

Blackwater Ryu Katana Kata

This kata makes no claims to be a traditional sword kata. It is just intended as a starting point for anyone interested in learning about the katana (especially those who encounter the sword for the first in judo katas eg kime-no-kata.) It gives basic terms and techniques for katana etiquette, stances, drawing, cutting and chibari. Judoka wishing to learn more should seek out a sword master (ie a skilled practioner of iaido or kendo)

Lesson 1- getting started

Set 1 – Commencement and Concluding rei

Lesson 2 – stances, targets, drawing and re-sheathing

Set 2- drawing, stances and re-sheathing

Lesson 3 – Katana tachi-waza – strikes to an opponent in front

Set 3 - attacks to the front

Lesson 4

Set 4 –blocking techniques when attacked from the front

Lesson 5 – Katana tachi-waza –attacking

Set 5 – attacks to multiple assailants to front and rear

Lesson 6 – Katana Blocking

Set 6 – High and Low blocks and attacks

Lesson 7– Katana tachi-waza –attack at different angles

Set 7 – variations on attacks to the front

Lesson 8 - using the katana when kneeling-icludes formal rei

Set 8 - drawing, using and re-sheathing the katana when kneeling

Lesson 1- getting started

1. Katana etiquette. The sword must always be treated with respect.
 - When not in use carry it sheathed and in your right hand.
 - Always rei to your sword before commencing training, just as you would rei to any partner.
2. Naming the parts of the katana – each part of the sword has its own descriptive name- the following will get you started. (for more complete glossary see appendix 1)

Saya	scabbard	Tsuka	hilt
Sageo	The cord	Tsuba	guard
Kojira	Tip of saya	Mi	blade
kurigata	Gap through which sageo passes		

3. Holding the tsuka- remember to keep your wrist and little fingers strong but relaxed.
4. Placing the sword in the obi – use a figure of 8 movement.
5. Basic Stances – flexed knees, and relaxed shoulders; strength is generated from the hara.

At all times maintain zanshin, do not watch the blade but focus on an imaginary opponent		
Shizen-hontei	Feet at shoulder width apart	Weight is evenly distributed
migi Shizen-hontei	Right foot forward	Weight is evenly distributed
Hidari Shizen-hontei	Left foot forward	Weight is evenly distributed

Set 1 – Basic Rei when commencing and finishing katana session.

COMMENCING REI		
1	Holding the sword in the right hand (non-aggressive)	The kurigata and sageo are towards your body, blade upwards.
2	Rei as you step onto the mat,	If appropriate face joseki and rei
3	Bring the sword vertical In front of you	Blade facing you, Bring katana to horizontal supporting kojira in L-palm,
	Rei to sword	L-hand brings kojira to the belt goes to belt
4	Use the L-thumb to separate the two layers of the belt	Place kojira between the layers, then using fingers of L-hand and small circular motion of katana thread the saya securely into position
5	Hook sageo over saya	Hold saya and tsuba with the L-hand
CONCLUDING REI		
1	standing near edge of mat	Step back with L-foot
2	Using R-hand withdraw obi from gi, L-hand is on belt as guide for saya	As step back with R-foot, Bring sword vertically in front of you, blade towards you. R- hand holding top of saya with thumb holding tsuba
3	Bring L-hand to kurigata	Slide L-hand down saya straightening sageo as bring sword to horizontal. Support kojira with L-palm and tsuba with R-palm
4	Rei to the sword	maintaining grip on saya and tsuba with R-hand
5	Return sword to vertical,	using thumb to keep tsuba secure hold katana to your R-side, blade upwards
6	If appropriate rei to joseki	step to edge of mat, (if appropriate Rei to joseki), rei to mat

Lesson 2 – stances, targets, drawing and re-sheathing

1. The Japanese sword slices, unlike the Western broadsword which hacks. This slicing action should not stop at the target but intention is smooth continuous arc – unless stopped by bone, the effectiveness is determined by the spirit of the sword and swordsman.
1. Releasing the katana from the saya – the thumb of the L-hand pushes against the tsuba.

