



KENDO forum

by Musashi of the
Shinto Ryu

Children's Kendo. Kendo training is ideally suited for children of both sexes. The youngest age to start Kendo is between five and six years and this is generally accepted in Japan, and elsewhere in the Kendo world.

In the first three months of training the young kendoka are never struck on the armour with the *shinai* but do all the cutting themselves under supervision from the *yudansha*. It is essential to promote the feeling of confidence and to firmly fix this in the child's mind since young people are quick to become defensive if faced by difficult problems.

With the very young or even up to eleven or twelve, the teaching is kept fresh so that constant interest is maintained in the class. Each session is run exactly parallel to the senior counterpart and there is plenty of action.

Discipline and *dojo reiji* is mildly applied to those below nine years old, after this age strict rules are enforced. The result is a strong feeling of pride in being a member of the dojo, and a developing community sense. It is this quality that is felt to be of great importance by senior Kendo *Kyoshi* and *Hanshi* in Japan. The young *kendoka* are not repressed but gently controlled.

OPPOSITE :

Mr. Knutsen and some of the members of the Middlesbrough Kendo Dojo. Mr. Fred Kidd is standing in *kendogi* on the right of the photograph. Photograph by Mr. Walter Seaton.

The thought of misbehaving never enters the child's mind since he works off his excess spirit in the best possible way.

The junior *kendoka* at the Shinto-Ryu club all thoroughly enjoy their practise; readers who saw the three smallest show *kakari-geiko* at the "Festival of Judo" in June were delighted to see Miss Marina Knibbs, aged 9, spiritedly attacking her 2nd *dan* partner almost without pause. Master Alexander Knutsen and Master Toby Wolpe, aged 7 and 8 were hardly less active.

At the end of each practise session when discussion time comes the masters are always faced with a barrage of questions covering all aspects of Kendo. If training stimulated half as much mental activity in adults I would be more than satisfied.

At the Shinto-Ryu Dojo the children train twice weekly: Wednesday evening between 6 p.m. and 7.15 p.m., and on Sunday morning 9.30 a.m. to 11 a.m. A typical session takes the following form:—

1. The children put on their *bogu* (armour) then quietly sit *seiza* opposite their *sensei*.
2. *Rei* (Bow). The whole class bows to the *kamiza* (the *sensei* side of the dojo).
3. Five minutes or so calisthenics.
4. Five minutes *suburi* (empty cutting) with the *shinai*.



Alexander Knutsen, aged seven, one of the three juniors who showed *kakari-geiko* at the Festival of Judo. He is just about to cut *do* against his father's exposed target. In the background can just be seen Miss Etsuko Horie, *nidan*.

5. Twenty minutes or more on a specific technique or techniques. Usually the children do not wear *men* and *kote* for this.
6. Put on *men* and *kote* kneeling in their original places.
7. *Kakari-geiko* (sustained practice) for a short time (two or three minutes each).
8. General *keiko* with each other or with the masters.
9. Five minutes before the end of the period *Keiko* finishes and the children once more sit in their places. Everyone removes *kote* and *men* and puts them correctly. To help correct breathing everyone sits calmly and controls the breathing (*mokutu*) for two minutes.
10. Question time and a critique is given by the *yudansha*.
11. Final kneeling *rei* to *kamiza*. The *bogu* is taken off and properly tied up before anyone rises. There is very little talking.

Middlesbrough Kendo Dojo. Mr. Roald Knutsen (3rd *dan*), conducted a weekend special Kendo training at Mr. Fred Kidd's dojo in the centre of Middlesbrough (June 12th—14th). Fourteen *kendoka* took part and the whole weekend was marked by a particularly friendly atmosphere. Mr. Kidd, Mr. Walter Seaton and Mr. John Spakes, three

of the leading members made very certain that this stay should be a memorable one for their visiting master. Mr. Kidd has excellent plans for developing proper budo (Karate and Kendo) in the Darlington/Middlesbrough region and will clearly stand none of the nonsense that spoils relationships between other budo groups in the country. Many people could learn a lot from this sort of spirit.

Perhaps three or four *Kendoka* will make a *musha-shugyo* visit in the early autumn up North to this dojo. If they do, they can be certain of real hospitality.

Enquiries concerning this dojo should be made either to Mr. F. Kidd, 7 Woodlands Road, Middlesbrough, Yorks, or to the British Kendo Association.



JUDOKWAI—BRISTOL

Bristols Festival of Judo

Dear Reader,

I am writing to inform you that the Bristol Judokwai, in collaboration with T.W.W., is to sponsor a "Festival of Judo" week on the 14th to 19th of September 1964. The purpose of the Festival is to present Judo, in all its various aspects, to the people of the West of England in order to mark the first inclusion of the sport in the Olympic Games of 1964. Daily Judo Exhibitions will be staged at our Festival site in the City Centre, and there will be supporting exhibitions of Judo books and Japanese art provided by Bristol book-sellers and the City Art Gallery respectively. Full coverage will be given to the Festival by the newspapers and television, and in addition a Festival Magazine will be on sale to the public. It is expected, therefore, that the Festival will appeal to a very large proportion of the people resident in Bristol and the West.

G. A. W. HICKS

On behalf of the Festival Committee.