor in a spiral, leading with the elbow.

### SUWARI-WAZA IKKYO URA:

On *kirimusubi* (cutting contact), as you uncross your arms (see p. 34) twist *uke*'s elbow upwards from underneath, to make his arm bent (cf. thumb movement, p.32 above). As you execute a turn, slide the other hand down the arm. *Uke*'s elbow can be compared to a circle that gradually straightens out to a line (as you do *tenkan*, and bring *uke* to the ground). The whole movement must be done in one piece. You must not stop and hold the wrist. *Ikkyo* is an elbow technique, so the wrist is held only slightly. The elbow is controlled in front of the centre (*tanden*) and pushed to the ground. Push the elbow away with both hands together in the same direction. Do not pull uke.

It is good to practice with one hand only – the one on the elbow, without taking the wrist at all. You must push along the direction of the line from elbow to wrist. Do not pull, but lead the arm. Always be close to *uke* with your own arms bent as you move.



2). Twist elbow upwards



Do not hold wrist.

Knees close together.

3). Position of *uke* from behind.



Elbow held here.

*Tori* pushes elbow in a circle which gradually straightens out.

### KATA MOCHI:

As your opponent approaches, stretch his *ki*. When he is just touching, *atemi* (strike) so that he is off balance, then cut straight down with the hand-blade of the 'atemi' hand.

1). *Atemi*

*Uke* goes to hold.



2).



3).  
Cut down.



*Uke* grasps.

4).



*Tori* moves toward *uke* with hips and shoulder, keeping *uke*'s hand and cutting up at elbow.

Keep the hand attached to the shoulder (Illustration 4 above), but do not grip it tightly. Move the hips (and thus the shoulder) in towards *uke*'s centre, in a spinning movement (*meguru*). Then cut up at the elbow: cut the whole body of your partner from your *tanden*, in a diagonal movement (cf. *kesagiri*).

*Tori* cuts across *uke* as he moves forward.



The shoulders are dropped and the partner is pushed to the ground with the full body. *Tori* bends over fully in the hold down: hands slide to the mat: the body rises, as in a kicking movement (cf. hold-down to *ushiro ryote-dori*).



This is not like leaning over:

1).



Legs and hips are strong and stable.

2).



Bad example.

### USHIRO RYOTE-DORI : TACHI-WAZA:

The hands stick to the hips; the hips and hands drop; then you raise your *tanden* and your hands. This way it is easy to cut up. The hands cut up in the outline of a large egg. Raising a sword correctly gives the correct arm movement in this technique. The edge of the sword rises first. However, you raise both arms, as in a two-sword movement. You can change *hanmi* and control *uke* with *hari* in the arm. Thus if you incline to the left side, your left arm and foot should be slightly in front of the right and slightly higher, to lead *uke* round. Step back as you cut down and then forward again with the same foot. Change the hand position, so you are holding, before you step through. To hold down control the thumb and push upwards and outwards. Your elbow (outside) almost touches the ground as you push. Then push the thumb towards the mat. With the inside hand you push *uke*'s elbow away from head, then towards yourself (see illustrations below).

1).

Hands  
stick  
to hips.



2).

Lower  
*tanden*  
and hips.



3).



4).



Edge of  
sword rises  
first. This  
gives correct  
arm movement.

5).



In cutting  
up, imagine  
a large egg.

6).

One arm slightly higher: this arm and same foot slightly in front.



7).



8).



Foot cuts back.

9).



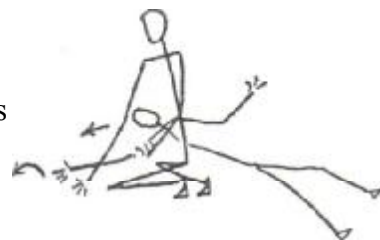
10).



Project forward like *yari*.

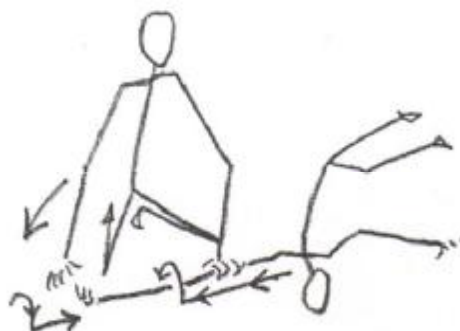
11).