2. Sword Parts

Hi	Blood groove	
ha	Cutting edge	
kissaki	Tip of sword	

3. Basic actions

STANCES	STANDING IN MIGI SHIZEN-HONTEI
Shomen	Tsuka is raised above the forehead, held high so you can see under the tsuka Sword is angled 45 to rear, a warning position
Jodan	Kissaki points to area between the eyes
Chudan	Kissaki points to the chest
Gedan	Kissaki [points to the stomach(or knee)
Chibari	Methods of removing blood from the blade before re-sheathing

ATTACKS	STANCE/POSTURE - MIGI SHIZEN-HONTEI	
Tsuki	Thrust to opponents throat or diaphragm	
Kirioshi	Vertical downward cut	Through the centre of the forehead
Ichimonji	Leaning forward, keeping mi horizontal to make cut but using a horizontal circular movement	A straight horizontal cut Just below the opponents rib cage

Set 2- drawing, stances and re-sheathing (can be shown as beginner's form)

1	REI. L-hand holding saya and belt. R-hand takes tsuka	Use L-thumb to push tsuba as turning saya horizontal	and stepping forward with R-foot and leaning forward partially withdraw mi (L-hand maintains grip on saya) and strike at the diaphragm with the sword hilt (tsuki)
2	Stepping forward with L-foot	As Re-sheath sword, claiming opponent's space.	
3	Step back R then L-foot, pause	Then stepping forward with R-foot, draw sword as leaning forward complete Ichimonji (L-hand maintains grip on saya)	
4	Using circular movement of sword, as Shuffle step back	Maintaining migi Shizen-hontei bringing Sword above head in shomen (L and R-hand holding tsuka)	
5	<i>Staying in Migi Shizen-hontei</i>	Bring sword to jodan, pause	
6		Bring sword to chudan, pause	
7		Bring sword to gedan, pause	
8	Step forward L-foot into Shizen-hontei	Pause in shomen	
9	tep forward into Migi Shizen-hontei	Show kirioshi	Vertical downward cut to head
10	Shuffle step back to withdraw blade	Stay in migi shizen-hontei and chudan	
11	L-hand keeps hold on tsuka	R-hand makes vertical fist strike to tsuka to knock blood of blade	
12	R-hand take reverse grip on tsuka, L-hand moves to saya and belt,	Turning saya horizontal re-sheath sword, as stepping forward with L-foot. (If showing as short form of kata REI, L-hand holding saya and belt, otherwise continue)	

Lesson 3 – Katana tachi-waza – attacking techniques to the front

kokutsu-dachi			
Kesagiri			
<u>Cat stance</u>			
<u>kirioshi</u>			

Set 3 – attacks to the front

1	Turning katana horizontally	Step forward with R for circular draw	To clear the front area
2	Step back with R-foot into migi kokutsu-dachi	R-hasso	Kesagiri as stepping forward with R
3	Return to cat satacne	Jodan	Kirioshi as stepping forward
4	Step back with R-foot into migi kokutsu-dachi	R-hasso	
5	Step back L	Waist cut	
6	Present L-hasso	Upward diagonal	Step forward with L
7	Present R-hasso, with R-foot back	Upward diagonal	Stepping forward with R-foot as
8	L-hasso then step back R	Downward diagonal	Into R-hasso
9	Stepping forward with R	Downward diagonal	
10	Simple chigari	L hand holding saya	– fingers wipe blood off mi as resheath

Lesson 4 – Katana tachi-waza – blocking/countering techniques

Stances, cuts, kicks and locks			
Cat Stance	Weight on rear foot	Front foot raised on toes for balance	
Hasso	Right fist by right ear	Elbow high	Ha facing forwards
	Or R-fist near L-ear	Ha facing to rear	
Kesagiri	A diagonal cut, from shoulder to hip	Either diagonally right to left or left to right	
Kote gaeshi	Wrist lock	Use tsuka to apply lock as stepping back with right	
Mae-geri-kekomi	R-front thrust kick	Kicking foot steps from behind and thrusts through. Power is generated through knee	
Sword parts			
Shinogi-gi	Blocking edge	Mune	Back edge

Set 4 – blocking techniques when attacked from the front

1	Rei -In shizen-hontei	Assume opponent has attempted to grab your sword	L-hand holding saya at belt, R-hand on tsuka
2	Step back with R-foot	Use R-hand to wind round wrist to create a wrist lock	
3	Maintaining L-thumb grip on tsuba,	let go of tsuka with R-hand	perform R–front kick to stomach
4	Step forwards into shizen-hontei	R-hand regrips tsuka, L-hand frees sword	R-hand draws sword to execute tsuki to throat
5	Shuffle-back step staying in migi shizen-hontei		Come to chudan
6	Turn to left, by stepping back with L-foot	Use both hands to block over-head strike	L-hand supports near kissaki end of mi
7	Step back r-foot to face forwards	Present sword on RH-side of head (Hasso)	Ha facing forwards
8	Step forward with R	Kesagiri slanting cut)	
9	Lean back on L	Hasso on L side	Ha facing backwards
10	Strong flick to R	To clear blood (chugiri)	
11	Resheath	Step back to Rei	

