

# 竜ヶ峯道場



## Araki Mujinsai Ryu laido®

Student information.

**laido** is a martial art based on the use of the Japanese sword (*Nipponto*). Students are taught how to draw, cut, block, and many other techniques against an opponent by repeated practice of pre-determined movements called *waza*.

The purpose of learning laido is to strengthen the mind and body through the practice of techniques.

Our style of laido is called **Araki Mujinsai Ryu laido®**. It's named after the founder of the style, **Araki Mujinsai Minamoto no Hidetsuna**. He lived in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century (Sengoku era) in the Echizen province. He was very successful in military campaigns and decided to organize a complete fighting style (*Bujutsu*<sup>1</sup>) based on his battlefield experience. His disciples continued to train in his style and it was handed down from generation to generation to the modern day.

Because people today do not have time to devote to an entire *Bujutsu*, Araki Mujinsai Ryu was separated into a variety of disciplines. Today we have Araki Ryu Kenpo (staff vs. sword) in Isezaki Gunma prefecture, Araki Ryu Gunyo Kogusoku (*iai-jutsu*) in Yokohama, and our style in Hyogo prefecture.

The place where we practice is called a **Dojo**. The name came from where Buddhist monks would practice religious austerities. The Samurai adopted the name, because they felt they should be cultivating their minds and strengthening their spirit as well as practicing technique.

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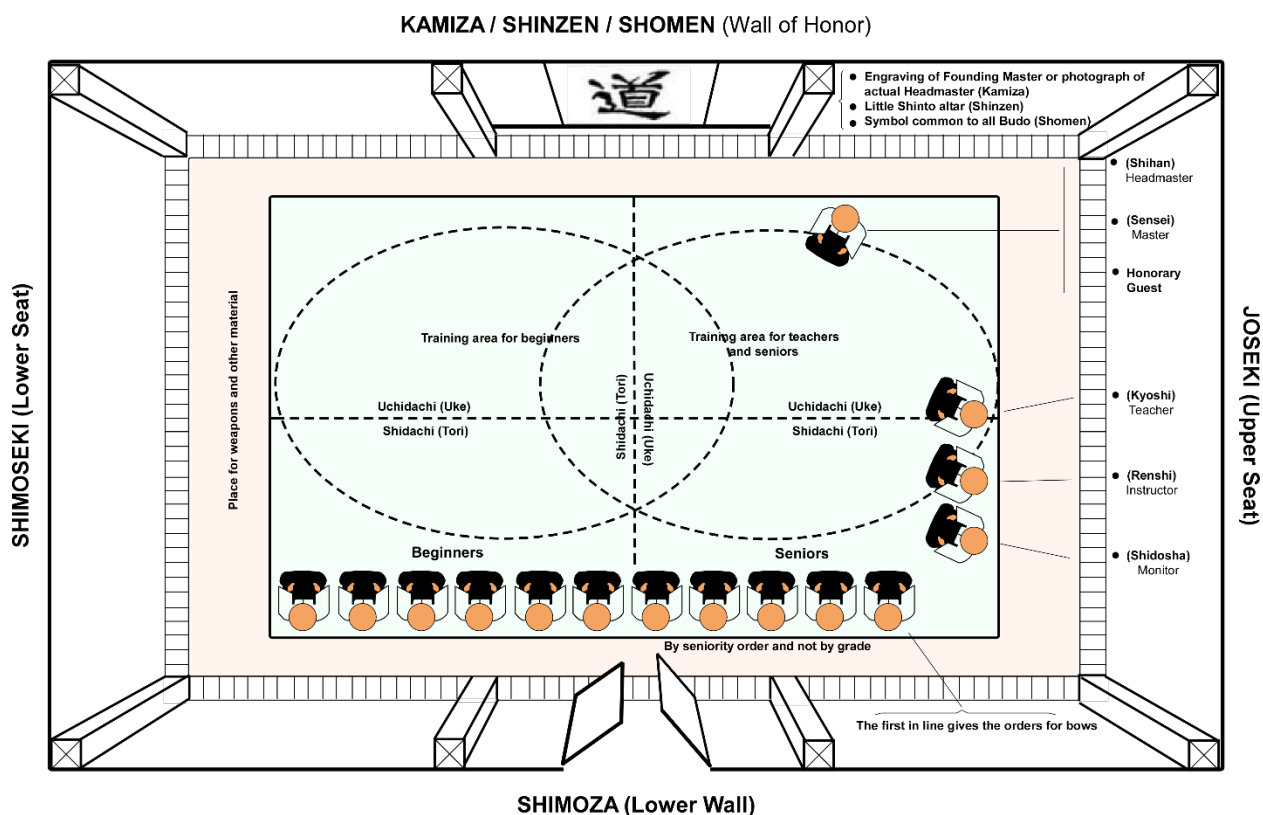
<sup>1</sup> A Bujutsu is a combat technique developed from battlefield experience.

