

Obukan Kendo Club

Portland, Oregon

A 501(c)(3) Non-profit Organization Dedicated to the Promotion of Japanese Fencing.

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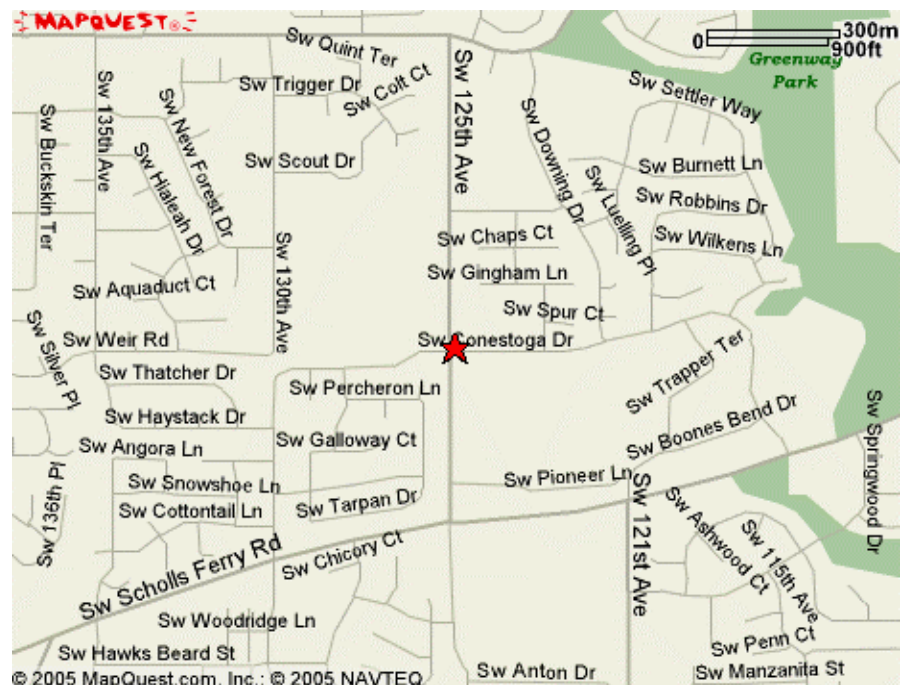


Kamei Sensei Visit and Seminar

As we mentioned last month, Kamei-sensei (Hanshi Hachidan) and a group of 16 other sensei and yudansha from Japan are coming to visit Portland, attend Obukan practices and hold a two-day seminar. The seminar will be held on Saturday March 26th and Sunday March 27th at the Conestoga Recreation Center in Beaverton, Oregon (15 minutes west of Portland). The seminar will run from 2pm - 5 pm on Saturday and from 10:30am - 3:30pm on Sunday. The seminar is open to all members of the PNKF, (juniors are free) but space is limited, and it is necessary for all participants to sign up beforehand to attend. Keith Fitz-Gerald has created an online sign-up form that handles that task and collection of the fees quite nicely from the <http://www.obukan.com> website. This is a *very rare* opportunity to practice with, and learn from some of the most advanced practitioners of Kendo ever to visit the west coast of North America, please don't miss out! **Please see the Obukan website for more details and to sign up.**

Obukan is Moving!

As many of you are hopefully aware, Obukan dojo is saying farewell to it's home of many years – the Greenburg Jazzercise facility. As of Wednesday, March 30, we will be practicing at the Conestoga Recreation Center, located at 9985 SW 125th Ave, in Beaverton. It's approximately 2 miles away from the current dojo location, easy to reach from the 217 freeway, take the Sholls Ferry exit west to 125th and turn right.



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This is the Way for men who want to learn my strategy:

Do not think dishonestly.
The Way is in training.
Become acquainted with every art.
Know the Ways of all professions.
Distinguish between gain and loss in worldly matters.
Develop intuitive judgment and understanding for everything.
Perceive those things which cannot be seen.
Pay attention even to trifles.
Do nothing which is of no use.
--Miyamoto Mushashi



Cultural and Other Events

A Obukan fund-raising carwash will be held soon (probably April 2nd) – watch for details. Our Senseis would like to point out that Kendo is more than just showing up for practice – you need to be an active part of the community too. Besides, these things are a lot of fun!

The Uwajimaya Sakura (Cherry Blossom) festival will happen this year on Saturday, April 30th. This year, Obukan will have a booth in addition to our usual Kendo demonstrations. Please plan ahead to attend, Uwajimaya has a long history of supporting Obukan Kendo Club, and this is one of two opportunities we have each year to help them in return!

Momokawa and Moonstone Sakery will host a demonstration of Kendo and Iaido on Father's Day, June 19th.

