

Rei-Gi

Rei-gi means manners or etiquette, referring to the techniques or actions of showing courtesy and respect

Rei-gi is an important part of kendo. It is based on respect - for your sensei, fellow kenshi, equipment, yourself, etc.

Failure to adhere to proper behaviour could be taken as a sign of poor instruction or, as a severe insult. It is essential to know your way around basic etiquette in kendo.

Conduct in the Dojo

1. Arrive early and be prepared to start practice on time.
2. Stop and bow when entering or leaving the dojo.
3. Greet everyone at the first opportunity, especially the sensei and your seniors. Examples: *ohayo gozaimasu* (good morning), *kon nichi wa* (good day), *konban wa* (good evening).
4. Pay respect to everyone when departing, especially to the sensei and your seniors. When addressing instructors, use the title sensei.
5. Be attentive; listen carefully to instructions, and respond promptly.
6. Be aware of seniors members and follow their lead. Do not sit down, stand up, finish bowing, or remove your equipment before your seniors unless told to do so. When lining up, position yourself relative to your seniors. For example, when seated, line up your men and kote, as well as your knees, to those of your senior.
7. Be aware of junior members and take care of them.
8. Always sit or stand properly when in the dojo. Do not slouch or lean against anything; especially, do not lean on your shinai.
9. Avoid walking in front of sensei, or in front of kenshi seated in the seiza position.

Apparel and Equipment

1. Always handle your keikogi, hakame, and bogu respectfully. Make sure they are packed neatly and properly, without dangling strings or straps. Know how to fold your keikogi and hakama.
2. Always handle your shinai respectfully. Do not lean on it, rest it on the floor, twirl it, or drag it. Make sure it is well-maintained, free of splinters and with tightened tsuru and nakayui. Check this before each practice.
3. Wear your keikogi and hakama neatly. Make sure the keikogi is smooth, not bulging, in the front and back. When putting on the hakama, put

your left leg in first; when removing the hakama, remove your right leg first.

4. Know how to wear your bogu neatly, and how to tie them securely. When putting on kote, put the left one on first; when removing kote, remove the right one first.
5. Do not wear jewelery during practice. This is for safety reasons as well as etiquette.

Conduct during Practice

1. When practicing with your seniors, show your appreciation by saying *onagai shimasu* at the beginning and *arigatou gozaimashita* at the end.
2. Perform ritsu-rei (standing bow) and za-rei (seated bow) properly. Do not bend or arch your neck or back. Hold the bow briefly before returning to your original position.
3. Do not crawl to adjust your position when in seiza or sonkyo; instead, stand up and move.
4. Practice diligently. Do not sit down during practice unless you are fixing your equipment. Do not engage in idle conversation. Do not let sensei remain idle when they are available for practice.
5. Apply yourself wholeheartedly to learning, and to improving your kendo to the best of your ability.

Aisatsu (salutations)

Aisatsu is extremely important in kendo. The phrase is usually translated as "greetings," but aisatsu are also used for other situations such as thanking an individual both before and after keiko, commending someone for their efforts, etc. Aisatsu are usually accompanied by a bow. A missed aisatsu will be noticed, and if you routinely fail to offer aisatsu you will be considered at best uneducated, at worst ill mannered or even rude.

Here are some common phrases.

konbanwa good evening (greeting)

oyasuminasai good night (taking leave)

onegaishimasu (customary phrase before keiko or gi-geiko)

arigato gozaimashita thank you

ohayo gozaimasu good morning

konnichiwa good day

sayonara goodbye

otsukaresama desu (customary phrase after a hard practice)