

Thus, I Heard

Kim Taylor Sensei's Notes of the 2018 Chris Mansfield Sensei Seminar



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Introduction: Thus, I Heard...

These days I'm finding my best usefulness in taking notes at seminars. The *Pamurai* certainly tells me so at least. This weekend we have *Chris Mansfield Sensei* visiting from England. Yesterday, November 22nd 2018, Mansfield Sensei taught an afternoon session of ZNKR laidō to a group of about 20 seniors at the *JCCC* in *Toronto*.

If you haven't heard about this, it was because the powers that be requested it be kept secret. Of course, the instant it was declared secret everybody found out and wanted to be allowed to attend. Such is human nature.

I will begin transcribing my notes today for all that want to know the secrets that were revealed at the secret seminar. This evening we start the non-secret Jōdō seminar and grading weekend in Mississauga. It's still not too late to attend should you get a sudden urge. I may take notes at this seminar as well, we shall see.

By the way I have cleared this transcription with Mansfield Sensei. Some have suggested that these notes and whatnot should be limited to those who were at the seminar, in order to promote attendance. I don't agree, most folks feel they can get all the information they need through their own Sensei and videos online, they aren't going to attend seminars in search of secrets. They aren't going to know that the value of personal attendance is to feel what Sensei is saying. Yes, I said feel what he says. Perhaps these notes will give you a hint of what you gain by standing in front of experienced teachers.

The Reality of Iai: Notes from a private ZNKR Iaidō Keiko, led by Chris Mansfield Sensei

Warmups: *Zen Go Giri* (feet spread, cut down, *ukenagashi* on either side up, repeat).

Warming up can be done in various patterns, but for the ZNKR Iai, not leaving the tip below the hilt is a major teaching point. If you drop the tip below the hilt during warmups you may just create a habit that you don't want. Keep the left little finger tight to control the sword. Use the left hand to cut.

Even when doing your warmups, you should *move the sword in such a way as to control the enemy*. Most of us don't grip properly, even after many years practice. Start with the left little finger.

Nukitsuke warmup: Does your cut feel real? Why not? You haven't set your mind to "*I'm going to use the sword*". What does *teki* see when you swing, is he seeing that he is in danger?

Iai actually has no warmup. You will not say to teki "*just a moment while I stretch a bit*", so your warmup should be done with that mindset. Do 5 more, does that feel different? Good, we have proved something to ourselves.

Practice is proof of something; you must make your own reality in Iai. If your teki is real, you are real, your Iai is real.

[At this point there was a demonstration of *Shihōgiri* (四方切り). Most of these demonstrations were done with Carole Galligan].

When you moved toward me, did you adjust for the distance when I moved? Is your enemy doing something? You should respond to your enemy, if he does not attack, nothing is needed from you.

Don't go into automatic mode when you do Iai. Is your enemy real? This must be your mindset; you must have the mindset of reality. You must live in the moment, your Iai must be organic.

O-Chiburi warmup: Your form is nice, it is correct, but is the form the reality? Ask yourself "*is this real*"? Your Iai can be tested, this is sometimes scary but it can be done. Could Carole move forward while I did chiburi? She was under threat of being hit, so she had to deal with that reality. There was something in me that stopped her. All kata have this something.

If Carole does *Ganmen-ate* (顔面当て) and her opponent does not have this something, if his movement is false, he gets hit in the face. If it is real, if her opponent exhibits this something, she cannot get in to hit.

The benefit of testing your Iai is to understand if what you do works or not. Is it real or not? Your form may be fine, the shape may be correct, but is it real?

In the recent Poland seminar, the Japanese Sensei said that in o-chiburi you should not take your sword away from the enemy. Here I have demonstrated o-chiburi in two ways, can you see the difference? You

can, but can you tell me what is different? Keep the sword in the right front quadrant while doing chiburi, do not take it away. Control teki while you do chiburi, that is the meaning of chiburi.

[Demonstrates chiburi with Carole]

That is the original, that chiburi is from **Jushin Ryu**, you can see the meaning of the control. Let's test this, if I take the sword away, yes, Carole can draw and get in. If I control her with my chiburi she cannot attack. This is the ZNKR interpretation of chiburi.

Noto warmup: Have the feeling of striking teki with the tsuka kashira on the first movement of noto, as you draw the sword across your left hand. There is a difference between sheathing the sword and putting it away. Don't just put it away, control teki.

We are trying to take something intangible and make it a little bit more tangible. Smooth movement is good, but does it have meaning? Does the movement deal with the reality of the situation?

As you rise through the ranks you must show more and more of this situational awareness. The kata does not do this, you must change your mind to do this. It is not the form that is real, only the meaning of the form is real.

Does it work? Why? Can I prove that my lai works? Everything must be tested, everything comes back to us, to you. You must do this testing for yourself to make your own lai.

This was the end of the warmup.

Make A Change If You Are Trying

The ZNKR Kata 1-3

The next in the series of notes from Chris Mansfield Sensei during the CKF Fall Jōdō seminar and grading, November 22-25th 2018.

Mae (前)

Furi Kaburi: As you lift the sword to cut downward give yourself enough time to grip and then you will feel that you have cut.

Sitting: If there is nobody there, you sit any old way, if there is someone there you will sit mindfully.

When I practice, I think how much time do I have, and how much time is there? These are not the same things; how much time I think I have and how much there actually is.

[Mansfield Sensei demonstrated the movement from Nukitsuke to Kiritsuke]

Was that dead or not? Did teki cut me while I was trying to cut him?

It's not about speed but about the moment. There is no time but the moment. Can you demonstrate the truth? Can you do lai that is true? You can or you can't, but it is true regardless. You can try with one moment but there is a problem with that. Teki has watched and learned from your moment and perhaps changed what he does next time. This is bad. Even without that, teki has a different time each time, a different moment.

To cut another person is difficult, you must decide to cut and then cut. You understand this but you don't apply it. You must engage with your lai, you must prove it, show that it works. This is the meaning of lai. I have had a student for 33 years, she hates hitting people, it is difficult for her but recently she's a little better at it.

Ushiro (後ろ)

This kata is the same as Mae so pay attention to those points. Is the turn difficult? If someone walks behind you and taps your shoulder what do you do? Do you shy away or flinch or do you turn and make the person behind you shy away? Do the second.

When you are walking along and someone says "*look at that*" you look naturally. Do this with Ushiro, turn naturally, don't think. *laidō* is natural, there is no time to think. *lai* is chaos.

Carole Galligan will threaten me. I drew my sword and cut her. *laidō* is a draw and cut, not a threat.

Don't think, just do. You should respond to a threat with "**done**". This is efficacy, the meaning of the sword. If you have a sword edge on your neck you can't fight and you can't run away, you can only give up.

I don't think about lai much anymore, I just do it. For Ushiro you don't know where teki is, but for the technique to work he must be close to you. This is scary. You know where he is, if he puts his hands on your shoulders it's too late. You must feel the hands coming and rise to respond to this feeling.

Whatever you're doing, you need to ask what the reality is. Practice to deal with that moment. You either can or you can't, but the proof is there. If you can't, persevere, this is practice.

You must do lai with a sense of realism. You must show you are trying to make it work. Suddenly you can do it...hurray! The next time you try it you can't. Sorry, that's how laidō goes. We must feel a difference, and then we can see a difference. You must ask "*when*" and then "*how much do I need?*"

Ukenagashi (受け流し)

In the recent central seminar in Japan, this technique was changed. I think it has been made easier to do. We all struggle to get up from seiza in this technique. With the change, the form is the same but the preparation, the unification of spirit, body and sword is different.

1. Sense the hands coming toward you, look and touch the sword in one action, at the same time.
2. Don't move the sword from its position in your belt. Move the left foot to the right knee. You, in fact, pass through this position but to learn you can stop here to examine it.
3. The moment you stand up, draw and parry the cut without pause.

The change is in the point of preparation, you do not rise from seiza but from position 2 above. In practice, imagine this in two stages, 1. the move of the left foot with no sword movement and then 2. stand, draw and cut.

Tenouchi, how you grip the sword as you move to use it, is something we do not do enough work on. The criteria for the sword are: 1. The sword protects you and 2. The sword takes teki's life.

Kisshimoto Sensei has said that there are three sections of the sword;

1. Defence (*bo*)
2. Control (*sei*) and
3. Killing (*satsu*)

Ukenagashi describes all three of these sections in its action.

First, deflect at the *bo*. Control at the *sei*. Kill with the *satsu*.

Question: Has the shape of the preparation point changed? Yes, it has, but it's easier now. We can do the form standing or from **sonkyo**, but not everyone can do it from seiza.

Once you start moving upward in this kata, do not stop. To stop is a fail point. Move right through the cut. This cut is often called a *hikinuki* but it really is not. We step back to make the distance, we don't pull the sword back to the hip.