Lesson 5 – Katana tachi-waza –multiple attacks

STANCES AND CUTS		
Cross stance	Stepping behind –as if to curtsy	So you can deliver a vertical cut going upwards from groin to head
Crane stance	Standing on one leg, other knee is bent and raised off ground – as the bird	
Kokutsu-dachi	Back stance	Similar to migi or hidari shizen-hontei but weight is on back foot
Gyakukesa	Upward diagonal cut	
SWORD PARTS		
Kashira	End of tsuka	

Set 5 – attacks from the front and rear

1	From shizen-hontei	Stepping forwards with R-foot	Tsuka thrust to stomach as withdrawing mi, ha is upwards
2	Turning through 180 ⁰ (to left ¹)	Rotate ha down	Straight thrust to stomach of opponent to rear
3	Cut down as you withdraw blade	Step back into jodan	Stepping forward with R-foot, Execute kirioshi
4	Withdraw R-foot into cat stance	Sword held in R-hasso	Stepping forward with R-foot, execute kesagiri asturning through 180 ⁰ (to left)
5	Bringing L-foot back into kokutsu-dachi	Lean back into L-Hasso	Cross stance sweeping through with gyakukesa
6	Pivot through 180 ⁰ (to left)	Lean back into L-Hasso	Step forward with L-foot as execute double-handed ichimonji
7	Momentum keeps turn through 180 ⁰ (to right)	Into cat stance L-hand on saya, katana over L-shoulder	Step back R as Using R-hand for neck-cut,
8	turn to face front keeping mi horizontal on shoulder (ha to neck)	Strong downward flick to clear blood -	And resheath katana

Set 6 –blocking and attacking high and low

1	In crane stance- weith on L leg	Holding saya vertically draw upwards	To block attack from L rear quarter
2	Step forward R	As come up into shomen	kesagiri
3	Turn through 180	Into crane stance – weight on R-leg_L- hand on Kashira	Mi upwards as stab forwards
4	Step forward L then R and drop onto R-knee	L-hand under blade as stab downwards	
5	Stand as pull blade out	Change grip to reverse hold	Stab backwards to an opponent behind
6	As stepping forwards	Jerk blade down to remove blade from body	Step back L-foot as turn through 180 ⁰ , keeping blade where it is
7	Holding tsuka in L-hand	Strike with R-fist to remove blood	And sheath.

Lesson 7 – drawing, using and re-sheathing the katana when kneeling

Set 7 – Formal rei's - Commencement Rei

1	Holding the sword in the right hand (non-aggressive)	The kurigata and sageo are towards your body
2	Rei as you step onto the mat, and walk to the place of your practise	If appropriate face joseki and rei
3	Kneel down, placing the L knee first	Using the R –hand. Hold the sword by the saya vertically in front of your body, blade towards you. R-thumb hooked over tsuka.
4	Rest the kojira on the floor, bring your L-hand to the kurigata	Keeping the blade facing you lower the tsuba to the floor a. Tsuka to your right b. Sageo on top of saya c. Straighten sageo with L-hand
5	Kyoshi	In high kneeling posture Step back 2-paces,using circular motion (as if wearing a hakama) place R-knee on mat
6	Rei to sword	Raise R-knee and take two steps forward
7	Kyoshi	Place R-hand under tsuba, L-hand travels down sageo to hold the sageo against the saya Keeping the blade facing you use the R-hand raise the tsuba off the floor the Kojira remains on floor
8	Bring the sword vertical	L-hand goes to belt
9	Bring kojira to the belt	Use the L-thumb to separate the two layers of the belt, place kojira between the layers, then using fingers of L-hand and small circular motion of katana thread the saya securely into position
10	Hook sageo over saya	Stand up by stepping back onto L-foot

Concluding rei

1	From standing position	Step back with L-foot as dropping onto L-knee
2	Using R-hand withdraw obi from gi, L-hand is on belt as guide for saya	Bring sword vertically in front of you, blade towards you. R- hand holding top of saya with thumb holding tsuba
3	Place kojira on floor	Bring tsuka to floor (blade towards you) as L-hand comes to kurigata and straightens sageo
4	Kyoshi	Step back two paces, use circular motion as if wearing hakama to bring R-knee down
5	Rei to the sword	Raise R-knee, take 2 steps forward
6	Kyoshi	Place R-hand under tsuba, L-hand travels down sageo to hold cord against saya
7	With R-hand supporting tsuba	Lift sword vertically in front of you (blade towards you) then using thumb to keep tsuba secure hold katana to your R-side, blade upwards
8	Stand up by stepping back onto L-foot	If appropriate rei to joseki
9	Walk backwards to edge of mat	Rei as leaving the mat

