



## LAIDO COMMITTEE

### 2022 PNKF Iaidō Seminar and Taikai

**PNKF Iaidō Shinsa (Kyu to 3 Dan)**

**AUSKF Iaidō Shinsa (4 & 5 Dan)**

**Rain City Fencing Center**

**1776 - 136th Place NE Bellevue, Washington**

**October 7-9**

Online registration opens July 15. Registration deadline **Saturday, September 17**

### Featuring a True Powerhouse of Instructors:

**Shozo Kato Sensei** (Iaido Kyoshi 7 Dan, AUSKF), **Seminar Instructor**

**Tatsuhiko Konno Sensei** (Iaido Kyoshi 7 Dan, AUSKF)

**Pam Parker Sensei** (Iaido Kyoshi 7 Dan, AUSKF)

**Goyo Ohmi Sensei** (Iaido Kyoshi 7 Dan, CKF)

**Stephen Cruise Sensei** (Iaido Kyoshi 7 Dan, CKF)

**Susan Sekreta Sensei** (Iaido Renshi 7 Dan, AUSKF)

**Robert Stroud Sensei** (Iaido Renshi 6 Dan, AUSKF)

**Jonathan Bannister Sensei** (Iaido Renshi 6 Dan, AUSKF)

*additional senior instructors from the PNKF and other federations*

Online registration, taikai, and shinsa information: [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

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See separate attachment for repair suggestions

**[Matsu Budogu](#) will attend this event. Have your equipment needs met!**

**Pre-orders receive 10% off and will be available to pick up at the event. Email to [matsubudogu@gmail.com](mailto:matsubudogu@gmail.com).**

The PNKF is committed to offering a safe and rewarding experience for all. We will observe a comprehensive Covid risk mitigation and safety protocol - carefully developed by the Iaidō Committee in consultation with AUSKF that includes advice from the CDC, State, and local health agencies. Participant must be a current AUSKF or FIK-affiliate member. We highly recommend vaccination. Participants and guests will be screened at the door, are required to wear masks, and must agree to follow the safety protocols outlined in this registration package. Participation is at-will, and those who might be at greater risk are advised to consult their medical care provider before registering. Withdrawal from the seminar or shinsa for reasons of illness shall be honored without penalty and all fees returned. The PNKF Iaidō Committee thanks everyone in advance for the cooperation needed to ensure this event is as safe as possible.

**2022 PNKF Iaidō Seminar & Taikai**  
**PNKF Shinsa (Kyu to 3 Dan)**  
**2022 AUSKF Iaidō Shinsa (4 & 5 Dan)**

**Event Schedule**

**Friday, October 7 – Sunday, October 9, 2022**

**Where**

Rain City Fencing Center, 1776 - 136th Place NE, Bellevue, WA 98005

**Schedule**

Friday, October 7	8:00am	Registration / Sword Checks
	9:00	Seminar
	12:30	Lunch Break
	2:00	Seminar
	5:00	Close
Saturday, October 8	8:00am	Registration / Sword Checks
	9:00	Seminar
	12:30	Lunch Break
	1:30	Group Photo
	2:00	6-7 Dan Enbu
	2:30	Iaido Taikai - Divisions: Kyu-1D, 2D-3D, 4D-5D
	5:00	Close
Sunday, October 9	6:30	Banquet
	8:00am	Doors Open / Sword Checks
	8:30	Shinsa Registration
	9:00	PNKF Iaido Shinsa (Kyu-3D)
	10:30	AUSKF Iaidō Shinsa (4D-5D)
	12:00	Lunch Break (Guest instructors free to leave)
	1:30	Seminar (Feedback and Going Forward)
	3:30	Close

**Note**

\*Shinsa candidates must be current members of AUSKF or obtain written permission from their national Kendo Federation.

**Deadlines / Cost / Payments**

Due to space limitations, this event will be limited to 85 attendees, so do not delay registering. Online registration deadline **Saturday, September 17**. All applicable fees must be received at the address below by **Saturday, September 24**. A flat fee of \$120.00 will be charged for all participants attending the seminar. Seminar attendance is required to test at the PNKF Kyu-3 Dan Shinsa and recommended for the AUSKF 4-5 Dan Shinsa. Taikai participation fee \$20.00. Banquet tickets \$35.00. **Some fees must be submitted by separate checks**; for test fees and application information, see "Iaido Shinsa Information".