We can prove all of our lai, and we should. Each cut has two energies, the cut forward or back, and gravity, the movement of the sword downward. Too much of each is no good. These two energies should be in balance which will give a good look and a good feeling.

We often make lai hard, and then ask why it is so hard. lai isn't hard, it's quite simple. Try, did you try, good. You have started to make a change if you are trying.

Don't go back!

Expansion and Contraction

The ZNKR Kata 4-5

These are notes from Chris Mansfield Sensei at the Fall 2018 seminar in **Port Credit** (Canada). The seminar is over now so I'd very much like to thank Mansfield Sensei for his kindness and instruction. We will see him again in May of 2019, I hope. In the meantime, we continue with his comments from the Thursday afternoon Iai class.

Tsuka-ate (柄当て)

Here is a question, how much time do you have to deal with an enemy you can't see?

The **AJKF** (All Japan Kendo Federation) has changed the point of application of this kata in order to more realistically deal with an unseen enemy. The book states that we should express "**subayaku**" for katas number 1 to 5 and 12. This term translates roughly to *nimbly, agilely, being effective to the situation*. Your enemy is close behind you, you must have a feeling for this enemy and from feeling his attack you start the kata. You do not start the kata in reaction to the front opponent.

After the tsuka-ate to the front opponent, don't move the right hand, draw, look and thrust all in one movement. There should be no pauses here, you have very little time to react. Hit the front opponent, move your left hand, look/tsuki (thrust).

Then in one action look to the front opponent and cut him. Don't just turn your head, **look**. If you look, the second problem is that you don't see. **Look-see-cut**. If we examine **Sanpōgiri** (三方切り) we can look to the front quickly or slowly, it is curious that when we look slowly the kata is more convincing. Make sure you look.

You should study carefully how you place your hands on the sword. How your hands move to take and use the sword is very important.

Question: How do we move from the thrust to the cut? To answer this, we need to think about how far the sword goes into teki's body. Two inches would seem to be enough, and if it is only 2 inches there is no need to make a large movement to pull it out again. It is up to you to make the distance between yourself and teki, this involves timing. Use your left hand in a more vigorous way during this movement.

[Note: It was very clear that Mansfield Sensei, when demonstrating this movement, "had his left hand on the hilt before his right hand was on the hilt" this is something I would like my students to examine carefully – Kim Taylor Sensei].

To keep the tip up, you must use the right hand, if the tip moves slightly down you are using the left hand. You must find your own synchronization when finding the grip. Find the feeling of the grip to get a good feeling in the cut. You must examine your hands as you take the grip. Consider a small cut of only 6

inches up and down, without a proper grip this is impossible.

We will break here; we can do a standing bow (*ritsu rei*) but consider that this easy movement can easily look meaningless. Show some sort of respect for your sword, for what you are doing. It is said that by looking at people's reiho one can tell "*who they are*".

When you are doing lai you must understand that the spaces between the movements are incredibly important, but for most people, these spaces don't exist.

To make your noto a natural movement, consider that at the start, someone may be trying to knock your sword aside. A natural movement will (naturally, without thought, without panic) avoid this contact and move the tip up and over into the noto movement. What is your natural form? You must try, test, to find this because we don't know what our natural movement is until we find it.

Kesagiri (袈裟切り)

There are no recent changes to kesagiri, but how can you do it? You should ask yourself; can I make this work? Can I draw in such a way that says to teki "*you are cut*"? The technical movements of all kata are there for you to read but you must always ask "*does it work*"?

If we try this first upward cut with our swords in our hands it is not difficult, it is only awkward when the sword is in the saya. Take your swords out and try. You all did it well, but when you put the sword back into the saya it is suddenly a problem. This is curious. When we draw in Mae the back of the sword rides along the saya, when we turn the saya over the back of the blade should still ride along the saya in the same way.

The original version of this kata was to walk past one teki and cut him as we draw and then to cut the next teki. This has been changed to a single teki for Seitei, but thinking about two opponents may help us understand the movement.

How do we release the sword and cut? You must feel the movement, you must expand with the movement and then contract with it. Take the sword out and wave it horizontally, cutting in each direction. This is no problem, now change the angle to 45 degrees diagonally. This is just as easy. Kesa giri is this action, once the *kensaki* (tip) exits the saya we continue in a single movement through to the second cut.

We must engage someone in front of us, we must express *seme*. How do we do this? The sword must occupy teki's space, only then can you think about cutting him. If you don't occupy his space, what are you doing?

Is "*should*" a reality? Why not just do it rather than consider that you should? Don't make a big deal about the drawing action, it should be natural, don't go overboard, that's not lai. In Europe for judging seminars we often put junior panellists in a position behind the three judges and ask them to judge as well. In one seminar we started with three experienced judges and 20 behind. The three judges gave the flag to white and all the 20 behind gave it to red. This is curious, but by the end of the seminar all the judges gave the flag to the same competitor. We need to consider what it is we are looking for, what is

good and what is overacting.

Chiburi: Consider my chiburi, how well did I control the person in front of me during this movement? Chiburi is all about control of teki.

Cutting: Pick up one foot and cut one handed, switch your feet and hands and cut again, continue with this. If you use too much power you are going to fall over. Try this one handed and one footed, then use two hands and both feet. Try to use only enough power to control the sword. You must find what is natural, how do you do that? You must find it in yourself, use one foot and try ukenagashi. Use one foot and try noto. Ask yourself, what can I try? What can I add to my practice to learn?

Question: Should we stick only to the kata during practice? This is a bit limited isn't it?

For chiburi you should think about expanding and contracting at the same time. What is the best "you"? Try, find out. Should you present the normal you or the best you at a grading? In order to do this, you must believe you can present your best.

In lai, we can't have it too difficult to do or too easy, If we have either of these in our practice we will quit. Some people do. For those who stay, they find a middle point where it is neither too easy nor impossible.

Expand and contract at the same time.

We will continue.

Iai is Chaos...and is Just Too Much Fun

The ZNKR Iai Kata 6-12

We continue with the notes from Chris Mansfield Sensei's visit to teach laidō at the JCCC in Toronto, November 2018. Since there is an Iai grading in a few days we will finish the Iai notes today.

Morote-tsuki (諸手突き)

You must make this draw a **nukiuchi**. You must deal with the first enemy immediately. Do you know the idea of "**Shinken Shobu**"? This is not just "*a fight with real swords*", but a fight with the mind as well. Here you have three enemies, not one. You must beat them or die, this is your choice, this is shinken shobu. Nukiuchi means to use the sword in the saya to kill the first teki.

What use is a nice-looking technique if you die? What if you had a crappy looking technique but you won? Would that be OK? Numbers 6, 7, and 9 are all nukiuchi. This is not about how fast you are, but instead the conviction that you will win. There are many here who are younger, fitter, who may have a shorter, faster sword than I do. That's OK but I must still win. Timing, you can win if you think of when you start the draw, when you finish the draw.

If you both use exactly the same timing you will achieve **ai uchi**, this is not the shinken shobu I am speaking of, do not settle for that. You must win. Shinken shobu is fighting to survive, like we spoke of in **Tachi Uchi no Kurai** last May. You must ask yourself, "*is it real*"? This is the only thing that helps.

ZNKR Iai is absolutely not basic. At the 8th dan level the entire test is from Seitei. If Seitei were simple, all the challengers would pass.

When doing nukiuchi to start the kata, do it with a feeling of shinken shobu, then you will have momentum for the rest of the kata to work actively.

In Seitei the turn, the **jiku ashi** was changed, why? [*Seitei turns are all done on the toes, not using the heel at all – Kim Taylor*].

Iai is chaos, it is not comfortable. The cut and tsuki are done in a smart manner, don't do lacklustre Iai.

[*Demonstrating Yukizure* (行連), *two opponents walking beside*]

I used the moment to the full, in a natural manner, nothing untoward. You must relax.

[*Demonstrating Tsuredachi* (連達), *a thrust and cut to 2 opponents*]

Here I thrust to the person at the left front, why didn't the person on the right front draw and cut? They were mesmerized by what I was doing, this is the moment, this was enough for me to cut.

If my opponent is thinking about what he is going to do he will be too late, so why would you think about your lai? It's just reality. You can't do it? Practice to get closer to reality. At my age and experience I hope to understand about 85 to 90% of lai. I am still working, still practicing.

Recently I've started to use this exercise to examine shinken shobu. Two people are facing me on angles, when I say "move", they try to draw and cut me. "Move", you see I did **Soete-tsuki** (添え手突き) to one and cut the other before they could cut me. Did you see what I did? Can you look-see? This is "real" soete-tsuki, to seize the moment, to take the initiative. Try this.