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There are 6 important values to remember while studying laido;

1. Be serious.
2. Show powerful spirit.
3. Be earnest.
4. Be courteous.
5. Think deeply about the techniques.
6. Be safe.

Etiquette is very important in a dojo. The most important location in the dojo is called the **Kamiza**. It is the most honored area in the dojo. In our dojo, it is located at the **Kamidana** (altar). The opposite of the **Kamiza** is known as the **Shimoza**. See drawing. When starting, and ending class, students line up by rank with the most senior person being the furthest away from the door

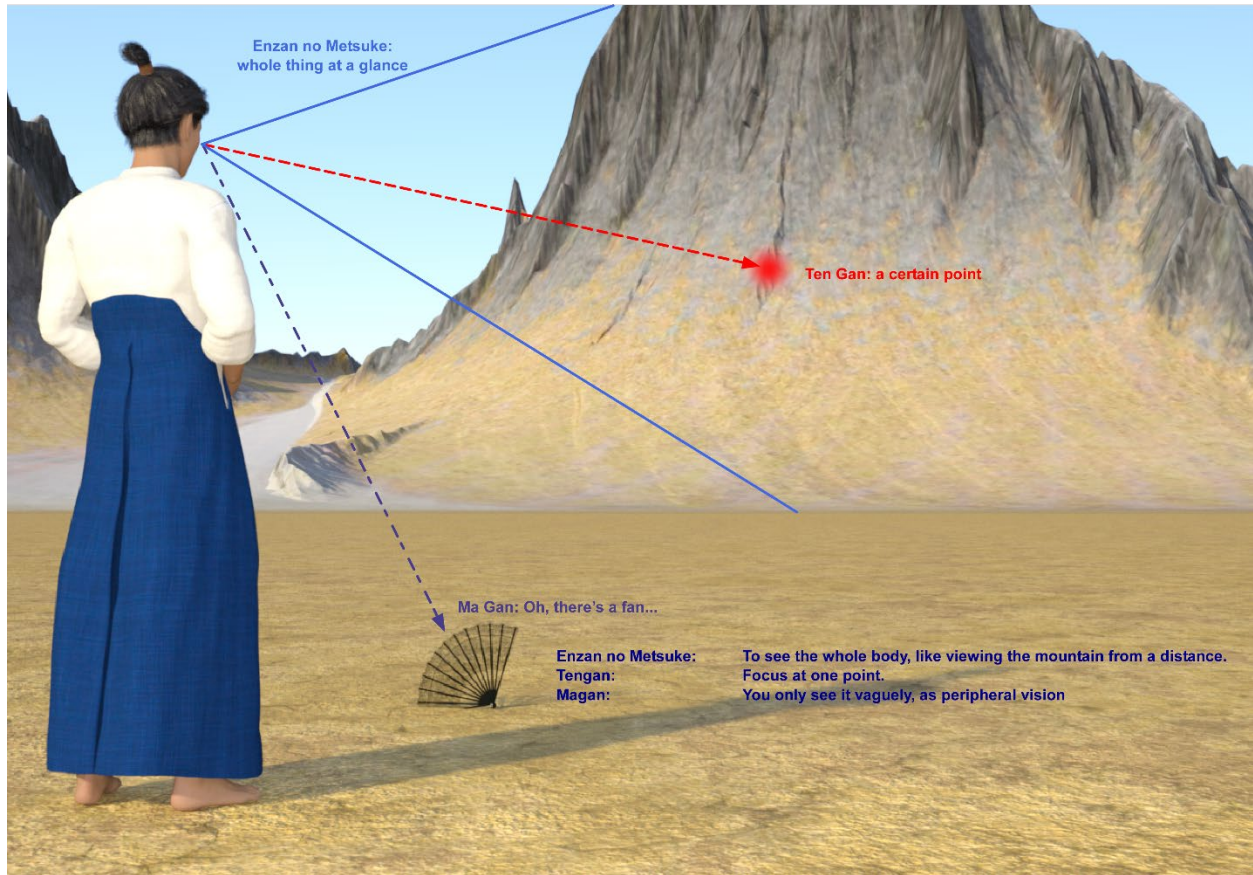


When walking in the dojo, keep the edge and tip of the sword away from others. When taking a step forward, use the leg closest to the **Shimoza**. Use the leg closest to the **Kamiza** when stepping backward.