Japan Trip Update

At this point, most of the details regarding the Japan trip have been nailed down, the airfare and Hawaii hotel fees are paid and the participants are getting ready to go. Don't delay in getting your passports squared away – new security regulations are making this a more difficult process than it has been in the past!

Beginners' Corner – Mokuso (by Tim Shaw, Shikukai Chelmsford Wado Ryu)

"Mokuso", is the brief meditation performed at the beginning of keiko. This practice goes back hundreds of years in both China and Japan.

History: Throughout history meditation training has been acknowledged as a vital part of the training of anyone wishing to penetrate the depths of the martial arts. Many of the great masters achieved a level of superb technical mastery; their deeds are clouded by time and no doubt have been elaborated over the years. However, if only a fraction of these legends show a grain of truth, the contribution of the meditative aspects of martial arts training cannot be overestimated.

Objectives: Short term - at the beginning of a training session to compose the mind and focus on the task ahead. Long Term - to return to a state of pure thought and action untainted by ill conceived and inappropriate responses.

Training of mind and body: The mind has to command the body to enable the practitioner to reap the benefits of the practice. A settled and controlled mind as a result of prolonged correct practice can have escalating beneficial effects on the body and boost and retain supplies of vital energy. ("Chi" chin. "Ki" jap.)

Posture: Posture is the first basic principle. Correct positioning of the body centres around the spine, which must be erect, and even when straight must not feel "collapsed".

In oriental thought the human being is the conduit between what they refer to as heaven and earth (The use of the word heaven must not be confused with the Christian understanding of heaven. Heaven in eastern philosophies means, the universe, or the cosmos.)

Mokuso/meditation can be performed in a number of ways, including sitting on a chair, standing or even lying down. (Ohtsuka Sensei endorsed the practice of laying down meditation; he called it Ouchaku Zazen. However the customary way is in traditional Seiza (kneeling) position.

Seiza is convenient, as it is also the accepted way to sit while bowing or resting in the Dojo. There is practical reasoning behind this posture.

Obviously it is a position that enables the hands to remain free. It was also an economical and dignified way of sitting in a Dojo of limited space. It was also safe; if a fellow student were to fall or stumble neither party would be injured.

Hands and other considerations

Again, there are various schools of thought as to the correct positioning of the hands during Mokuso. Traditionally the position adopted is of the Zen practitioner, i.e. the hands in the lap, left hand upturned resting in the right hand. Thumbs of both hands are joined at the tip. (Some say that for women the hand position is reversed, i.e. right hand in left.) The hands must not be in a position that causes the shoulders to lift or cramp.

THE LAST WORD

(from PNKF *Kenyu*)

While in the city of Matsue in the coastal area of Izumo in 1638, the swordsman was invited to give a demonstration of his skill by Lord Matsudaira Izumo no kami Naomasa. There he defeated the most skilled sword practitioner in the entire fief in a bout in which neither man was injured. Not quite believing that this had been accomplished with such apparent ease, Lord Matsudaira himself took up a wooden sword and declared himself ready for a match. Musashi then took up two wooden swords and chased Naomasa around the area three times before driving him into a corner. The match finished, Musashi went on his way. -

--William Scott Wilson, [The Lone Samurai: The Life of Miyamoto Musashi](#).



Kendo Sites of the Month

Here are some excellent sources of Kendo information on the Internet – remember, when in doubt, *ask Sensei!*

<http://obukan.com> - Hey, that's US!

<http://wfkendo.com/> - The Emerald Coast Kendo Club. Great kata videos for study.

<http://kendo-usa.org> - Marsten-sensei's site. Among other things, probably the clearest most concise information on how to maintain your shinai out there. See the "Kendo References and how-to's" section.

<http://trussel.com/aikido/aikido3.htm>

The Way of the Wood. An Aikido master discusses bokken and The Way.

Also of vital importance is the position of the tongue. The tip of the tongue must rest on the palette just behind the top teeth. The reason for this is that the tongue acts as a connector to the cross over of two meridian channels and without the connection vital benefits of the practice will be lost.

Concentration: In Zen training the goal is to try and empty the mind to contact your true essence. Look at the floor about two metres in front of you, with eyes half closed. This prevents unnecessary visual distractions.

Breathing: Breathing is the keystone of correct practice. Over hundreds of years many techniques have been developed, but they are all based upon a series of central principles.

Correct breathing benefits the body in many ways, but first it must be recognized that our everyday breathing is hindered and restricted by a number of influences, ranging from stress and tension to poor posture.

Observe the breathing of a newborn baby or animals and it is noticeable that the breathing is primarily abdominal, while ours tends to involve the upper chest. Physiologically the diaphragm controls the breathing acting as a pump. It is diaphragm breathing that is used in Mokuso (ed.: and Kendo!).