Why did you change what I did? Are you are making something else up? Looking at me you must transpose what I do, I am not a mirror. Try three times, was it right? Was it believable?

[The exercise was to start with the right foot forward, holding the sword in soete zuki. Switch the feet in place to thrust the left front enemy, this puts the left foot forward, then step toward the right front enemy with the right foot to cut him. The students had the most trouble with "seeing" the foot switch and step, the sword movement was not as much of a problem. – Kim Taylor]

When you turn you must look-see the opponent. Don't just turn.

Sanpōgiri (三方切り)

Let's test this, the three 7th dans will walk forward toward this student who is without a clue as to what we will do. To deal with the opponents in this kata you must put your priority, your full attention, on enemies' number 2 and 3. Number 1 is the centre opponent, the one you intend to kill. You must make this kata come alive, you must respond to the situation, not react to it. If you react, you will be late, you will die.

lai is chaos, you must enter the chaos. Make it real, you must engage and deal with the situation. The worst lai is comfort zone lai. You must constantly test your lai.

Ganmen-ate (顔面当て)

In this kata you can see we are engaging with two teki, if you perform badly you will lose to both. Carole Galligan Sensei will try the kata against me. See that I simply draw and cut her as she tries to get close enough to thrust to my face. She must get into the correct distance, through my attack. How can she do this?

Seme. She must take control of the space. When you walk into a space you must dominate and control that space. Carole is now using the space, she is accelerating with 100% concentration on the kata, therefore she only needs one "time". If your teki is sitting or standing still waiting for you to come kill him, this is not real.

You must turn and look/see. You must keep turning and attacking. The turn and cut must also be done with seme. Carole has now done this and I could not kill her when she turned. The dilemma we have is

to do this every time we do the kata. Why can't we do that?

How can we do that? We must make an effort every time. Given a chance, humans are lazy. We must make a supreme effort to have a sophisticated teki. In Jōdō or Kendo if we face a high level partner, we must up our game, it is no different in Iai.

Soete-tsuki (添え手突き)

This is nukiuchi! You must win, not just draw. Your technique is not bad in truth, but you must work to progress from there.

Shihōgiri (四方切り)

We will skip this kata because it is just too much fun.

Sōgiri (総切り)

This kata is linear, it's all on one line. Is this one enemy or five? The book doesn't say. You must deal with the situation regardless.

Do not make this kata laboured, try to have the feeling that you are hitting them before they can step back away from you. What is the point of cutting at them after they have stepped back out of range?

Use *okuri ashi*, synchronize your sword with that. If the feet are slow, your sword will be slow and you will miss teki. Drive from the back foot, this kata should be exciting, alive. It's no fun just hitting air. Hit this person and they then step back, that's fun.

If you try to be too big the timing becomes laboured, if you have enough expansion you will have enough contraction. To test your movement here, just walk forward and synchronize your cut to your steps, see how there is a lightness that contains heaviness. Make sure it is this way, not the other way around. Balance it.

Nukiuchi (抜き打ち)

Your left hands are too slow to grip the sword on the cut, you must be more proactive with your grip. Here is a test, I will face 90 degrees and then turn to cut, you must react. Be "*in touch with your Iai*", how can you do this if you react to my cut with a flinch and then try to draw and cut?

You must occupy the space, then vacate it, then reoccupy it in the least time possible.

Relax, confidence is needed. As I move closer and closer to you when I turn and cut you become less

confident. Why? You can do the technique when I am far from you, what changes when I get closer?

You must deal with the reality of the situation this is true here in this kata and it is true in all of lai. I will just drop this shinai onto your hands, try the kata. Why did the shinai hit your hands? You must use the sword to escape, do not escape and then think about using the sword.

This kata is the same as kendo no kata number 1, ***men nuki men***.

Remember that lai is chaos, you need to respond to the pressure that must exist here. You must test your lai, assume teki is trying to kill you. Check your reality.

It takes effort to change, without effort there can be no change.

[That was the end of the afternoon session. Next time we will move on to some notes from the Jōdō seminar – Kim Taylor].

Conversations

ZNKR Jōdō Kata 1-3

Today we move into the Jōdō section of Chris Mansfield Sensei's visit to Canada, November 2018. We began with solo kihon and went on to partner kihon for the Saturday morning. Since I participated in that practice, I didn't take any notes. In the afternoon we began working on the kata and I picked up my notebook once more...

The book contains the points for all the kata, you can read them. When at a grading the judges will look at these points and tick them off. Do not give the judges any excuses to give marks against your performance.

The first pleat of your hakama is said to be **Benevolence**. Benevolence is good in judges and in you, it is worthy, but does it change people? We appeal to students to change; we ask them nicely. Later we may not ask so nicely when we ask them to change. A judge will weigh benevolence against the need to change when deciding to pass or fail a student.

One teacher from the past (**Hiroi Sensei**, teacher of **Shiia Sensei**) was ultra-severe in his teaching. Hiroi means wide, and he was a very solid man who was said to be unforgiving. He was a three strikes man. He would ask you to do something. No? Try again. A second time no? One last chance, if you don't do it on this third try, I am walking away.

The effect on students was great, they didn't want Sensei to walk away, they forced themselves to change. I often say you must practice to change, I'm not a three-strike man but I could be, perhaps I'm more benevolent than that?

Tsuki Zue

The dialog in this kata starts with the sword. The sword asks a question, the jō answers and we are finished with the conversation.

When you take a **kamae** you should not just do it, you should know the reason you are taking that stance. To begin, the sword moves to the edge of the area claimed by jo. This must be based on common sense; you should not be too close but there must be a connection between you.

The movements of jō are **go no sen**, therefore you must decide on the best time for the jō to move. If he moves too soon the sword will follow, if too late he will be cut. Note the moment of attack, the moment sword is committed to the attack and it cannot be changed. This is important.

The question is the attack, the answer is the escape to the right rear. Jō then counter attacks using an okuri ashi footwork. The sword asks the next question by moving into **jodan**. The jō answers with an attack to the **kote**. Then the sword is released. The sword is the first to move back and jō allows him to retreat with dignity.

Move at a natural speed, you should not look busy, instead you should look controlled.

[*Demonstration at normal speed The kata were demonstrated by Eric Tribe and Pam Morgan throughout the seminar – Kim Taylor.*]

Eric and Pam have presented a very clean image, nothing extreme. The kata looks clean; therefore, it feels honest. There is nothing sneaky here, just clean and honest. If you do your kata like this, I will be very happy. This is the form as form. Now please do the fighting version.

This is a different feeling than before, but the kata retains its clean image. It is a little more "hmmm". You don't need much more to make your kata "tasty", just a little bit of spirit.

Suigetsu

The first, the most important thing about this kata is that the jō reaches the target before the sword finishes the cut. The timing must be such that the sword starts and the jō gets there before the sword finishes. Both sides must move together as they step back to *hasso* and *hiki otoshi no kamae*.

The sword must regain something, the jō has the advantage so the sword must do a bit and moves into *chudan*, but the jō says "sorry" and ends the kata.

I am talking you through these kata because I'm concerned you don't know the reasons for your movements.

Again, this demonstration was clean, there was nothing unnecessary here. Do your kata like this and I would be impressed.

Hissage

At the beginning of this kata the jō must send a message to the sword. That message is "stop". If you don't, why would the sword stop? As you reach this point, both sides reassess the situation and in an unspoken agreement you match weapons.

The sword tries to reassert control by applying some, pressure, and then cutting. This is done in two steps. The jō understands this some on the first step and moves back so that the cut cannot be done. The sword must recalculate and step again to cut, this requires a bigger action so the jō has time in that moment to catch the sword from underneath and do *kuri tsuke*.

You know that the purpose of *kuri tsuke* is to pin the sword to the body, you know it but can you do it? Check this, you must pin the sword to the body at the point of contact. If you don't do this the sword gets clever and cuts you on the leg. If you do it correctly the sword must receive it to prevent getting hurt. Do you receive this technique on the wrist or the hilt? It's up to you.

This next part is tricky, the sword must move off the jō to break contact. The thrust from the jō is done

between the second and third steps, this is written in the book. The sword does not have to stop and wait to be hit, so jō must be crisp in order to hit sword. Why is the second to third step the best place to hit? This is the distance of the jo. The timing of this is tricky but watch the demonstrators and see how they do it.

If you have good timing the jō will hit. If you have bad timing you will not.

The ***hiki otoshi uchi*** sends the message that the kata is over, it must be convincing. If there is no clear message, the fight will continue. The jō must finish things now so that both can go home.

After this is ***zanshin***. Jō must keep zanshin so that teki does not get any clever thoughts.

Demonstration:

Do it like this and I will be happy.