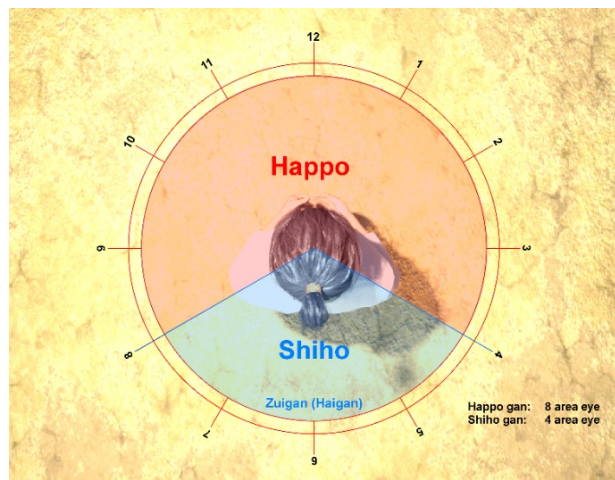
When moving your body towards an opponent, keep your torso balanced over your legs. Your body should float like a cloud (*Unkyaku*). Do not move up and down. Keep your body weight off of the leg you are moving. Start all movements by focusing on the area around your waist (**Koshi**).

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You should view your opponent like looking a mountain in the distance. Do not focus on one point (**Tengan**, lit. clairvoyant), but try to use your peripheral vision (**Magan**) so you can react more quickly.



This practice is known as **Tohyama no Metsuke**. You should think of your field of view like a clock face. If your head is in the center of the clock and you are looking forward at 12:00. Through training you should be able to see from 8:00 on your left to 4:00 on your right. This is known as **Happohgan** (eight segments). Each segment of the clock face is called **Ippou**. The remaining 4 segments are **Shihogan** and the view behind you is called **Zuigan**, or **Haigan**.



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When practicing, or facing an opponent, you must keep your mind focused. Do not let yourself be distracted. Continue to focus even after you have defeated an opponent. This is called **Zanshin**.

When facing an opponent, your body and soul should be full of a fighting spirit. You must not let your adversary invade your focus. This is known as **Kiai** in Japanese martial arts. Once you have achieved **Kiai** you voice your condition with a strong shout. This shout is known as **Kakegoe**.

Your grip on the handle of the sword is called **Tenouchi**. Use the following points to ensure good technique. Hold your right hand near the **Tsuba** (*Tsubamoto*). Hold your left hand at the end of the hilt (**tsuka gashira**). Squeeze the handle of the sword so that your wrist line up with the back of the sword. This motion is similar to how the Japanese wring out a towel (**chakin shibori**). When facing an enemy with your sword at the ready (**kamae**), grip softly and calm your mind and body.

When cutting, your right hand should push forward and your left hand should pull back. This is called **Kirete**.

When receiving (blocking) your opponent's sword, you should bend and shrink your wrist to absorb the enemy's energy. This is called **Ukete**.

When using the *Katana*, it is important to have your mind, sword and body work in unison. This is known as **Ki-ken-tai-Ichi**.

**Maai** is the distance between you and your opponent.

**Issoku itto no maai** is one step and one sword length away from the enemy. This is the ideal distance for an attack.

When the opponent is too far away to strike, it is called **Tooma**.

Distances closer than a sword length away are called **Chikama**.

**Budo** is a philosophy of how one must act in battle. *Budo* is used not only to improve *Bujutsu*, but to learn how to act in our daily lives. *Budo* was a matter of life and death for the Samurai.

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## Preparing for class

### What to wear?

For your first few classes use loosely fitting clothing, like sweat pants, and a T-shirt. Knee protection can be useful if you're not used to sitting in seiza. An obi can be borrowed from the dojo on a first-come-first-serve basis (usually not a problem). During practice the dojo can borrow you a boken (wooden practice sword) for your first classes, again on a first-come-first-serve basis. A iaito (metal practice sword) can also be borrowed from the dojo during practice.

### What next?

Once you feel comfortable enough after a few practices it may be a good idea to invest some money into an obi (Kaku Obi) and practice sword (Boken with Saya, or Iaito). That way you can practice at home, and you have your own equipment to practice with in the dojo.