*Tori's* elbow goes close to ground.



Stretch thumb upwards and outwards first.

12).



Then stretch thumb back towards mat, and push towards *uke's* head.

Hand slides towards elbow. Stretch elbow away from *uke* and twist towards *tori*.



# MORE MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON IKKYO:

- How to create *maai* in *shomen-uchi*, if *uke* is not attacking strongly.

1).



2).



Cut *uke*'s  
centre  
with  
right hand.

3).



Aim at back  
foot with *ki*  
and cut  
through *uke*  
with left  
hand.

- When you enter at the beginning your arms can be crossed. *Suikomi* from hips, bring *uke* into you, elbows close together. Describe a large circle as you lift him and execute a *kesagiri* (diagonal movement) movement. Your arms are bent with *jodan* contact at forehead. Then you straighten arms when controlling *uke* at *chudan* (middle) level. Even if the technique is done slowly, do not stop until your hands come back to their original place (uncrossed) at the hips, holding *uke*'s elbow and arm (see Illustration 10, p. 28 above). So *uke* comes in and goes away again like a stream (*ikioi*).

1).

Looking  
down.



1a).



2).



3).



- Adjust your *maai* if *uke* comes from the side. Step sideways and move in so that you face him centre to centre. Keep hand and arm contact as you *suikomi* to improve your stance.

1).

*Atemi*



2).



3).



If you  
cannot  
stretch  
your arm.

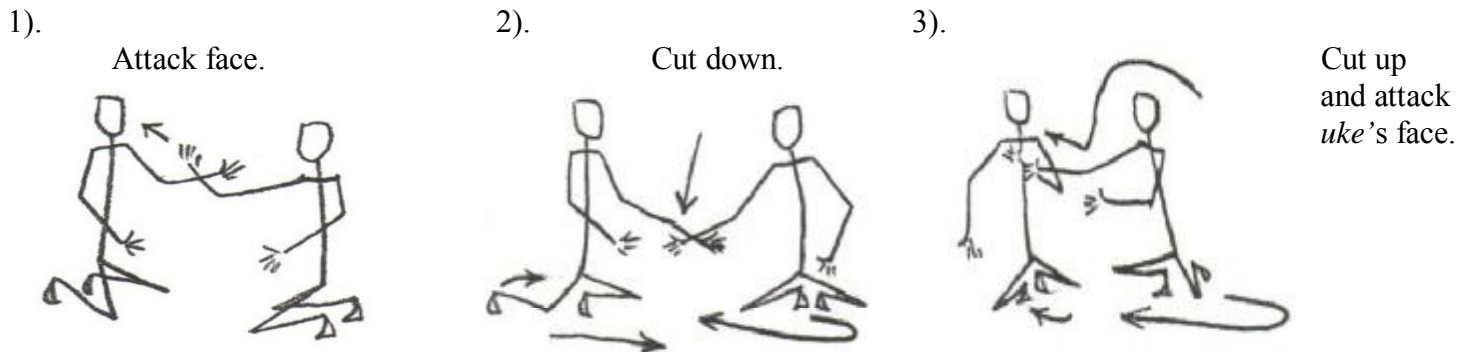
4).



...open your body  
and lead *uke* down  
in a circle.

When, in bringing *uke* to your hips you cannot straighten your inside arm, turn your hips and open your body, leading him down in a circle (see Illustrations 3 and 4 above).

IKKYO OMOITE (HEAVY HAND) EXERCISE:



This is called *ikkyoshu itosoku*: one hand, one foot movement. If *uke* pushes forward (2) go back, then cut down and move forwards towards his face, *omote* or *ura*. Stick to your partner and have both hands together, so as to use the hips, thus making a triangle with the arms and body.

- *Seshin tekiyoso kokoro gamae*: your mental attitude (literally the posture of your mind).



When you raise your hand in *ikkyo*, it is not like lifting a weight. You should have the feeling that you are lifting a thread. There should be no strength in the shoulders. If you act as though you were lifting a thread, then at any moment you can cut down, if necessary.