Question: What about the ***kiai***, should it be done like ***tandoku*** and ***sotai kihon***? The kiai is, can be, voiceless. If you do a voiced kiai at each action it can get monotonous, with no contrast in the movements there is no flow. Should you put a kiai in the kuri tsuke? A voiceless kiai is enough. If you add a voiced kiai here you should look at the effect you are creating. For example, look at the kata Ran Ai, this is a long kata, if you put a voiced kiai into each movement it becomes laborious. No two people are the same, no two kata are the same. Practice to develop wisdom in yourself, your kiai represents your wisdom. If you panic you will kiai all the time, or at strange places.

Beat the Hell Out of the Other Guy

ZNKR Jōdō Kata 4-6

We continue with notes from the Nov 2018 Jōdō seminar with Chris Mansfield Sensei.

Shamen

This is **tsune no kamae**, note the word kamae. Don't just stand there holding the stick. The end of the jō must be attacking the enemy, the sword must be concerned by the tip as he approaches. Do not think of this stance as "*no kamae*".

The same as for number 2, Suigetsu, this first move from the jō must finish before the sword finishes the cut. The sword does what it does, jō must finish first. This movement is dangerous because jō attacks the temple. It is important that the jō finish about 10cm away from the head for safety.

You must aim the jō to reach the target, too short or too long is incorrect, you want a point of connection with sword.

Sword, try moving into jodan again, Jo, no, too late, you must be proactive, you must finish first. The sword sees the tip of the jō and pauses to reassess, at this point the tsuki must be solid.

You move in zanshin to a safe distance.

[*Demonstration*]; This was clean, honest and uncomplicated.

Questions: In Hissage you must make the kamae real, don't invite the sword to hit you, he will.

Kata is chaos, you must struggle to find order, fine the form within the chaos. Make control out of chaos. Robotic movements are not real.

The sword considers his options (openings) and jō responds. If there is no care taken when you move, there will be no change. I call this shinai "**The Reminder**", I would like to remind you to move with care, to be in the moment, this is exciting, it is excited jōdō.

When walking toward jō at the beginning of Shamen, you must be real so that jō can be real. This is true for both sides. laidō is difficult to do because it is solo, in jōdō it is easier, you can hit your partner and say "*you didn't move*". This gets results.

Real budo is electrifying. You must use more effort, not more power. Make more concentration, more focus. Look for the moment and use it. If not, you are not doing kata as it's intended to be done.

The rule is:

1. Be true to yourself
2. Beat the hell out of the other guy

It is written that the purpose of the jō is to chastise. To hit someone on the head is benevolent. What are you doing? When can you do it? Ask this always.

You are still attached to what you have learned, you are not paying attention to cause and effect. We can do choppy jōdō all day but we don't have time. In the dojō you have time to work things out, do that in the dojō so that you can take it to the seminar. The dojō is where you practice to change.

Generally, 1 to 4 are OK but if you want to impress someone, make more effort to change.

Sakan

In the first movement, sword is trying to use the space between you, to disrupt jō, so that sword can complete the movement. Project your sword into the space and then attack the solar plexus.

When you match weapons after the thrust, the jō is on the line, the sword is off centre a bit. When jō moves to hasso this slight movement off the line makes it easier for jō to hit the sword at that angle to move it.

After the push across the floor, as both sides go into hasso, jō must be in hiki otoshi no kamae first. When you do this, move the right hand to the end of the jo, don't take a shortcut.

The sword tries to recoup the initiative but jō says "no".

[*Demonstration*]: This was clean and uncomplicated.

Monomi

When must the jō move? Be as decisive as you can when you move. The sword starts to cut, jō prepares by opening the body, don't move too far. When the sword attacks, he explodes. Try to hit before the sword finishes the cut.

When sword moves back to jodan, jō does *kaeshi tsuki*. Jō must prevent the sword from cutting. Why doesn't the sword simply cut from jodan? You must think about the practicality of kamae, is the kamae of jō real? Can you make it real? When you go into the kamae you must control teki.

The sword steps back from the wrist strike, attempting to control jo. When jō does kaeshi tsuki he must use the length of the jō so that he doesn't get hit by the sword. Use the length of the weapon, make it real.

It is very important that even your steps backward be full of purpose, they must be real.

In *Osame* you move the jō to finish the kata but you must suppress teki with this movement.

Dialogue

ZNKR Jōdō Kata 7-9

We continue with notes from the November 2018 jōdō seminar in Port Credit, Ontario, with Chris Mansfield Sensei.

Kasumi

When you match weapons, you should be at the correct distance. If you are too deep, or meet too high you will be too close and this is not good. In awase you must meet naturally, never meet and then move your back-foot back.

Strike down the sword with the jō. Relax the grip on the sword to receive the strike with the body. Don't open the hand and move the sword. Both move to a two-step distance, don't force the kamae at this point, don't "*plant*" the word into hasso.

Sword must move two steps which gives jō time to catch his attack from below. Move to *tae atari* with full concentration. Keep the connection with the sword and the jō the same throughout the movement. The sword moves four steps back.

The rest of the kata is as per number three, Hissage. This is a long kata but it gives us a lot of techniques to do.

[*Demonstration*]: This is a challenging kata, with one step and two step distances. Be clean, clear and ask yourself if you are at the correct distances.

The kamae of kasumi is a dominating kamae. Does the jō initiate the match? You decide. If the kamae is done properly, sword asks "*is there a weakness*"? No? Then move to chudan.

Tachi Otoshi

This kata is very difficult, there must be a message of "**stop**" as the sword and the jō meet.

Jō attacks and the sword must react with a block if the attack is done correctly. How does the sword cut from here? The sword goes for the neck, his body should be square to jō as he attacks. Do **NOT** drop the tip of the sword, hold it with the left hand.

Jō uses his inside position to catch this attack and then does kuri tsuke.

As the sword tries to move back, jō does kaeshi tsuki. As sword is reeling from the shock of the thrust, jō can finish the kata with hiki otoshi uchi.

[*Demonstration*]: This was not as clean as the other kata but it is a difficult kata.

Question: How far across do we step on the first movement? The Japanese answer to this would be "enough". Enough means that you don't get hit as you move, we could measure this in centimetres but what would be the point?

How long do we wait before the jō attacks? The timing of the awase to the **gyakute uchi** can't be answered by me. You must provide the answer in your own body.

Do you leave the left hand at the end of the jō for osame? Questions about osame are the "*residue of the exchange*". Often the hand is too high, too stiff or other things which are the result of the excitement of the kata. During osame, release the sword and keep control of him. Osame should always be natural, not too much or too little.

Tachi Otoshi is a problem kata. It is said that the "*sword harasses the jo*" but I believe that the sword is trying to fend off the harassment by the jo. The sword is light, it is an instrument that cuts, you should treat it like this. Your swords are not light, they are heavy, use the swords lightly. Close your eyes and feel when to do your movement.

This is an exchange, a dialogue.

Rai Uchi

At awase the sword tries to dominate by striking jo's left upper arm. Jō responds by moving on the same line to sword's solar plexus. If you do this well, the angle of the jō will not be so steep. It is always best to use the whole length of the jo.

The sword now tries to cut the neck and jō responds by attacking **waki bara** (the lower right side). The kiai for jō is "o" and for sword it is "e".

Question: How do we synchronize the second thrust and our feet? Synchronize your movements with the sword and you'll know what the footwork timing should be.

There is a legend that this is the kata that Muso used to defeat Musashi. The timing of the jō is within the timing of the sword. You can't work on the timing by using the jō alone, you can't extrapolate to the timing with a partner. If you work from the timing of the sword side you will learn the jō side.

On the second thrust rotate your body while pushing the left hand forward. This creates a vertical rotation rather than horizontal. After the first thrust, the sword answers jo's question with the second cut, jō should try to move without panic.

[*Demonstration*]: This speed is OK, it is natural.

30 cm of Extra Timing

ZNKR Jōdō Kata 10 & 11

Today, we continue with the Seitei Jōdō notes from the November 2018 seminar in Port Credit with Chris Mansfield Sensei.

Seigan

When you put the **bokuto** into your belt remember that it's a bokuto, not a sword so don't put it in like your iaito. Take the left hand to the belt, find the place, take the bokuto to the left hand and then put it into the belt.

This is the first kata where both partners move at the same time. When the sword moves to grab the sword, jō thrusts toward his eyes (*seigan*) and then strikes the **suigetsu**. It is a natural drop from the eye to the suigetsu.

The sword twists his body, taking the sword under the jō to draw, make some distance and re-engage. When you feel the sword moving away, quickly do gyakute tsuki kamae with the jo. Jō must attack, the sword is escaping.

The sword considers that he can maybe cut the hand. He doesn't want to walk back onto the jo. In order to move the jō away, sword must be convinced that you will cut the hand, if you are, jō must move.

Jō hasso; the right hand is just above the head, the jō carries a wider grip than the sword so the hasso is different. At this time the sword is off the line after missing the cut to the hand.