Next you may want to purchase a Gi (jacket) and Hakama (pleated pants) for Iaido. Keep in mind that hakama for aikido are not good for Iaido. The colors that our style allows for Gi and/or Hakama: Black or Navy. For practicing a white Gi is also allowed. Other bright colors (e.g. red, yellow) are discouraged.

Striped hakama and kimono style Gi (Montsuki) are only allowed for advanced students (Sho-Dan and up). Likewise, the wearing of Mon's is only allowed for advanced students.

### Testing?

Once every year an opportunity for testing and advancement in rank is possible. Tests are taken by Soke, or one of his higher-ranking Sensei. When testing the Gi, Obi, and Hakama must be clean and worn correctly. Colors as above, i.e. black or navy. No other colors are allowed! Jewelry, including glasses must be removed. Tattoos must be covered as much as possible. Your first test will be for Go-Kyu (5<sup>th</sup> kyu) and next tests go from Yon (4) to San (3), to Ni (2) and Ikkyu (1), followed by Sho-Dan, Ni-Dan etc. Soke has the privilege to promote an exceptional student to a rank higher than he/she tested for. Obviously, this cannot be requested, nor guaranteed!

### Where to buy?

There are many sites where one can buy Iaido equipment. Some examples:

[www.tozando.com](http://www.tozando.com) , [www.e-bogu.com](http://www.e-bogu.com) , [www.budo-aoi.com](http://www.budo-aoi.com)

Be careful buying cheap stuff. Especially Japanese swords that are cheap knock-off blades are discouraged. They can be dangerous for you and the people around you. A blade from an unknown vendor must first be inspected by Sensei, before its use is allowed in the dojo. Cheap clothing is usually not an issue but bear in mind that you probably have to replace them sooner than clothing coming from the above mentioned sites.

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## Class Sequence

A class has the following sequence:

- Stretching
  - Meditation (Mokusou)
- Opening Rei
- Warm up with practice cutting
- Practicing waza
- Closing Rei
- Sword cleaning

## Stretching

Under guidance of Sensei or Senpai the students stretch various parts of the body to enable the practice of laido. Especially thigh muscles (for seiza), wrists (for cutting), and lower back are typically addressed.

## Meditation (Mokusou)

At the end of the stretching everyone is told to sit in seiza.

To sit seiza-style: From standing straight, heels together, lower yourself and bring your left knee on the floor, followed by the right knee. The ankles are turned outward as the tops of the feet (first left, then right) are lowered so that, in a slight "V" shape, the tops of the feet are flat on the floor. and the buttocks are finally lowered all the way down. The hands are placed palm down on the upper thighs with the fingers close together. The back is kept straight, though not unnaturally stiff. Traditionally, women sit with the knees together while men separate them slightly (~1 fist apart). Stepping into and out of seiza is mindfully performed.

With hakama first place the thumb of both hands inside the side openings. Grab the front part of the hakama with the fingers, creating a fist facing forward. This lifts the bottom of the hakama just enough to sit down without stepping on the hakama. Sit in seiza as described above.

Sensei/Senpai requests “**Mokusou**”. Place the right hands in front of your navel with the palm facing up, then place the left hand on top of the right hand with the palm facing up, the thumbs touching each other, thus creating an opening.

Slowly (inaudible) inhale from the abdomen through the nose and exhale from the mouth. Focus on your breathing, focus on your training, and try to clear your mind.

At “**Mokusou-Yame**”, place your hands back on the thighs, and sit straight. Standup and take a practice sword from the sword rack. Keep in mind that most students keep their sword in the rack, and that those are personal properties. In case you don’t know which one to pick, ask!

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## Opening Rei

At the start of the class the Senpai (oldest student present) requests all students to line up. This line up is according to rank. Lowest ranks are closest to the door highest ranking students are furthest away from the door, with the Senpai at the far end. The sword is carried out of the Obi in the left hand (cutting side up) at Obi level, and the right hand is on the Obi.

The Senpai will say, " **Seiza!**", at which the students and Sensei all sit down in seiza.

Following Sensei, the students slide the sword to their right and place the sword with the *kojiri* ~45 degree to their right front and the cutting edge pointed back.

The sword is then placed flat on the floor with the cutting edge towards the student and the *tsuka* to the left in front of the student. The loose ends of the *sageo* should be in line with the sword.

