

## ***The 5 elements of Yuko Datotsu***

The main point of Yuko-datotsu is to ensure that one strikes in the correct place, at the correct time, showing a strong spirit, and zanshin. If this is not achieved then one really does not have a valid strike.

***Yuko-datotsu*** is defined as the accurate and intentional striking or thrusting made onto *Datotsu-bui* of the opponent's *Kendo-gu* with *Shinai* at its *Datotsu-bu* with *Kiai* (in high spirits and positive voice) and correct posture, being followed by *Zanshin* (mental and physical alertness and a positive follow through of attack and strike).

In order for Yuko Datotsu to be achieved, five elements need to be included in the execution of a definitive cut. These five elements are:

1. *Kamaeru* (Posture): to be prepared to attack or defend, and continues on through the strike and into the completion of the *waza*.
2. *Semeru* (Controlling Centre): to apply pressure and break your opponent's *kamae*, leading to #3.
3. *Toraeru* (Opportunity): to recognize and determine where the opportunity to strike is after breaking an opponent's *kamae* or defeating their *waza*.
4. *Utsu* (Datotsu): Making an intentional and effective cut or strike to the correct target utilizing the correct part of the *shinai*.
5. *Zanshin* (Remaining Heart): to maintain spirit and connection after striking your opponent and coming back to a fighting posture (*chudan*) so that you are ready to cut again.

Other key aspects and terms:

- a) *Datotsu-bu* - You must use the correct part of the sword: the top one third, between the *kensen* (tip) and the *nakayui*.
- b) *Datotsu-bui* - You must hit the correct part of your opponent's armour.
- c) *Hasuji* - You must use correct angle of the blade, so you must cut only with the side of the *shinai* opposite the *tsuru* or string.
- d) *Ki* - You must have full spirit (*kiai*) and correct posture throughout the *waza*.
- e) *Ki-ken-tai-no-ichi* - You must create a strike where the spirit, sword, and body are one, including proper *fumi-komi-ashi*.