Strike the suigetsu convincingly, the kiai here should perhaps be a bit more expressed. This strike is usually expressed with the right foot and right hand. Alternatively, one could use both hands. The strike comes down on a 45-degree line although various Sensei use various lines. Personally, I prefer to enter sword's space from above. First, it is difficult to see the jō from this angle and secondly, it strikes in a less problematic manner for women. Use the end of the jō to strike the suigetsu.

The problem in this kata is the space at the last strike, to be short is common. You must maintain the space in the kata so that you can use it.

[This was the end of the Saturday classes, we continued on Sunday]

Midare Dome

This is a linear kata and so isn't much of a problem, the next kata, Ran Ai is all over the place. Sometimes

for Ran Ai we practice it as 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 of the movements. Is this a fun kata? It's hard to have fun with this one.

Are you warmed up well enough? If not, begin to practice softly but sharp. To practice sharp and with focus is ten times better than practicing strong. For example, if we practice the kihon **Maki Otoshi**, at first, we move strongly, later if we practice in a relaxed manner the effect is different. Plant the idea of being relaxed in your head. Consider the three-strike image is in force, you will get more satisfaction out of a movement that is relaxed.

Eric and Pam will demonstrate Midare Dome. The start and finish of this kata are different, so please practice safely. The kata starts like number 3, Hissage. The jō attack must be a true attack, don't just hit the sword, attack sword with the jo. If there is no pressure after the strike why doesn't sword simply cut jo? The josaki must be in the space to control the sword.

At this point the two move apart into Hiki Otoshi and Hasso. The sword must not be devious, but must try to cut the triceps. This is a two-step distance so sword moves left-right feet as he attacks.

Jō must wait for the reality to occur, if he moves too soon jō can cut his hand easily, jō must wait for the last moment.

The sword should not lean back on this movement, instead reserve the front foot and stay upright. We call this move "*ai uchi*" but it really isn't because jō wins. This is a dangerous moment so be careful.

Strike the sword down after stopping it. The power is due to gravity, jō then lowers the stick to the floor naturally, don't hit the floor after striking the sword.

Sword receives the strike by pulling the feet together, rotating the sword in front of the body and reaching to cut the head. This is Maki Otoshi and jō performs it by moving both feet (1-2) back.

Maki Otoshi scoops the sword from below, it is a soft movement not a block. Ideally, there should be no noise.

After maki otoshi the sword does not retreat on his own accord, he moves back in a reaction to seme from the jo. On the last step back sword goes to hasso and jō moves to a square position, [*feet together and jō held in both hands at the centre* – Kim Taylor]. This stance is centre to centre, sword and jō on the same line. Sword should not make a big flashy move into hasso.

It is the sword's idea that he is going to cut jo. This is the moment of truth for the jo, the moment of courage when jō must win the centreline during this attack. Jō attacks sword's eyes. Jo's posture at this moment increases the point of focus of the jo, if jō has a weak posture there is no control of sword.

During tai atari keep the contact point with the sword the same. Neither side moves to a feet together position at this point. At this point Jō drives forward with his left foot and sword responds with three steps back, the last one naturally bigger than the first two. Jō moves back into kamae at the correct distance (*kiri musubi*).

Question: After the maki otoshi, jō pushes sword two times, does sword then move back on his own? The sword is responding to pressure from jo, the sword is trying to outmatch jo. When the sword comes

into *hasso*, *jō* must be ready first, otherwise the sword can take the initiative. Sword doesn't wait, when he sees an opening he cuts, so *jō* must be ready first, he must be proactive. Whatever sword says, *Jō* is there to take over the situation. This is "*inside fighting*" during the kata.

If *jō* is not proactive, the sword just comes in. For example, at the start of the kata, sword comes in three steps, in *Seitei* sword stops on the second step to allow *jō* to take that moment, to be proactive. In *koryu* there is no stop there, so *jō* must be proactive. In this sense, *koryu* is fighting. [*Demonstrating Kage Kasumi*] In this demonstration you can see that sword has no chance at all. The *jō* is "*30 cm of extra timing*".

[*Demonstration by Pam and Eric*]: The book doesn't explain whether the *tai atari kiai* is 'e' or 'o'. Is *tai atari* a strike or a thrust? Which do you think? Perform the *kiai* accordingly. The *kiai* is not prolonged in *Seitei*, if you have no weapon your *kiai* must be sharp to stop the sword. If you have no *kiai* you will get cut.

In *Midare Dome* the *jō* attacks in an unassuming way. Use gravity and a sliding movement. Use momentum. Pay attention to contact and technique. *Tachi* should feel "*oh, nice*". Be unassuming, it just "*is*". This is convincing, sword says "*Can't argue with that*".

The kata is question and answer, question and answer, there is a continuity. It needs lightness, as you know, a heavy conversation is difficult. As you get older you don't have as much power but how much do you need? You need enough.

Receive the techniques in the moment, be light and responsive. With older or weaker partners use your power to match them. Don't collapse their power, there is no benefit to anyone. There should be no overkill, just "*it's finished*" not **IT'S FINISHED**.

Alex and Nacho, please demonstrate. Are you relaxed, or tired? You should look for the most obvious mistake here. Oops they didn't do it. What did you do differently from before? Yes, the changing of the hand after *tai atari* must be done at the end of the *jo*, don't just drop the *jō* and change it. This is the difference between a big movement and a small one, the big move is nicer. Change can happen soon or late, these two knew they needed to change and put it together and now they are fine.

Next time we will continue with *Ran Ai*.

Does Your Technique Work?

ZNKR Jōdō Kata 12

We finish the Seitei Gata Jōdō notes from the November 2018 seminar with Chris Mansfield Sensei, with a discussion of Ran Ai.

Ran Ai

This kata begins with the sword in the obi, like in Seigan. When the sword is already out, take the left hand to the obi, place the bokuto into the hand and insert it. The other way is from the bow, **Sogo ni rei** and similar. In this case, take the sword in the right hand, find the opening and put it in.

In Ran Ai the jō engages when you are about half way together. Don't over-reach on this movement, keep the arm flexible. When jō releases the pressure to sword's eye, sword can come back toward jo. Move the bottom end of the jō to waki bara as if it is attached with elastic. Keep the tension in the jō to the end of the movement or sword will attack.

Both break apart to a 2-step distance.

1. Sword collects the sword overhead and applies seme, jō responds.
2. Sword cuts, jō rotates underneath and catches the hilt. Jō must do more than the sword at this movement, so move sharply, inside and up.

Jō uses leverage against the sword at this point, not strength. How do you disengage the sword from his power? It is a combination of the angle and an upward movement which continues to a reverse kiritsuke.

Jō pins the sword to his body. Both are on parallel lines at this point. You must engage sword's centre. Sword tries a straight step off the jō but jō follows him.

Desperately, sword tries to break out. Jō lets him go, rotates and attacks waki bara. This is an attack on the internal organs so be careful. The feeling is to catch the elbow so that sword is stopped and cannot cut.

The sword resets and tries again. This is "*ai uchi*".

The sword tries to cut the head this time. Jō goes to the side and attacks waki bara.

The sword breaks again, jō steps onto the centreline, not back. Because of this, pressure is instantly applied to sword and jō does ***honte uchi*** which sword must receive.

Sword sees he has a chance here, so he presses, jō keeps him in check, keeping the pressure on. Jō gets clever here and releases sword, brings the right foot back and the jō overhead. Sword sees his opening

and tries to cut the chest. Jō draws his foot back causing sword to miss, then thrusts to sword's waki bara.

They break again.

The sword steps in and cuts and jō does *kuri hanashi*. It is curious that kuri hanashi is kihon number 8 but we don't see it until kata number 12. Sword releases his left hand as he receives the technique, steps back three steps with one of them crossing.

Sword turns and sees a target but cannot step in, jō holds the space, so sword attacks jo's forward hand. Jō moves back to hiki otoshi no kamae. Sword tries to thrust into the throat. Jō moves back to awase.

If jō simply steps in here he will be cut, he must protect the space between, and apply seme. Sword must step back and as the pressure is released on jo, jō drops the front end and tries to hit sword. Sword avoids and moves to hasso.

Sword then tries to cut jo's wrist, jō avoids this by taking the jō overhead, feet together and the end of the jō aimed at sword's eyes. This is a little harassment of sword. If jō now shifts in, the jō remaining in the face, the harassment increases. Jō then drops the stick to thrust suigetsu.

Sword attacks and jō does do barai uchi.

Sword tries one last attack, jō strikes it away and hits suigetsu to end the kata.

This kata is long and hard to do in a continuous way.

[*Demonstration*]: Did you count the kiai? There were lots, maybe too many. Do they need all of them? Use kiai at places you consider key to the kata to let the kiai breathe naturally.