Once done the students sit up straight in seiza, with their hands on their legs (fingers closed). The knees should be one fist apart.

Sensei will turn around to face the Kamiza (Shinzen)

The Senpai will say, " **Shinzen-ni, Rei!**". All bow to the Kamiza: Left hand is placed in front on the floor, with the thumb-index finger open. Then the right hand is placed on the floor, both index fingers and thumbs touch, thus creating a triangle in between the hands. This is immediately followed by a bow from the waist, keeping the back straight. The bow is almost 90 degrees. This is done twice, followed by two claps on the hands, and then another bow.

When done, everyone sits up straight. Sensei will turn to face the students.

The Senpai will say, " **Sensei-ni, Rei!**" A similar bow as described before is started. At the lowest point of the bow, the students will say, "O-ne-Gai-Shi-Masu!<sup>2</sup>" and rise back to seiza.

Following Sensei, the students inspect their sword by moving their hands forward above the sword and waving their left hand to the left, right hand to the right.

Then place the left hand on the obi and grab the sword with the right hand from the top (the thumb on the tsuba, the rest holding the saya).

Lift the sword up with the kojiri touching the floor and place it in front. Move the left hand toward left side and the middle of the saya. With a flat hand wipe down to the kojiri and grab the sword with the left hand at the kojiri.

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<sup>2</sup> "**Onegai shimasu**" is a hard phrase to directly translate to English. In Japanese culture, "onegai shimasu" is used in many different situations. The basic connotation is the feeling of exchanging "good will" towards the "future" of the two meeting parties. Another connotation is "please" as in, "please let me train with you." It's an entreaty often used in asking the other person to teach you, and that you are ready to accept the other person's teaching.

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While holding the sword this way, move the left hand back to the left of the body at obi height, and insert the sword into the obi. Make sure that there is one layer of the obi between the body and the sword, the other two layers are on top of the sword.

Push the sword through the obi, until the tsuba is in front of the body (one fist from the navel). Once the sword is at the correct position, sit back in seiza and wait for everyone to finish.

Following Sensei, stand up. Place your feet in such a way that the heels touch and the toes point to ~ 45 degrees left and right. Place your left hand on the saya with the thumb holding the tsuba. The right hand should be on the obi. We are now ready for laido practice!

## Warm up with practice cutting

Under guidance of Sensei or Senpai several standard motions are practiced. Usually they are full cuts, horizontal (drawing) cuts, chiburi, etc. Attention should be given to correct grip (**te-no-uchi**), proper technique while cutting, and finishing position. Powerful cuts are discouraged, it's proper technique that is most important.

## Practicing Waza

Depending on the level of the student all waza are practiced by the students. New waza will be taught by a ranking member or Sensei himself depending on the proficiency of the student.

## Closing Rei

After practice Sensei or Senpai will clap his hands twice and request: "**Line up**"

This line up is according to rank. Lowest ranks are closest to the door highest ranking students are furthest away from the door, with the Senpai at the far end. The sword is carried out of the Obi in the left hand (cutting side up) at Obi level, and the right hand is on the Obi.

The Senpai will say, "**Seiza!**", at which the students and Sensei all sit down in Seiza.

Following Sensei, the students slide the sword out of the obi with their right hand to their right and place the sword with the Kojiri ~45 degree to their right front and the cutting edge pointed back.

The sword is then placed flat on the floor with the cutting edge towards the student and the tsuka to the left in front of the student. The loose ends of the sageo should be in line with the sword.

Once done the students sit up straight in seiza, with their hands on their legs (fingers closed). The knees should be one fist apart.

The Senpai will say, "**Sensei-ni, Rei!**" A similar bow as described at the Opening Rei is started. At the lowest point of the bow, the students will say; "**Arigato-gozaimashita**" and rise back to seiza.

Sensei will turn around to face the Kamiza (Shinzen)

The Senpai will say, "**Shinzen-ni, Rei!**". All bow to the Kamiza as described before.

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When done, everyone sits up straight. Sensei will turn to face the students.

Following Sensei lift the sword up with the kojiri touching the floor and place it in front. Move the left hand toward left side of the tsuba and place the right hand on the right hip (obi). Lift the sword and place it on the left hip

Sensei will stand up and leave the floor. Then according to rank and stature each student stands up, takes two steps back and turn to their right to leave the floor. When the student to your right is two steps away, stand up with your left hand holding the sword at obi level with the thumb holding the tsuba. The right hand should be on the obi. Take two steps to your right. We are now done with laido practice.