Make all checks payable to "Pacific Northwest Kendo Federation"

**Cancellations and Refunds**

Requests for cancellations are requested to be received no later than Saturday, October 1, 2022. Cancellations received after this date for any reason other than illness will not return the fees. If the case of special circumstances, please notify the Event Coordinator as soon as possible. For Shinsa cancellations, please refer to the **PNKF Iaido Shinsa Information and Application**.

**Contact / Questions**

Hiroaki Fukumoto, *Event Coordinator*  
16551 8th Ave NE  
Shoreline, WA 98155  
Email: [hirof@comcast.net](mailto:hirof@comcast.net)  
Phone: (206) 369-5515

**2022 PNKF Iaidō Seminar & Taikai**  
**PNKF Shinsa (Kyu to 3 Dan)**  
**2022 AUSKF Iaidō Shinsa (4 & 5 Dan)**

## **PNKF Covid Safety Protocols**

*The PNKF is committed to offering a safe experience for all. We will observe a comprehensive Covid risk mitigation and safety protocol that has been carefully developed by the Iaidō Committee in consultation with AUSKF and Rain City Fencing Center. It includes measures recommended by the CDC, State health guidance, and local agencies.*

*Attendance, whether as participant or guest, implies consent and agreement to abide by the safety protocols established for this event. Individuals who fall within any of the categories below should not participate in this event. By attending this event, you certify that you do not fall into any of the following categories as recommended by state or local public health authorities:*

- *Individuals who currently have experienced any symptoms associated with COVID-19, which include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea;*
- *Individuals who have experienced asymptomatic or mild symptoms of COVID-19 and have not cleared at least five full days isolation period starting a day after tested positive or symptoms first appeared;*
- *Individuals who may have been exposed to a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 and have not cleared at least five full days quarantine period after the last contact. Quarantine is not necessary if a) you are up to date on COVID-19 vaccines, including booster and additional doses, or b) tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test within the previous 90 days and recovered.*

*The PNKF does not require but strongly encourages vaccination. Participants and guests will be screened at the door, are required to wear masks, and must agree to follow the safety protocols outlined in this registration package. Participation is at-will; those who might be at greater risk are advised to consult their medical care provider before registering. Withdrawal from the seminar or shinsa for reasons of illness shall be honored without penalty and all fees returned.*

*The PNKF Iaidō Committee thanks everyone for cooperating to ensure this event is as safe as possible.*

### **Attendance**

- It is unlikely, but registration may be restricted to ensure physical distancing; if that occurs, preference will be given to test candidates. We will confirm registrations as soon as possible.
- Temperature checks may be conducted at the door; everyone must sign the AUSKF Covid Questionnaire daily
- Pre-registration is required; walk-ins not permitted
- Attendees must be members of AUSKF or FIK affiliate
- Spectators are allowed but will be screened and must sign the PNKF waiver and AUSKF Covid Questionnaire
- Provide your own equipment, hand sanitizer, mask, and named water bottle
- No penalty assessed if withdrawing from the seminar, taikai, or shinsa for reason of illness, and all fees will be returned.

### **Sanitation**

- All participants required to wear face masks that cover their nose and mouth inside the event venue
- Practice hand hygiene, especially if wearing tabi (unless medically necessary, tabi prohibited during shinsa and taikai)
- Cleaning supplies will be provided by the organizers, including supplies for handwashing, including soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and disposable masks and gloves (provided for cleaning; not for participants' use during training)

### **Sword Checks**

- Our sword check station will facilitate physical distancing
- Sword checkers will wear masks and gloves

### **Participation**

- Changing facilities are limited; we recommend arriving at the venue already dressed
- Participants must provide their own equipment; equipment must not be shared
- Please engage in physical distancing

### **Miscellaneous**

- Please limit the duration of close gatherings
- All instructors are asked to gently help monitor and encourage observance of these safety protocols. Please respect advice offered or requests made; we are all working to ensure a safe environment.

**2022 PNKF Iaidō Seminar & Taikai**  
**PNKF Shinsa (Kyu to 3 Dan)**  
**2022 AUSKF Iaidō Shinsa (4 & 5 Dan)**

**Shinsa Information**

**Test Date:** Sunday, October 9, 2022, 10:00am – 3:00pm

**Location:** Rain City Fencing Center, located at 1776 136th Pl NE, Bellevue, WA 98005

**Testing Ranks:** PNKF Shinsa up to 3 Dan; AUSKF Shinsa 4-5 Dan

**Requirements**

Candidates must attend the seminar if taking an Iaidō exam. Seminar instructors will detail elements of the art and technique that will be assessed during tests. Contact the event coordinator in the event of special circumstances, and we will try to accommodate.