Question: If the judges have a different idea of where to kiai than we do, is there a problem? First, judges are required to be impartial. For example, a challenger may have tattoos. A judge shouldn't like or dislike tattoos, if they have a preference, they aren't impartial and they can't judge fairly. Budo has always been strict but fair.

Question: After *do barai*, does the jō open up the centre or keep it until sword attacks? Jō can force an end to the kata by keeping centre, so the jō moves off the centre here, but the angle of the jō strike is such that the tip of the jō is slightly off the centreline when it hits the floor. You should use an angle according to your body size.

Question: What is the shape of the jō movement after the sword attacks? *Answer*: What is the right time to hit? You must prepare to hit the sword in the right place. This is *harai waza*, not *suriage men*, if you do suriage men you will be hit by the sword. The sword can't step in on this cut, he must lead with the sword. This is a somewhat unique cut, a reaching cut. Jō hits the sword on that reach, sweeping it sideways like one does in kendo to knock the sword off the centreline.

There are normal cuts, reaching cuts like this one, and pointing cuts. At a *kodansha level* (do not do this, forget I am showing you this, it is for the seniors) you judge the distance and cut jō just as his attack misses your head.

Regarding distance, it is difficult to get past the opening gambit of Ran Ai. If you do, you know something about jōdō. You must examine distance and speed. Severe training can be done with a shinai. You can examine how teki is complying with your movements.

Does your technique work?

Attenuation

[Editor's note: The previous chapters are the compilation of notes taken by Kim Taylor Sensei during the 2018 Mansfield Sensei seminar. The following chapters have been included here as they are supplemental essays from Taylor Sensei, expanding on his thoughts from the seminar itself]

Something mostly concerning speaker building, but applicable to the lessons Chris Mansfield Sensei gave us recently. Read carefully to see.

I made a strange looking speaker yesterday, mostly because it's strange looking. When I compared it to its twin (a couple of old Sony surround speakers, four-inch speaker in a sealed box) I was a bit disturbed to find no difference. Was my day's work a waste of time?

On listening further, I did discover differences in them, and I much prefer the one I made so I'll probably make another to pair it with. Then I'll have to figure out what to do with them, but the point, (like Budo) is to learn from them rather than to use them.

It took a direct comparison, one to the other to figure out which I liked, and to see any difference at all actually. We humans are great attenuators, it's part of how we work. The world is such a mass of information it would be impossible to survive without the ability to get used to what is not necessary to "know" at any moment. We're so good at this we have whole systems of practice to teach us how to pay attention to things that we've hidden from ourselves. Like how our minds work, so we do "*mindful meditation*" and mistake it for a religion, or for some of us, we do Budo. But we can never, and should not, get to the point where it all comes crashing in. Instead we need to get used to (*attenuate*) what we have and learn how to use our comparison circuits efficiently.

Huh? OK take the speakers, I make a pair and listen to them for a couple of minutes and unless they're real tin farts, they sound fine. Now I compare them to another set, oops they're not as good, they have no bass at all. So, I listen to the new ones, and then try them with another set. Woah, they may have bass but it's just a spoon on a kettle, these new ones are smooth (which usually means there's some midrange for my old ears to hear, bass and treble are long gone). You see the point, if not exactly happy with, we can get used to just about anything. It's noise, it masks the tinnitus, I'm happy. It's only by comparison that I know there's something better.

I could of course take someone's word for it but *audiophiles* are like *oenophiles*, banging on about things I can't hear or taste. I don't trust them to tell me what I'll like. I can't, they are in the spirit world, they hear and taste things that are beyond my understanding. Sort of like the people who do that delayed death touch stuff. Just as an aside, knowing that stuff seems more a curse than a blessing. "*Really, there's hints of cat pee in the finish, I swear there is*". Consider knowing how to kill someone a week later with a touch. Undetectable, nobody knows, now don't use that knowledge on the guy who just cut in front of you in line. You see? A curse.

But we can learn how to use our own ears to hear differences in speakers and this will actually train us to get more out of our music listening. My daughter can hear stuff in a composition that I absolutely

cannot, but she's studied music all her life. My son can track multiple objects in his shoot-em-up video games (is that the genre... I'm thinking I got that wrong) that I'd lose in the clutter.

Training works to make you better at what you can already do. I don't have to think about how to make a bokuto anymore, I put on a podcast and concentrate on Kant or Hume or nuclear physics and the background activity is me playing around motorized knives with my bare fingers. I'm good at it. But the earphones come out when I'm making speakers, I'm not good at that, I have to pay attention, and it makes me a better woodworker (with all my fingers) when I'm paying attention.

Which always brings me to Budo. You can get used to what you do, you attenuate, get satisfied. Then your Sensei comes along and makes you notice something, a twitch, a glitch, and once you can see what he's talking about you can fix it. But you have to see it first. Is that it? Just let your Sensei shove your nose in the mess and you'll learn? It can be, it depends on what you want. Not to diss your Sensei but you can also compare performances. I can fiddle with speaker shapes for years but never get much bass out of a two-inch speaker driver. If I don't know there are ten-inch drivers out there, or ports, or folded horns or transmission lines, I will continue to mess with my closed box trying to get 50 hz out of 50 mm. It's only by seeing/hearing one of the giant floor-standers of the '70s that you will understand there is a more efficient way to get bass than fiddling with height x width and stuffing insulation.

Same with your Budo. If you don't know how much room there is for improvement (by looking at those who are infinitely better at this than people like I) you will continue to fiddle with what you have. Or perhaps you simply declare you're good enough. Look, it depends on what you want from your practice. I have listened to my music on a set of computer speakers for years and I was fine with it. It was only when I gave my daughter her grandmother's pair of *PSB "bookshelves"* (back in the day our definition of bookshelf was a bit different) and my old *Marantz* receiver that I knew I could still hear the differences. I could still improve my ear. I was quite happy with the computer speakers; I was happy to listen to those who told me that modern computer-aided design means that modern speakers are better automatically than those old designs. It is a choice that I am now rescuing old speakers from the thrift shops and going on like a wine expert about smooth mid-bass and wooden cabinetry.

It's a choice whether or not you want to settle for the Budo you're doing now or actively go out and look for better, more efficient ways to do things. My Sensei says that you must, absolutely must look at everyone, senior and junior and find their faults. Not to correct them, never that, but to look within and see if you are doing that same thing. If so, you fix it in yourself and thank the person you're watching for teaching you. If you see something that they do better, steal that and thank them again.

If you are happy with what you are doing, by all means ignore your chance to improve while making notes of their mistakes. Just be careful of feeling superior if you ever meet that same person in the back alleyway with your swords drawn.

Discombobulation

We continue with the apparently quite voluminous notes from the November 2018 jōdō seminar with Chris Mansfield Sensei held in Port Credit, Canada. The last afternoon was devoted to some aspects of koryu.

Your kata must be smooth, a back and forth smoothness. If you stop and start, there will be gaps, it will not be smooth.

The attack must be real, kata must be real. If there is no attack what is there?

Would you say that Seitei jō is inflexible? No, it is not. Flexibility is in the head, not the kata. In Japan you can see that as a train gets more crowded, people get more inflexible. If there is too much in a kata, too much in your head, you become inflexible.

Kata should have an attitude of "*deal with it*", be flexible, don't do the same thing over and over. I don't just teach kata, but also how to deal with it, what to do with it. You should become more than you are, make your life bigger. Find this in your kata. Why don't you become more? Your kata can be tight, small, make it big and relaxed.

When I teach a seminar, my battle is to try to get people to change, they listen, then go away and don't change. We struggle with change.

All experience is there for us to learn from. Did you fail a grading? That means you must change, if we don't, we have wasted that chance to change. We may start to complain about the judges or other things. Negativity is easy but the positive makes things better. My path to Budo was hard, but I learned, so now I can teach others to learn. Hardship has value, it can be positive. Negativity has little use.

Using the sword when moving back during a kata, it is easy to get back on the heels. When you are moving forward your heel is up, when you move back you must keep your heel up as well. Then when you move either back or forward it is easy. The sword may be moving back but can still strike.

Observe what you are doing. We seem to like looking without seeing, this is a big problem in Iai, don't make it a problem in jōdō.

Don't let small things build up to make the form less natural. Use the checking process constantly, to make a more natural form. You don't need power to use the jo. We should relax, we should be smooth, but also sharp. How can we become sharp?

Let's look at Tsuki Zue. What if I walk in and hit with no pause? How does that change things? When sword walks in and pauses it becomes obvious when he will hit. That sets up a pre-designated "*when*". This is boring, it doesn't feel like you are standing on the edge of a cliff.

I am asking that you observe what you are doing. I see glimpses in you, workings in your subconscious that are good, but mostly you are trapped by the kata. Mostly it is in your brain and that's a problem.