When facing your opponent your posture must be the same as when you are drawing a sword. You may need to draw at any moment. So your *ki* is alert, not sleeping. Then when your sword moves, the hand moves, the arm moves and then the elbow moves. The elbow does not move first. Do not wait from the beginning with the arm raised. Rather, time your attack to coincide exactly with *uke*'s. Both *tegatana* (handblades) should be in front of the *tanden*: the upper hand protects you from the enemy's sword; the other attacks his jaw.



### 13. NIKYO

#### KATA MOCHI:

This is a double movement. One hand grasps *uke's*; the other slides up from the shoulder as you push forward. You are facing *uke's* centre. You slide your hand gently towards you as you move forward towards *uke*. You must face your opponent to make it work (see illustration below).

1).

towards *uke*:  
knees very  
soft.



hand towards you.

2).



3).

Elbow  
close  
to body.



Elbow in.

Turn your body.

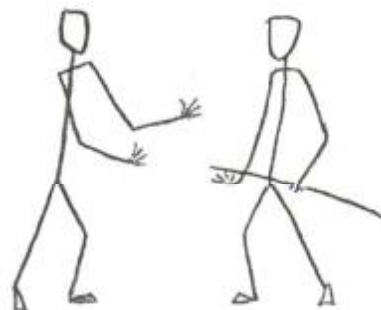
If you cannot turn your opponent to face you, keep your elbows down and slide *uke's* hand, in a *nikyo* grip, down the side of your body to your feet. Keep sticking to your opponent even when he is on the ground. Stretch his hand over, in your elbow and cut down to his elbow, keeping your own elbows in close to you. Put your (left in illustration) hand on *tanden*. Keep your other elbow close to your chest. For very supple *ukes* move your centre further towards *uke's* head.

In *katate-dori ai-hanmi nikyo*, done at the hips, make sure that both hands work together. Both hands serve to bring the hips more into the movement. As with *ikkyo*, for extra effect, if *uke* is strong, raise your leading foot as you lower *tanden* and advance.

1).



2).



## 14. SIX PRACTICES FOR PROPER RELAXATION

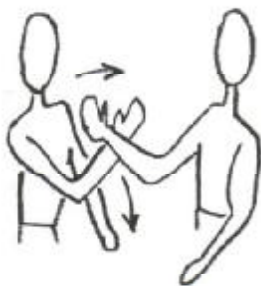
- 1) A test for proper relaxation in your body. If *tori* grasps *uke*'s wrist, and *uke* swings his arm from side to side, then *tori*'s shoulders and upper body should not move. Only the arm should move. If *tori* grasps too strongly with muscle, he will not be relaxed and his upper body will move when *uke* swings his arm side to side.



- 2) *Tori* grasps *uke*'s opposite wrist. With the upper body relaxed he can enter in with *irimi*. If he grasps too strongly he will not be able to enter.



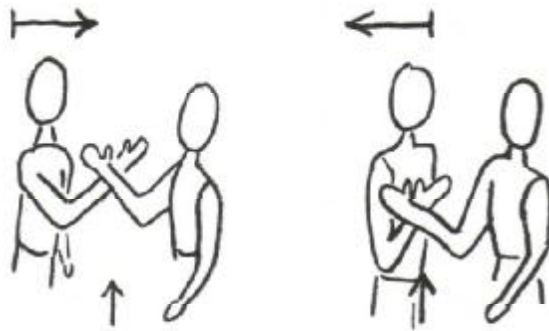
- 3) *Tori* cuts *uke*'s opposite wrist. They should be *tegatana* (knife hand) to *tegatana* at the wrists. *Tori* cuts down to the side, with sticky contact, to enter in with *irimi*.



- 4) *Tori* places his wrist on top of *uke*'s wrist. *Uke* quickly bounces his arm up and down from the bottom. *Tori* should stick to *uke*'s wrist but only his arm should move – and not the rest of his body.



- 5) *Tori* contacts *uke*'s opposite wrist *tegatana* to *tegatana*. While leaving both wrists in the same place with a constant pressure between them, *tori* should move in close to *uke* and back away from *uke* several times. All the time the point of contact at the wrists remains in the same position with the same level of pressure between them.