## Sword cleaning

Although a iaito (practice sword) doesn't need much maintenance, cleaning it and putting a thin coat of oil on the blade helps the sliding of the sword through the hands substantially.

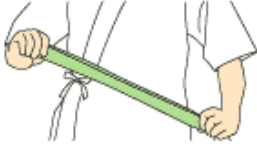
- a. All students gather in a wide circle with sensei in the corner and sit in seiza. Swords will be positioned on the floor on your right with the tsuka pointing forward and the cutting edge towards you. The tsuba is level with your right knee.
- b. Grab the sword by the tsuba and point the kojiri forward, cutting edge of the sword up. With the right hand slowly pull the sword from the saya. Bump the koiguchi of the saya on your left thigh to clear the saya from any debris. Then, place the saya to your left.
- c. With a dry clean cloth wipe the blade over the mune (back of the sword) from the tsuba to the kissaki over the hi side. NEVER wipe a blade from the sharp side!
- d. Use a small cloth with a few drops of choji oil (clove oil) to thinly(!) coat the blade in a similar motion as the previous step.
- e. Point the sword out and slide the saya over the sword.
- f. Place the sword to your right and wait for everyone to finish.
- g. Sensei will thank everybody for their attendance and everybody stands up.

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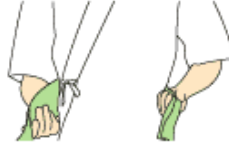
## Tying a Kaku Obi

### Kanda Musubi

#### 神田結び



1. 帯の一方の端を二つ折りにする。



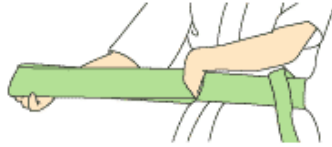
2. 帯幅×3くらいの部分を持ち、背中から回して前に持ってくる。



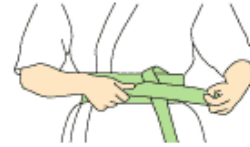
3. てをたれで押さえるようにしながら帯を巻き始める。



4. もう一巻きし、軽く引き締める。



5. たれの余分を内側に折り込む。(てと同じくらいの長さになるように)