For example, in kendo if I think "*I will hit men*", at that exact point I get hit. So, the brain is a problem. I am 5th dan in Kendo, not very accomplished but I like to practice one-hit Kendo.

In both iai and jō you should engage your opponent, but try not to give away your action. Try to retain an element of surprise. Let's look at ***Ushiro Zue***, here we walk together, now I turn around. Do you see how I turned around with surprise? This was exciting. This doesn't happen when you do clockwork kata.

Question: Can you change the kata? I just did it, of course you can change the kata.

Mostly we work face to face, you must be sensitive to work the other way around. Here we walk side by side, I turn around and go the other way, what happens? I can also turn and strike sword on the leg with my jō as I do so. This is an example of the "*anticipation, expectation problem*". If you expect something to happen, you do something else.

The jō curriculum is wide, iai is vertical, remember this. When we are side by side we can't strike yes? Observe the situation and then turn around, oh, I hit the leg.

All kata are, is observation with/within a pre-programmed movement. Can you do free-form jōdō? Koryu is the introduction to free-form practice. I once had a student come into my English class and say "*I want to do free conversation*" I sat silent and waited for him to speak, after a long time he said "*free conversation is very difficult!*"

Let's look at some koryu, what kata do you want to try? We will examine ***Kasa no Shita*** and ***Hoso Michi***.

Kasa no Shita is a contained form, you must work around teki, and with him. Hoso Michi presents the problem of having little freedom to move.

Kasa no Shita

Rei. Jō moves to kamae and sword follows. When we meet teki we must respond correctly to take awase.

At the first move of the kata the jō will bend. What is the best angle for the jo? Find this.

Sword moves back and jō follows. Sword must step sideways to cut the neck. At this point jō moves into the void left by sword and hits the target.

There is a nice word for the effect of this kata on sword, it is "*discombobulation*". You discombobulate teki.

The rest is zanshin and a natural movement. On osame you should project the jō into the space between you.

When you take kamae, you should only move one hand-width on the jo. On the sword side I learned koryu using seigan no kamae, chudan is OK. My kamae is a little higher, a little more expressive.

The pressure of the sword cut to the neck will affect the angle of the ear strike from the jo.

Osame is pressure, keep that pressure on through the movement. In koryu we must make teki do what we want them to do.

On the first strike, project force directly down the jo, take everything out of his attack when he attacks. When you move in to jam his body, take his balance and keep it. The jō position means we are guarded from his sword. Guard all the way through the move as sword tries to strike by moving aside.

Hoso Michi

This is what I call "**military stick kamae**" the jō is like a rifle on your shoulder. This is a narrow corridor; some describe it as being on the path between rice paddies.

The jō makes a large movement to hit the head. Sword usually avoids the strike in such a way that there is contact on the sword hilt. Sword draws with seme and then cuts.

Jo, without falling into the rice paddy, strikes the wrist.

Both sword and jō face the same fact, they both deal with the same space. Sword tries to cut the body but jō cuts as well.

The sword must not be "*on automatic*". Jō must observe, not move too soon, not too late. If there is a gap, sword will cut. There must be a seamless movement of the jō so that sword can't cut.

On the kaeshi tsuki movement the footwork is as I showed you. Keiko means practice, **Renshi** means to polish what you learned by practice.

Shall we do one kata from Chudan to finish?

Let's do the alternate version of Ushiro Zue? Jō moves into position, they start to walk with different feet. On the second step sword pushes.

Jō stays on the line, then avoids the cut. If sword is too close for the next movement, switch your feet to hit the ankle (remember what happens if you strike this point, don't accidentally hit it). Sword takes a small step to cut, jō avoids this and strikes in a true ai uchi.

This kata is about a short, reduced space, it shows something I heard this weekend, it shows "*misplaced volume*". It is tight so you must use small movements.

You have three chances.

[This completes the notes, in ten parts, from this seminar. I would like to thank Mansfield Sensei for teaching us through the three days of the seminar. I hope that all who attended achieved some change. We hope to see Sensei back again in May of 2019. Please note that all mistakes and mis-interpretations through these notes are strictly my own - Kim Taylor]



Dates of Original Publication:

- Introduction and the Reality of Iai, was first published as Thus I Heard on Nov 23rd, 2018.
- Make A Change If You Are Trying; The ZNKR Kata 1-4, was first published as Thus I Heard 2 on Nov 24th, 2018.
- Expansion and Contraction; The ZNKR Kata 4-5 was first published as Thus I Heard 3 on Nov 26th, 2018.
- Iai is Chaos...and is Just Too Much Fun: The ZNKR Iai Kata 6-12 was first published as Thus I Heard 4 on Nov 28th, 2018.
- Conversations: ZNKR Jōdō Kata 1-3 was first published as Thus I Heard 5 on Nov 29th, 2018.
- Beat the Hell Out of the Other Guy; ZNKR Jōdō Kata 4-6 was first published as Thus I Heard 6 on Nov 30th, 2018.
- Dialogue; ZNKR Jōdō Kata 7-9 was first published as Thus I Heard 7 on Dec 1st, 2018.
- 30 cm of Extra Timing; ZNKR Jōdō Kata 10 & 11 was first published as Thus I Heard 8 on Dec 2nd, 2018
- Does your technique work? ZNKR Jōdō Kata 12 was first published as Thus I Heard 9 on Dec 3rd, 2018
- Attenuation was first published Dec 4th 2015 and Reposted Dec 4th, 2018.
- Discombobulation was first published as Thus I Heard 10 on Dec 4th, 2018

About the Author:

Kim Taylor holds Renshi seven dan rank in Iaido and sixth dan rank in Jodo from the Canadian Kendo Federation. He is the chief instructor of the *Sei Do Kai* and a member of the **CKF Iaido** grading committee, chief examiner of the **CKF Jodo section**.

Along the way he has been president of the *Ontario Kendo Federation*, associate editor of the [Journal of Asian Martial Arts](#), and editor of *The Iaido Newsletter*, a "little publication that could" which has gone from a local club newsletter to an internationally-distributed monthly paper and finally to an internet journal named The Iaido Journal. He publishes the *Electronic Journals of Martial Arts and Sciences*.

He also published the *Journal of Japanese Sword Arts*. This journal is now out of publication, but if you would like to purchase back issues of the Journal of Japanese Sword Arts on paper (they've got cartoons!), [click the link](#).

Kim is the author of several books and videos as well as almost daily essays concerning the sword and is also the "owner" of the Iaido-I mailing list. You can purchase several of the books and videos at the [sdksupplies website](#).

Kim teaches: ZNKR Iaido, Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu Iaido, Hosoda Ryu Iai, Keshi Ryu Iai, Kage Ryu, Niten Ichiryu, ZNKR Jodo, Shindo Muso Ryu Jodo, Uchida Ryu Tanjo, Shinto Ryu, and occasionally Aikido as well as the Gryphon Claws self-defence course. You will note that most of these arts are very similar and Kim has been practicing since 1980.

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About the Editor:

Paul 'Batman' O'Brien, Sandan (3rd Dan) is an instructor of Musō Jikiden Eishin-ryū (無双直伝英信流) under the International Division of the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai, Sandan (3rd Dan) in ZNKR Iaido, and Sandan (3rd Dan) in ZNKR Jodo. O'Brien is a direct Iaido student of Peter West, 7th Dan Kyoshi, studying the Harasuke-ha line of MJER under the direction of Oshita Masakazu Sensei, 8th Dan Kyoshi. Within Jodo O'Brien is a direct student of Elena West, 5th Dan Jodo, studying under the direction of Ueda Kayako Sensei, 8th Dan. He began his study of Niten Ichi Ryū in 2011 and has received direct instruction from Kajiya Soke, (12th headmaster of Hyoho Niten Ichi Ryū) from 2014 on.

O'Brien is a two-time medallist in Iaido, has represented Ireland at the European Iaido Championships and received the Fighting Spirit Award from Oshita Masakazu Sensei at the Masamune Taikai in 2015.

O'Brien is an author and columnist for Irish Fighter Magazine and has been writing on the martial arts and other topics for over 10 years.

He has published a number of works on martial arts, koryu bujutsu and traditional medicine including:

- Tanren: The Method of Samurai Strength
- Knife Combat & Defence
- Samurai Nutrition Vols 1&2
- Living the Warrior's Way, The Secrets of Samurai Philosophy Vols 1&2.

These are available on his website; way-of-the-samurai.com.

To train with O'Brien he can be contacted through <http://kenjutsu.ie>

Photo's kindly provided by Hasham Toor.