Candidates must be current members of AUSKF or obtain written permission from their national Kendo Federation. If not AUSKF registered prior to the event, you are NOT ELIGIBLE to test. The applicant's AUSKF Membership Number must be included on the application form. **If a member of a regional federation other than the PNKF**, your application must be approved by your federation president. **If applying from outside AUSKF from an FIK affiliate**, your application must be approved by the AUSKF vice president prior to the exam. The earlier these applications are received, the better.

**After completing the web form shinsa application, please send the following items via regular postal mail to the Event Coordinator, Hiroaki Fukumoto, 16551 8th Ave NE, Shoreline, WA 98155:**

- a. **Essays**, if required, must be computer-processed or typewritten and printed on the "Iaido Shinsa Written Exam Form". Please refer to the "Iaido Shinsa Written Test Questions".
- b. If **special considerations** need to be made, such as for injury or medical limitations, please include a note of explanation so that this information may be given to the Examination Board. Doctor's notes are not required.
- c. **Test Fees** must be paid in advance by **SEPARATE CHECK**, payable to "Pacific Northwest Kendo Federation":

PNKF Iaido Examination Fees	Certificate (Menjyo) Fees	TOTAL
Mudansha 17 & under \$10.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 30.00
Mudansha 18 & over \$15.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 45.00
Yudansha (1-3 Dan) \$20.00	1 Dan \$ 50.00	\$ 70.00
	2 Dan \$ 60.00	\$ 80.00
	3 Dan \$ 80.00	\$100.00
<b>AUSKF Examination Fees</b>		
4 Dan \$80.00	4 Dan \$100.00	\$180.00
5 Dan \$100.00	5 Dan \$150.00	\$250.00

**SPECIAL CASES** (If you have questions, contact Fukumoto Sensei, Event Coordinator, listed on page 2):

- d. **AUSKF members outside PNKF for PNKF Shinsa** (up to 3 Dan only): [Request for Kendo/Iaido Examination by an Affiliate Organization of the AUSKF](#) signed by the member federation president and a copy of **menjyo (certificate)**
- e. **AUSKF members for AUSKF Shinsa** (4 - 5 Dan only): A copy of **menjyo (certificate)**; **Request for Kendo/Iaido Examination by an Affiliate Organization of the AUSKF** is not required.
- f. **FIK members outside AUSKF**: Approval letter from the AUSKF VP of Promotions obtained by submitting [Application Request Form for Promotion Examination from FIK affiliated Organizations](#) and copy of **menjyo (certificate)**

**Application Deadlines (Absolutely NO late entries!)**

**Online application by Saturday, September 17.** Fees must be received no later than Saturday, September 24.

All fees and documentation must be received by the deadline. Get yours in early to make sure there are no problems with your application. Email is not a substitute for the submission of fees and hard copy by the deadline.

**Cancellations and refunds:** Requests for Shinsa cancellations, except in case of illness, must be received no later than **Saturday, October 1**. Cancellations received after this date will have only the certificate fee returned. In the case of illness, all fees will be returned. Please note that if an applicant does not pass the examination, only the certificate fee will be returned. If an applicant does not attend the Shinsa without proper notification, the Shinsa fee is forfeited, and only the certificate fee is returned. If special circumstances occur, please notify the Event Coordinator as soon as possible.

**2022 PNKF Iaidō Seminar & Taikai**  
**PNKF Shinsa (Kyu to 3 Dan)**  
**2022 AUSKF Iaidō Shinsa (4 & 5 Dan)**

**PNKF Iaidō Shinsa Requirements** *(edited for Kyu to 3 Dan)*

Adopted by the PNKF Board of Directors January 12, 2019

- Age is the minimum age as of the date of the Examination.
- Number of months of practice in rank is the minimum number of months.
- Highest rank for first test as indicated below, in principle no jumping ranks after first test.
- A lower kyu rank can be awarded if the candidate does not meet passing criteria for their first rank test, except in case of Junior 6 kyu or Adult 3 kyu, which are minimum starting ranks.
- All swords shall meet safety criteria as defined by the exam officials.