6. たれを半分に折る。



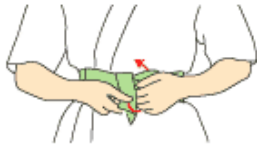
7. てを上(わは下)、たれを下にして交差させる。



8. てを下から上に通して結び、引き締める。



9. たれを斜め上に折り上げる。



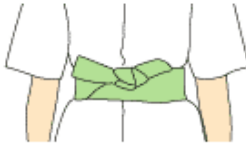
10. 折り上げたたれに てを通して結ぶ



11. 形を整える。てとたれが水平になるように。

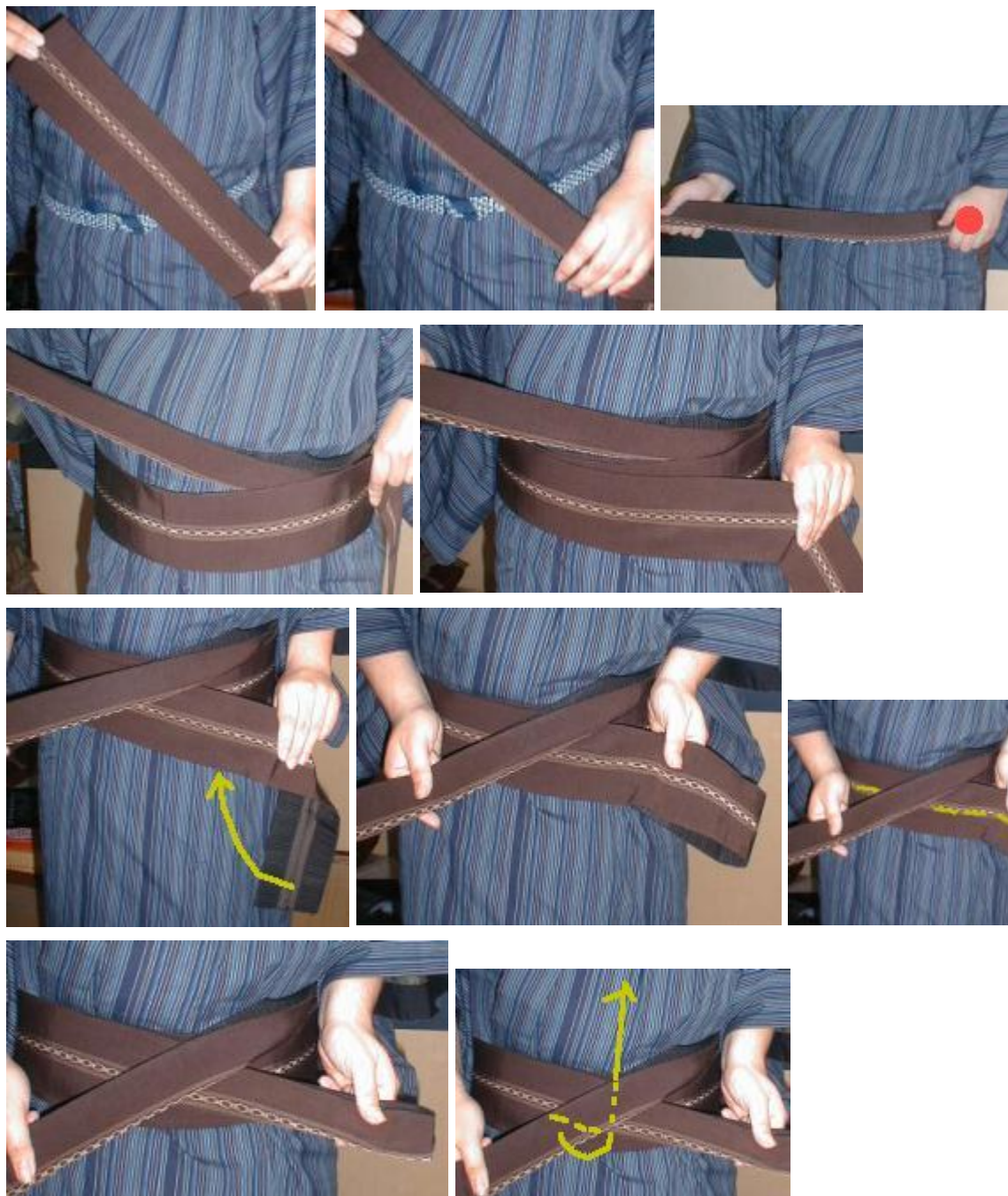


12. 右手で結び目、左手で後ろを持って回す。



13. できあがり。

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## Wearing Hakama

### 袴の着方(男性版)



1. 前腰(ひだが5本の方)を持って片方ずつ足を通し、真ん中のひだを体の中心に合わせる。



2. 左右の紐を後ろで交差させる。(帯のふちに合わせる程度で締め過ぎない)



3. 斜め下方向へ引っ張り加減しながら、前紐を体前面へ戻す。



4. 左脇あたりで左右の紐をぴんと張りながら重ね合わせる。(右側でも可)



5. 重ねたところを左親指で押さえ、右手は紐を張ったまま折り返す。



6. ぎゅっと張りながら、帯下縁をなぞるように左右の紐を後ろへ回す。



7. 緩まないよう2回からげて蝶結びする。



8. 後のへらを道衣と帯の間にしっかりとさし込み、帯の結び目に袴の後腰を乗せる。



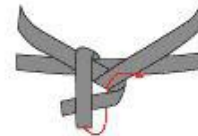
9. 後紐を持ち、前方へ引きながら、左右の脇のあきが同じになるよう合わせる。



10. 後紐を前中央で重ね合わせる。(前紐の下に通してから、この状態にする方法もある)



11. 上の後紐を、紐全体をまどめるように通し、引き締める。(もう一回通して巻きつける方法もある)



12. 下の後紐を横に渡し、上の後紐をその上に重ね、図のように通す。



13. 結び目を引き締める。



14. 後紐の余りを下辺の前紐に巻き付ける。(長く余る場合は、後腰下で結束する)



15. 出来上がり。(前腰と結び目の間に、紐1~1.5本程度の開きができる。これより狭いと落ち着かず、広いと品がない)