Set 8 –shortened formal rei if only doing a short form

1	Either complete formal rei (see lesson 8)and remain kneeling or having positioned your sword in obi kneel down (full seiza), come to high kneel as	
2	Raising R-knee	As turning saya horizontal, withdraw the sword
3	As leaning forward	complete Ichimonji
4	As completing a circular movement bring	Sword to above head to jodan
5	Stepping forward with r-foot	Execute shomen Shuffle back to withdraw katana
6	L-hand keeps hold on tsuka	R-hand makes vertical fist strike to tsuka to knock blood of blade
7	R-hand take reverse grip on tsuka	L-hand moves to saya and belt, turning saya horizontal re-sheath swrod
8	Return to full seiza	Either stand by coming up to R-knee and stepping forwards or
9	Rei – to complete the 2 nd set	

Appendix 1

Bokken	Wooden (practise sword)
Cat- stance Migi or hidari	The front foot is bent with the heel off the floor, most of the weight is on the rear supporting foot
Chibari	Methods of removing blood form the blade before re-sheathing
Chudan	Standard chudan is described in as being held one fist away from the body with the bottom knuckle of the left thumb directly in front of the navel, the kensen held in the centerline, and aimed towards the throat of the opponnet
Crane stance	Standing on one leg, other knee is bent and raised off ground – as the bird
Cross stance	Stepping behind –as if to curtsy So you can deliver a vertical cut going upwards from groin to head
Gyakukesa	Upward diagonal cut
Ha	Cutting edge
Hasso	L-Hand is at mouth height and one fist away from mouth, R-hand supporting sword with elbows naturally raised. Ha points to rear sloping slightly backwards.
Hi	Blood groove
Hidari Shizen- hontei	Left foot forward Weight is evenly distributed
Iaido	Essence -‘saya no uchi’ victory whilst sword remains un-drawn practise zanshin is maintained whilst Drawing, cutting and re-sheathing
Ichimonji	A straight horizontal cut Just below the opponents rib cage Mayoko giri---side cut This cuts the opponent horizontally and is practiced entering on one side and cutting through the other.
Jodan	the sword is raised above the head with the tip (kissaki) pointing back and the blade facing up, in readiness to strike. It is the most aggressive stance of the five kendo stances
Kashira	End of tsuka
Katate	one handed
Kesagiri	A diagonal cut, from shoulder to hip Either diagonally right to left or left to right Kesa giri---downward diagonal cut This vertical cut enters at a 45-degree angle at the right side of opponent's neck and travels through his torso, exiting above his left hip. It can also be executed from left to right.
Kiriagi	---upward cut The opposite of kesa giri, it travels upward, from the hip to the opposite side of the neck
Kirioshi (kiritsuke)	Kirioshi---downward straight cut This is a vertical straight-down cut to the top of the skull. When practicing in the air, students follow through to the abdomen or knees. While it is unlikely that a samurai could cut through the skull and armor into the torso, the mental intent is to cut through the target.

Kojira	Tip of saya
kokutsu-dachi	
Kokutsu-dachi	Back stance Similar to migi or hidari shizen-hontei but weight is on back foot
Kote gaeshi	Wrist lock Use tsuka to apply lock as stepping back with right
Kurigata	Gap through which sageo passes
Mae-geri-kekomi	R-front thrust kick Kicking foot steps from behind and thrusts through. Power is generated through knee
Mi	Blade
migi Shizen-hontei	Right foot forward Weight is evenly distributed
Mikituke	Drawing the blade
Mune	Back edge
Noto	Re-sheathing the sword
Nukitsuke(nukiuchi)	First strike – if effective kirioshi may not be necessary
Sageo	The cord
Saya	scabbard
Shin-ken	Real blade as opposed to bokken
Shinogi-gi	Blocking edge
Shizen-hontei	Feet at shoulder width apart Weight is evenly distributed
Shomen	Vertical downward cut Through the centre of the forehead
Tsuba	guard
Tsuka	hilt
Zanshin	Relaxed state of awareness

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Offline

Re: Sword Cutting names

You can get a sense of what the names mean by breaking down the Japanese vocabulary:

sho = front

men = head

uchi = strike

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So, for example, *shomen uchi* is a strike at the front of your opponent's head.

hidari = left

migi = right

A *kesa* is a sash or stole worn by monks, extending from the left shoulder to the right hip. It is used in a metaphorical context here, to indicate a diagonal line from the shoulder to the hip.

giri = cut

ichimonji = a horizontal line

I'm not sure about *joho*, but it is often attached to the beginning of words to indicate "upward".

age = rising

Hope that helps