**Mudansha Ranks: Juniors (age 10 and below)**

- Performed with Mogitō or bokutō (bokken), use of shinken not permitted.
- 6 Kyu: 8 years of age; 6 months practice  
Perform AJKF Seitei Iai reihō and kata #1 and #2
- 5 Kyu: 9 years of age; 12 months practice (or 6 months in previous rank)  
Perform AJKF Seitei Iai reihō and kata #1 thru #3
- 4 Kyu: 10 years of age; 12 months practice (or 6 months in previous rank)  
Perform AJKF Seitei Iai reihō and kata #1 thru #4

**Mudansha Ranks: Adults (age 18 and up), Juniors (age 11-17)**

- Adult first test can be either 3 kyu or 2 kyu, however the highest rank adult first test is 2 kyu.
  - First rank tests above 2 kyu require approval by the PNKF President.
  - Mogitō required, use of shinken (sharp sword) not permitted.
- 3 Kyu: 11 years of age; 12 months practice (or 6 months in previous rank)  
Perform AJKF Seitei Iai reihō and five (5) AJKF Seitei Iai from kata #1 thru #10
- 2 Kyu: 12 years of age; one year total practice (or 6 months in previous rank)  
Perform AJKF Seitei Iai reihō and five (5) AJKF Seitei Iai from kata #1 thru #10
- 1 Kyu: 13 years of age; 6 months in previous rank  
Perform AJKF Seitei Iai reihō and five (5) AJKF Seitei Iai from kata #1 thru #12  
Written test

**Yudansha Ranks: Adults (age 18 and up), Juniors (age 14-17)**

- Mogitō required, use of shinken only with permission of shinsa panel chair.
- 1 Dan: 14 years of age; 6 months in previous rank  
Perform AJKF Seitei Iai reihō and five (5) AJKF Seitei Iai kata within 6 minutes  
Written test
- 2 Dan: 15 years of age; 1 year as 1 Dan  
Perform AJKF Seitei Iai reihō and five (5) AJKF Seitei Iai kata within 6 minutes  
Written test
- 3 Dan: 17 years of age; 2 years as 2 Dan  
Perform AJKF Seitei Iai reihō and five (5) AJKF Seitei Iai kata within 6 minutes  
Written test

**Iaidō Shinsa Examination Panels:**

Dan Examination	Examiners	Number	Criteria
Kyu – 1 Dan	4 Dan and higher	5	Consent of 3 examiners
2-3 Dan	5 Dan and higher	5	Consent of 3 examiners

**2022 PNKF laidō Seminar & Taikai**  
**PNKF Shinsa (Kyu to 3 Dan)**  
**2022 AUSKF laidō Shinsa (4 & 5 Dan)**

**Notes for PNKF laidō Shinsa:**

- The PNKF laidō Committee Chair, with the consent of the Advisor, will determine which Seitei Kata will be required.
- Kōryū is determined by examinee.
- Age is the minimum age as of the date of the Promotional Examination. If the applicant's birthday is within one (1) month of the Promotional Examination, the applicant will be eligible.
- Number of months of practice or months in rank is the minimum number of months. The amount of time in the previous rank must be within 15 days of the required time.
- Highest rank for first test as indicated above, in principle no jumping ranks after the first test.
- A lower kyu rank can be awarded if the candidate does not meet passing criteria for their first rank test, except in the case of Junior 6 kyu or adult 3 kyu, which are minimum starting ranks.
- All swords shall meet safety criteria as defined by the exam officials.
- The written exam essay must be submitted in English. Computer processed or typed submissions are preferred. If handwritten, make sure submissions are clearly legible; answers that are too difficult to read may be rejected.
- Written examination questions and instructions will match the most current laidō shinsa information published by AUSKF.
- Candidates shall submit their written answers together with their test fees by the deadline.
- The written examination for 1 Kyu-3 Dan will be graded as either pass or fail by an appointed representative of the PNKF laidō Committee Chair. Essays for 4 and 5 Dan will be graded by an AUSKF representative.

**2022 PNKF Iaidō Seminar & Taikai**  
**PNKF Shinsa (Kyu to 3 Dan)**  
**2022 AUSKF Iaidō Shinsa (4 & 5 Dan)**

**AUSKF Iaidō Shinsa Requirements**

- 4 Dan**      *20 years of age; 3 years as 3 Dan*  
AJKF Seitei Iai reihō, one (1) Koryu waza of candidate's choice, and four (4) AJKF  
Seitei shiteiwaza within 6 minutes  
Written test
- 5 Dan**      *24 years of age; 4 years as 4 Dan*  
AJKF Seitei Iai reihō, one (1) Koryu waza of candidate's choice, and four (4) AJKF  
Seitei shiteiwaza within 6 minutes  
Written test

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## **Iaidō Shinsa Written Test Questions**

Answer two questions from the group of questions for the rank for which you are testing.