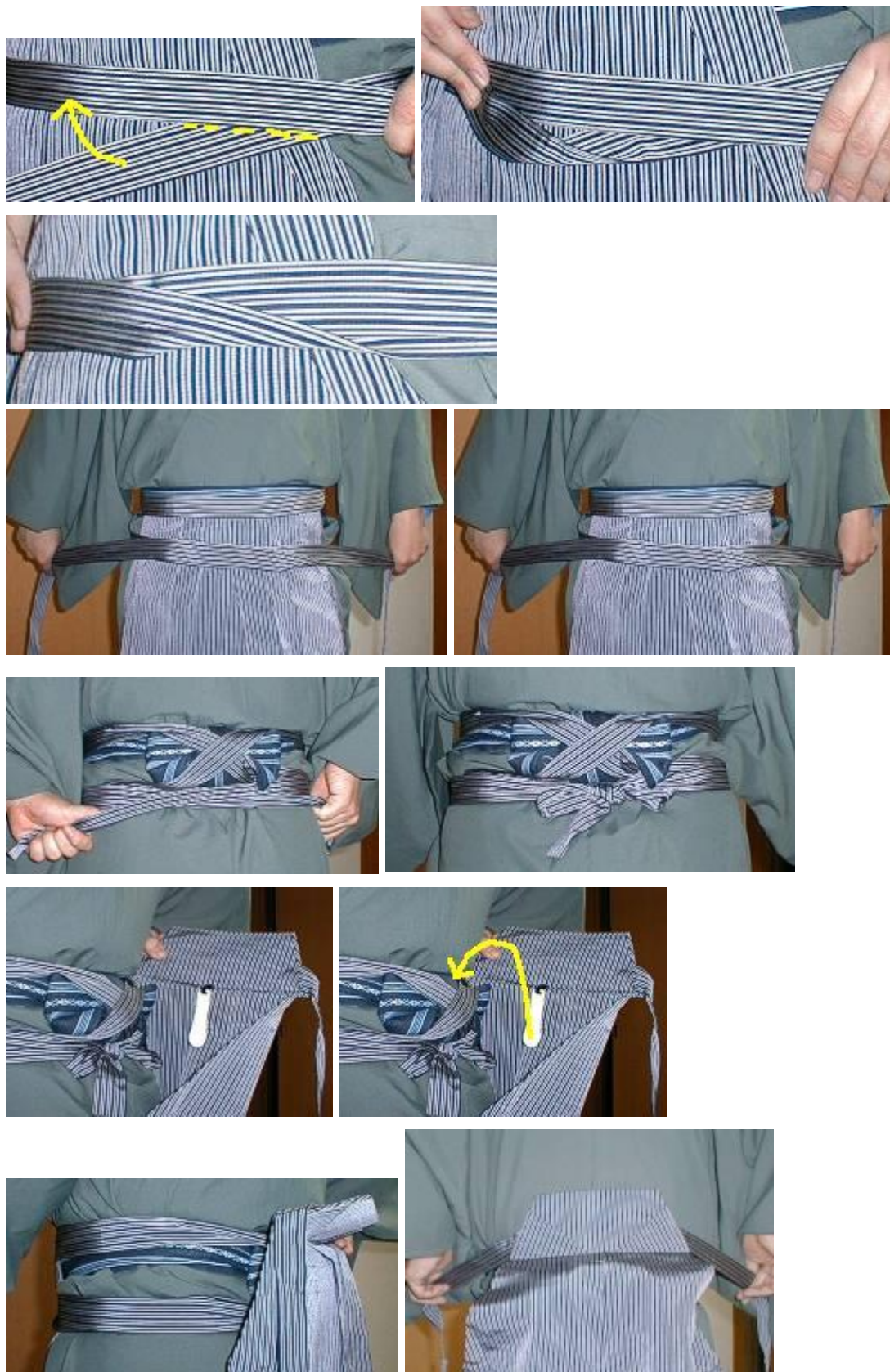
一般的な男性の袴紐の結び方では「十文字(←図)」や「一文字」がありますが、弓では上記の「駒結び」にします。とはいえ、奉納射会の前の参拝で、着物を着ている人が一文字にしているのを見かけた時は、「参拝」と「奉射」の区別をつけているようで、悪い印象は受けなかった。

また、着付け本には「帯の上端を1cmくらい見せる」ようなことが書いてありますが、それは「着付けの違い」と同じような「見せる」着方で、正絹の袋帯ならともかく、木綿等の稽古帯ではかえって逆効果になります。

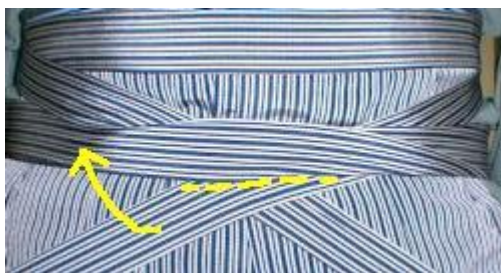
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