- 6) *Uke* cuts down on *tori*'s arm (*tegatana* to *tegatana*) over *tori*'s head. *Tori* is cut down 90% of the way. He must have a springy light feeling as he goes down to the ground. Then, at the last minute, *tori* cuts *uke*'s arm down from when he is almost to the ground in a springy motion.



## 15. ONE'S CORRECT AIKIDO ATTITUDE:

Various remarks: In all this there is not intended to be a sharp difference between the 'mental' and 'physical' sphere.

- § Cut with the hips. For this, *happo-giri* and *shomen giri* with sword are good exercises.
- § Use the one sword with two hands. This is also excellent hip practice. Even if you are holding with only one hand, you must still use both.
- § Make a triangle. On attack your whole body should be coordinated. When your opponent grasps, point the other hand also, making the hips the base of a triangle.
- § Attack the whole of the enemy and not just a part. Look at his whole body, not just his hand or face. So you attack his whole body.
- § When you cut with a *tegetana* your aim should be to cut your enemy in half. A *tsuki* should be aimed right through him and not at his surface.
- § Develop good eyes through correct practice. You improve by noting good and bad in others and developing a sense of what is correct and incorrect.
- § The basic technique is the crucial, 'secret mystery' of Aikido (*gokui*). All the mystery is contained in *ikkyo*, *irimi-nage*, *shiho-nage*. It is vital to study these and create your own understanding of the theory. Your instructor can only go so far. Hence in the basic technique, theory and practice should coincide. It is a matter of self-realisation as much as of plain learning. *Ikkyo shitoso kude shobuga tsuku*: one movement of hand or foot decides the outcome of the attack. So the techniques should be very simple and clear. Complex movements might be good for display but not for real situations.
- § *Jyu*: softness implies the ability of moving quickly, as in a whip or spring. Through softness (*jyu no geiko*) you develop a supple mind and the ability to take any *ukemi*. Your outside must be soft: your inside hard and strong. Lao Tsu says that softness and weakness defeats strength. This is the spirit of *Judo* and is very hard to understand. The strength of weakness, how weak people can win, is very difficult. In nature the willow tree in snow is soft, bends and sheds its snow: whereas the oak is hard and could break under the weight. So we should be like the willow and not the oak.
- § *Teino*, *atari* and *kokyo* are very difficult to describe in words. In *atari* there is perfect body posture and an attack, on a straight line, to *uke*'s centre. *Shiho-nage* is a good example, but it is important in all techniques.
- § *Michubi ki kokkyui*: inviting *ki*. Your *ki* must be positive and call out your opponent's. When you have contact and hold in a cutting manner (*awasae* - blending, *kirimusubi* - cutting blending), holding with *tanden*, then there is *ki no ataru* (sufficient *ki*). Psychologically you, yourself, are to attack your opponent (cf. *mugamae*). Once you begin the movement do not stop. Hold and control.
- § *Zanshin*: Your finishing mental attitude is as important as your physical posture. You must show a genuinely serious attitude by your correct posture. When you project it is not the end. You have to have *zanshin* in case your enemy kicks or otherwise attacks, or others come. So, use your eyes and keep your mind open: it must be a real situation.

- § Do not make Aikido into a *ki* mythology, or a superstition or ‘a supernatural medicine that will cure all ills.’
- § Treat your equipment as seriously as your opponent. Keep it clean and in good repair. Westerners do not believe that inanimate things have some kind of spirit. They make too much distinction between the physical and the spiritual. They have something to learn from the Oriental attitude.

### 3 SLOGANS:

- i) *Sunosa*: Sincerity follows humility: obeys meekness.  
(An important attitude for understanding and improving Aikido).
- ii) *Shinkensa*: Have a serious attitude. Be honest. In a martial art if you were to e.g. use a real sword the result might be painful. In *taijutsu* it is easy to lose seriousness but it is the same attack. You must attack and defend as if you were holding a real sword.
- iii) *Keinokokkoro*: Have a respectful attitude for your opponent, *sensei*, everybody.

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The aim of this book is to enable instructors to understand the *shinzui* (essence or soul) of Aikido: greater than merely physical force. It is not a textbook, such as Saito Sensei's volumes are. It merely contains key ideas for improving technique.

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