### **First Kyu Candidates**

1. List the names of the twelve All Japan Kendo Federation Iaido kata. Include a short English translation for each.
2. Describe the proper way of gripping the katana when cutting.
3. Why are you studying Iaido? What do you hope to accomplish?

### **Shodan Candidates**

1. *Tsuki* (thrusts) occur in five of the ZNKR Iai kata. Name these katas, and identify the target areas.
2. Draw a simple diagram of a katana, label as many parts as you can.
3. What is *kirioroshi*? Describe its use in one All Japan Kendo Federation Iaido kata.

### **Nidan Candidates**

1. Discuss *zanshin*. Describe its use in one All Japan Kendo Federation Iaido kata.
2. A katana blade has three sections or areas along its length; describe the location and use of each.
3. What is meant by the term *Iai-goshi*? Describe its use in one All Japan Kendo Federation Iaido kata.

### **Sandan Candidates**

1. What is *mettsuke*? Describe its use in one All Japan Kendo Federation Iaido kata.
2. Describe how to clean a sword (shinken and/or iaito).
3. Discuss *jo-ha-kyu*.

### **Yondan Candidates**

1. Define *hasuji* and discuss its importance in Iaido.
2. What is *saya biki*? Why do we do it?
3. Explain *fudo-shin*.

### **Godan Candidates**

1. Describe the *hara (tanden)* and explain its importance for Iaido.
2. What is meant by *saya-no-uchi*? How does it apply to AJKF Iaido?
3. What is important when teaching Iaido to beginners?

### **Guidelines for PNKF Iaido Shinsa up to 3 Dan Written Test Questions**

*Essays are expected: don't submit mere definitions. We're looking for discussion in your own words, evidence of personal research, and indication of increasing breadth and depth of understanding.*

### **Suggested Essay Lengths**

- 1 Kyu – No less than 5-6 sentences and no more than one-third page, for each answer*  
*1 Dan – No less than 6-8 sentences and no more than one-half page, for each answer*  
*2 Dan – No less than 8-10 sentences and no more than one-half page, for each answer*  
*3 Dan – No less than 10-15 sentences and no more than two-thirds page, for each answer*



**2022 PNKF Iaidō Seminar & Taikai**  
**PNKF Shinsa (Kyu to 3 Dan)**  
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**Iaidō Shinsa Written Test Questions Answer Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Requested Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Test Date: 10/9/2022

AUSKF ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Shinsa ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ (Official use only)

Write selected questions, together with answers, in English only. Computer-processed or typewritten submissions are preferred. If handwritten, make sure submissions are clearly legible; answers that are too difficult to read may be rejected.

**Question 1:**

Answer:

**Question 2:**

Answer:

*Please use the back side if you need additional space.*

**2022 PNKF Iaidō Seminar & Taikai**  
**PNKF Shinsa (Kyu to 3 Dan)**  
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## Area Hotels

These hotels are close to the event location. Prices shown were the most recent available at the time this list was compiled (6/6/2022), but are best used only for comparison. Please call to confirm.

**Quality Inn Bellevue - \$82**

3241 156th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98007  
Phone: (425) 643-6644

**Hyatt House Seattle/Bellevue - \$155**

3244 139th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98005  
Phone: (425) 747-2705

**Extended Stay America - Seattle - Bellevue - Downtown - \$133**

11400 Main St, Bellevue, WA 98004  
Phone: (425) 453-8186

**Embassy Suites by Hilton - \$166**

3225 158th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98008  
(425) 644-2500

**Red Lion Hotel Bellevue - \$118**

11211 Main St, Bellevue, WA 98004  
Phone: (425) 455-5240

**Larkspur Landing Bellevue - \$135**

15805 SE 37th St, Bellevue, WA 98006  
Phone: (425) 373-1212

## Restaurants

Reasonably-priced, local suggestions.