It is no coincidence that the all-important "centre", the Saika Tanden is situated two inches below the navel. The Tanden is the reservoir of vital energy. Correct breathing charges and replenishes the store of vital energy.

All breathing must involve long, slow cycles of breath. Inhale through the nose, slowly drawing air into your lungs, but feeling as though you are drawing it down into your lower abdomen. Naturally this encourages abdominal breathing, correct use of the diaphragm and awareness of the Tanden.

Stop inhaling just before you are completely topped up. Don't push it too far, as it will cause tension in the wrong places. Retain your breath for a couple of seconds. Not too long or you will feel faint. Then slowly release the breath through your mouth, again concentrating on the use of the abdomen.

Do not force or squeeze out the last of the breath and do not hold, just allow your natural reflexive inhalation to begin the next cycle of breath.

PNKF Shinkyu Shinsa Results

A record Obukan turnout for the February Shinkyu Shinsa produced a great set of grading results, nice job everyone!

Iaido:

3rd DAN: John Hancock

1st DAN: John Morse

1st KYU: Hisakazu Kawai , Glenn Walker

3rd KYU: Christopher Merritt

Kendo:

2nd DAN: Andrew Scott

1st DAN: Sean Galloway , John Morse

2rd KYU: Tadahiro Inose , Glenn Walker

3rd KYU: Robert Hopkins , Christopher Merritt

4th KYU: Clyde Bailey , Malia Considine , James Hunter , Perry Hunter , Takayuki Iguchi , Terry Manita

5th KYU: Christina Choi , Beatrix Considine , Portia Considine , Rudiger Noppens , David Robertson , Connor Smith , Geoff Smith , Joan Smith , John-Paul Stroud .

6th KYU: Liliana Considine , Keenan Grobart , Rose Hong , Nick Peterson

7th KYU: Andreas Collins

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Portland, Oregon**

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the Promotion of Japanese Fencing.

Dojo Kun

Seek Perfection of Character

Be Faithful

Endeavor

Respect Others

Refrain from Violent
Behavior

KEIKO SCHEDULE

As of March 30th:

(current schedule holds until then)

**Conestoga Recreation and
Aquatic Center**

9985 SW 125th Avenue
Beaverton, Oregon 97008

Members will be able to enter one half
hour prior to practice times. There are
lockers and showers available

Kendo

Sun: 5:00 – 7:00 PM Gym “A”

Mon: 7:30 – 8:30 PM Room 201

Fri: 6:30 – 8:30 PM Gym “A”

Iaido

Wed: 7:30 – 9:00 PM Room 201

- AND -

Richmond Elem. School

2276 SE 41st

Portland, Oregon 97214

Kendo

Thurs: 7:15 – 8:30 PM

Credits

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PNKF Datebook

Mar 19, Highline Mudansha Taikai, Sat, 10am; all participants must be ready by
the 9:45am roll call.

Mar 25/26/27, visit of Kamei Dojo to Obukan.

Mar 25, Fri, evening practice at Obukan.

Mar 26, Sat, seminar 1-5pm at Conestoga Community Center.

Mar 27, Sun, seminar 10am-2pm, dinner 3-5pm.

Apr 2, PNKF Board, Sat, 2:30-4:30pm, Kent.

Apr 8/9/10/11, visit of Kendo Hanshi 8th Dan Ota Tadanori.

Apr 9, Sat, Seminar.

Apr 10, Sun, Seminar.

Apr 23 or 30 (TENTATIVE POSSIBLE DATES), UW Taikai.

May 7, Bellevue Junior Taikai, Sat, 10am.

May 21, PNKF Board, Sat, 9-11am, Kent.

May 21, PNKF Shinpan Seminar, Sat, 12noon-5pm, Kent.

Jun 11, PNKF Board, Sat, 2:30-4:30pm, Kent.

Aug 13, PNKF Iaido and Kendo Shinsa, Sat, 9am-4pm, Kent.

Oct 1, PNKF Board, Sat, 9-11am, Kent.

Oct 1, PNKF Shinpan Seminar, 12noon-5pm, Kent.

Nov 12, PNKF Taikai, Sat, 9:30am, Renton.

Nov 19, PNKF Board, Sat, 2-4pm, Kent.

Dec 10, Renton Taikai, Sat, report time 9am, start 9:30am, Renton

Obukan T-Shirts and Patches Available!

We have white club t-shirts available for purchase. The shirts and patches are part of our fund raising efforts to help those going on the Japan trip, as well as help to cover expenses for other activities throughout the year. They are made from high-quality materials, and are a great way to show your pride in your club!



T-Shirts are available in S, M, L and XL sizes for \$20 each.



We also have Obukan “Tsuba” patches for your keikogi – which are required if you are going to Shinsa or Taikai representing the club. Patches are \$5.