Additional Works by Taylor Sensei

For those who wish to purchase other manuals, you can find them at <http://sdksupplies.com/> where they include:

Niten Ichi Ryu: The Sword Of Musashi Miyamoto

8x11" 100 pgs. Kim Taylor.
\$36 (includes shipping in North America)

This book contains all the kata from the three levels of the Niten Ichi-ryu, long vs long sword, short vs long sword and "long and short" vs long sword. There are quick descriptions, detailed descriptions and over 200 illustrations. The book is cerlox bound for easy opening and use. Also included is a detailed history of Musashi, genealogy tables, and an interview with Sei Do Kai instructor Matsuo Haruna.

The Little Book Of Jodo (I)

8x11" 140 pgs. Eric Tribe and Kim Taylor
\$48 (includes shipping in North America)
The Little Book of Jodo covers the ZNKR seitei jo. With over 500 black and white photos it covers the kihon tandoku (solo exercise), kihon sotai (partner basics exercise) and the kata (partner applications).

IAIDO MANUALS

These Manuals are cerlox bound for ease of use while training. Kata are presented by a quick key reminder, general instructions on the physical movements, and then advanced notes including hints on movement and explanations of meaning. Each kata has two illustration sets, one showing the purpose of the kata and one detailing the movements from the front, and from the side.

BBI-1 Kim's Big Book Of Iaido (I): The Manual

8X11" 108 pgs. Kim Taylor:
\$36 (includes shipping in North America)
Pronunciation guide, History of Japanese Sword, Sword schools and Kendo, Iai ranking requirements, List of waza names, Care and use of equipment, Etiquette, Sword basics, stances, suburi, Glossary of terms.

This book is not restricted to Iaido practice but forms a good general introduction to Japanese sword training.

BBI-2 Kim's Big Book Of Iaido (II): Seitei Gata (Zen Ken Ren Iai)

8x11" 100 pgs. Kim Taylor
\$36 (includes shipping in North America)

All Japan Kendo Federation (ZNKR) Iaido forms (Seitei Gata Iai): History of Seitei Gata Iai, Forms 1-10, Quick Key, General Instructions and Advanced Notes. Lavishly illustrated. One of the easiest books to learn from.

BBI-3 Kim's Big Book Of Iaido (III): Omori Ryu

8x11" 94 pgs. Kim Taylor
\$36 (includes shipping in North America)

Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu Seiza no bu (Omori Ryu): History of Omori Ryu, Forms 1-11, Quick Key, General Instructions and Advanced Notes. Notes on All Japan Iaido Federation practice are also included. Illustrated.

BBI-4 Kim's Big Book Of Iaido (IV): Eishin Ryu

8x11" 127 pgs. Kim Taylor
\$36 (includes shipping in North America)

Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu Tate Hiza no bu. (Eishin Ryu): Detailed genealogy and history of Iai and other sword schools, Forms 1-10 and Haya Nuki (quick practice).

BBI-5 Kim's Big Book Of Iaido (V): Oku Iai

8x11" 100 pgs. Kim Taylor
\$36 (includes shipping in North America)

Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu Oku Iai. Forms 1-8 Oku Iai Zawaza (Tate Hiza no Bu), Forms 110 Oku Iai Tachi Waza (standing forms) and Oku Iai Itomagoi 1-3 (Seiza no Bu). Six older practice forms not contained in the school curriculum are also included in this volume.

The Riai of Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu: The Meaning of the Kata

This is an interpretation from Kim Taylor on the meaning of the Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu Iaido kata, the way they are arranged in the school and what each level of training teaches the student. This eBook is intended for those who are advanced students in the art who wish to begin moving deeper into their study.

\$12 epub format

TIN/JJSA collected issues

Here is the modern history of Japanese sword in the west, collected in one place. The laido Newsletter and its successor the Journal of Japanese Sword Arts ran from 1989 to 2001 when the print versions were retired and the Electronic Journals of Martial Arts and Sciences EJMAS.com took over. TIN/JJSA Collected are cerlox bound 8.5 x 11 inch manuals of approximately 100 pages each. (includes shipping in North America)

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15	110-112	Sept 00-Apr 01 \$25

All 15 volumes 1-112 Nov 89-Apr 01 \$280

Hammerterz Forum collected issues

Hammerterz Forum ran from 1994 to 1999 and remains the premier journal of western sword arts. While most of the world was getting their information from Hollywood, editor Christoph Amberger was publishing articles and information that would eventually spark and anchor a massive research boom in European swordsmanship. Amberger not only researched the subject, he is one of the very few people I'm aware of who has actually participated in duels with "*sharps*". As a member of two of the most respected duelling fraternities in Germany he fought seven *Mensuren* with the bell-guard and basket-hilt *Schläger* between 1985 and 1987.

Chris has given SDKsupplies permission to collect and offer Hammerterz Forum to those who were not fortunate enough to obtain the journal as it was published. This is "*must have*" information for any serious student of the sword and SDKsupplies is extremely pleased to be able to provide it once again. Some reprinted articles from HF can be seen at The Journal of Western Martial Arts.

Hammerterz Forum Collected is 8x10 inches, and cerlox bound. It is 364 pages covering the Summer of 1994 to the Fall of 1999, the complete print run.
\$95 (includes shipping in North America)

OTHER BOOKS

A Student's Guide to Self-Defence: A Discussion of Practical Self Protection

8.5 x 11" 150 pages by Kim Taylor
Cerlox bound to lay flat
\$36 includes shipping in North America

This book is the manual for the University of Guelph "Gryphon Claws" women's self defence course taught since 1987 by Kim Taylor. The book was written in 1992 and contains material relevant to courses dealing with self defence and sexual assault of University age adults. This book contains the material from both free ebooks below and more.

Resisting Sexual Assault: A manual of resistance strategies for escaping a sexual assault

8.5 x 11" 130 pages by Kim Taylor
Cerlox bound to lay flat
\$36 includes shipping in North America

This book contains the academic research upon which the U.G "Gryphon Claws" women's self defence course was based. The book was written in 1992 but the research was monitored for another 15 years and no changes were noted which led us to change our conclusions for the course.

Songs Of The Sword

5x8" 100 pgs. by Kim Taylor
\$17 (includes shipping in North America)

Philosophy of sword practice in sayings and poetry. Readers must assemble the book before reading it. Assembly instructions are included.

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These books are in epub format. You will need an e-reader such as Calibre on your computer/tablet, or a dedicated reader such as Kobo. Firefox also has an add-on reader. If all else fails, open the file with a zip program and read the html files.

Much as I'd love to offer these eBooks for sale, they would likely not be big sellers.

I spent several years researching each book, and I believe they have a contribution to make so they are here for your use. If you figure they are worth something to you, recruit a new student to your club, try a class yourself, organize a self-defence session or buy something from this catalogue.

There's always a way to pay it back.

The Psychological Effects of Martial Arts Training

This e-book by Kim Taylor, written in 1996, is being offered to customers of SDKsupplies.com free of charge. It is a literature review of the research into, you guessed it, the psychological effects of martial arts training. For anyone who would like to say that their martial art or self-defence course does some good, download it, read it. E-pub format.

Little Pearls of Wisdom: On teaching a self defence course

Kim has taught the women's self defense course "Gryphon Claws" at the University of Guelph since 1987. This is a two-part e-book in epub format (zipped). The first part contains advice relevant to instructors of any self defense course. The second part contains common sense advice which can be given as a handout to your class. Feel free to share this book with other self defense instructors. If you like the writing style consider purchasing one of the manuals above. This is an excerpt from the hard copy of "A Student's Guide to Self-Defence: A Discussion of Practical Self Protection" above. E-pub format

A Student's Guide to Self-Defence: A Discussion of Practical Self Protection

This book is the manual for the University of Guelph "Gryphon Claws" women's self defence course taught since 1987 by Kim Taylor. The book was written in 1992 and contains material relevant to courses dealing with self defence and sexual assault of University age adults. This is an excerpt from the hard copy of "A Student's Guide to Self-Defence: A Discussion of Practical Self Protection" above. E-pub format

This free eBook was produced because I thought the hard copy self defence book had just not sold since 1994, turns out it wasn't listed on the website! So... if you want to buy the much more handy hard copy book, for instance, if you wish to teach the course, it's above. I'm also available for seminars.

Resisting Sexual Assault: A manual of resistance strategies for escaping a sexual assault

"Resisting Sexual Assault" is a manual of sexual assault prevention based on published literature. It defines the problem, gives an analysis of resistance, strategies and the aftermath of assault. Written by Kim Taylor, published by SDKsupplies.com and offered free to you here. Hardcover version is available for sale above.

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Patterns of Thought

This book of photography and poetry from Kim Taylor, has nothing at all to do with the martial arts or self defense. It contains some of Kim's fine art nude photography (nothing graphic) so don't download it if you're looking for yet another way to smack someone with a stick. The book is here because I told some folks it would be here. By the way, it's a big book, byte-wise because of the photos so be patient with your kobo as it loads. E-pub format