**Angelo's Restaurant** (Italian) \$\$

1830 130th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98005  
Phone: (425) 883-2777

**Thai Chef** (Thai) \$\$

1645 140th Ave NE B9, Bellevue, WA 98005  
Phone: (425) 562-7955

**Applebee's Grill + Bar** (American) \$\$

13856 Bel-Red Rd, Bellevue, WA 98005  
Phone: (425) 603-9696

**The Crab Pot Bellevue** (Seafood) \$\$

2 Lake Bellevue Dr, Bellevue, WA 98005  
(425) 455-2244

**IHOP** (American) \$\$

14747 NE 20th St, Bellevue, WA 98007  
Phone: (425) 747-5975

**The Pumphouse Bar & Grill** (Pub Grub) \$\$

11802 NE 8th St, Bellevue, WA 98005  
(425) 455-4110

**Bellevue Brewing Company** (American) \$\$

1820 130th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98005  
Phone: (425) 497-8686

**Gyu-Kaku Japanese BBQ** (Japanese) \$\$

14506 NE 20th St #2, Bellevue, WA 98007  
(425) 296-8818

## Markets and Food Courts

**Safeway**

1645 - 140th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98005  
Phone: (425) 373-5263

**Trader Joe's**

15563 NE 24th St, Bellevue, WA 98007  
(425) 641-5069

**Uwajimaya Bellevue** (Asian)

699 120th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98005  
(425) 747-9012

**PCC Community Markets - Bellevue**

11615 NE 4th St, Bellevue, WA 98004  
(425) 615-0295

**2022 PNKF Iaidō Seminar & Taikai**  
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## **Basic Sword Safety Checklist**

**Pacific Northwest Kendo Federation – PNKF Iaido Committee**

21 October 2019 (revised 2/12/2022)

### **Introduction**

Keeping your equipment clean and in good condition is a pleasure and a necessity. It is indicative of an advanced practitioner's respect towards his or her tools, and enhances everyone's safety and enjoyment of practice. In recent years, sword checks have become standard at all regional and national events, and are normal procedure for participants up to 5 Dan (6 Dan and higher rank instructors – though exempt from this requirement – are welcome to submit their swords for inspection voluntarily) at all PNKF sponsored and hosted Iaido events. *Iaidoka* are responsible for maintaining their equipment to ensure personal safety for themselves and others in their vicinity. When in doubt, consult your instructor or another qualified person, and be mindful that some sword repairs should only be undertaken by professionals.

### **Points of inspection**

There are several items that will be checked during sword inspection. These critical safety items are listed in order of importance, and any deficiencies should be addressed immediately.

#### **Essential Points for Inspection (used at PNKF Sword Checks)**

1. Is the sword Japanese-made as required by AUSKF and FIK rules?  
*This rule was made to address issues with non-Japanese swords that proved more susceptible to breakage in past years, posing alarmingly dangerous conditions to others.*
2. Is the blade in good condition, free of serious warpage, chips or dents?
3. Are the *mekugi* (retaining pin(s)) and *mekugi-ana* (retaining pin hole(s)) in good condition? The bamboo used for o-hashirō or "chopsticks" is not suitable for *mekugi*. There are many varieties of bamboo that are soft and weak. Good *mekugi* are made of a special aged and smoked bamboo called *susudake* すす竹. *Mekugi* are carved from the outer part of the bamboo with the tightest grain. This is the hardest part of the bamboo. Other woods are not good substitutes for bamboo. Wood *mekugi* tend to snap, while bamboo tends to deform. Water buffalo *mekugi* are only suitable for *shirasaya* (holding scabbards), are purely decorative, and are not suitable for working swords. *PNKF inspections of shinken may request that you remove the mekugi for visual inspection of this essential component.*
4. Are the *tsuba* (guard) and *habaki* (collar) tight and free of noise or slippage when the sword is handled?  
Excessive movement puts extra stress upon the *mekugi*, posing an unnecessary risk to yourself and others.

#### **Other Considerations: Primarily the Responsibility of the Practitioner**

5. Is the *koiguchi* (mouth of the scabbard)-*habaki* (blade collar) fit tight enough to prevent falling out of the blade?
6. Is the *saya* (scabbard) in good repair and free of any cracks?
7. Is the *nakago* (tang) fit snugly within the *tsuka* (handle)?
8. Is the *tsuka-ito* (handle wrap) in sufficiently good and tight condition to ensure safe practice?

**Thank you for attending to your sword's safety. If you need assistance with basic repairs, PNKF Iaido Committee members may be able to help. When in doubt, please ask. We want everyone to enjoy Iaido practice safely.**