

The Edmonton Kendo Club Winter/Spring 2003 Newsletter



Here in the fourth issue of the Edmonton Kendo Club Newsletter: a review of the Saskatoon Seminar and Grading, details about our first Spring Gasshuku and yet another installment of “Kendo-ese” 101.

The Annual Saskatoon Seminar

The Saskatoon Kendo Club hosted their annual seminar this past Feb. 28 – March 2, and as usual, it was a rousing success. This year we benefited from the instruction of Mr. Morito Tsumura. Tsumura-Sensei was assisted by Mako Hayashi and Wendy Nakano; the weekend was hosted by Miyaoka-Sensei. Okusa-Sensei, Shiono-Sensei and Takagaki-Sensei were also in Saskatoon lending their wisdom to everyone who attended. Congratulations to Team Edmonton for their great showing this year! With 17 members making the trip, we really made an impression with not only our numbers, but with our hard work and enthusiasm as well.

The weekend began Friday evening with a free practice. Gendzwill-Sensei opened the evening with the words “Tonight’s practice is open...stretch out and find someone to hit”. And with over 50 kendoka present, space was at a premium. And as usual, EKC members jumped in with both feet, practicing with anyone they could find!

Saturday morning involved a session of formal instruction by the attending Sensei. The session was broken up into 3 groups: Ikkyu and non-degree, shodan and nidan, and sandan

up. Each group benefited from the experience of the Sensei with Tsumura-Sensei imparting his wisdom among each group. Everyone felt that the morning was excellent; they all worked hard and learned a lot. Saturday afternoon was the annual Prairie Taikai. This year’s tournament had divisions for beginners (non-bogu), non-degree and ikkyu, shodan/nidan and sandan up. Congratulations to all EKC members; all played hard and with enthusiasm, and several members even made it past the first round. And the support we gave to each other during the tournament was fantastic. Great job!

Sunday morning was reserved for grading. This year, there were kendoka grading for ikkyu, shodan, nidan and sandan. It was a large endeavor to coordinate all those grading, yet it all went relatively smoothly. Congratulations to all who graded – all EKC members successfully passed their respective grading tests. The weekend ended on a high note with all EKC members having lunch at Chianti’s amid lots of smiles and laughter. Again, great job EKC...we really turned some heads and let everyone know that Kendo is in Edmonton!

The 1st Edmonton Kendo Club Spring Gasshuku

The dates for the first Edmonton Spring Gasshuku have been finalized for the weekend of May 23 – 25, and we have booked the Ukrainian Hall for the event. If you recall, we had tentatively

planned the Gasshuku for the following weekend (May 31 – June 1), however the hall was unavailable. Okusa-Sensei (UBC) and Miyaoka-Sensei (Saskatoon) have graciously accepted our invitations to be our head instructors for the weekend. Also, Takagaki-Sensei (Steveston), Gendzwill-Sensei (S'toon), Shiono-Sensei (Calgary) and the other prairie clubs have expressed their interest in coming out for the event. If you've been to a similar event, such as the Saskatoon Seminar this past February, you'll recall that these events are a lot of fun and you definitely learn a lot about kendo. The schedule for the weekend is as follows: we will be having a Friday evening practice from 7 – 10 p.m., and practices on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., respectively, with a Saturday evening BBQ/party. If we have not yet nabbed you to volunteer to help out over the course of the weekend, so don't be shy...volunteer now! ☺

The EKC Around Town

In late February we gave yet another public demonstration, this time to the students of Harry Ainly High School. Many thanks to everyone who was able to make it out: Stephanie, Gerald, Simon, Patrick, Walter, Tom and Mike. This demo was part of the Festival of Japan during the International Languages week at Harry Ainly, and was sponsored by the Japanese Consulate. Gerald and Stephanie first gave a demo of the first seven kendo kata, to many "oohs" and "aahs" and even a few "Holy Cows!". Stephanie then pointed out the legal points in kendo. Next was a demonstration of the basic drills and we finished up with some free practice, again to more than a few "Holy Cows!". The demo was a

real hit. Thanks again everyone who made it out!

We are always open to showing others what Kendo is about and broadening our exposure in the community. If you know of a potential for the EKC to provide a presence, please talk with Stephanie or Gerald.

Summer Practice Times

We again this year will not be practicing at Allendale School after the end of May. Our last practice at Allendale School is on May 28. Our Sunday practices at the Ukrainian Hall will continue through the summer months. We are also looking at booking the Ukrainian Hall for Wednesday evenings from 7 – 10 pm for July and August. We will therefore be practicing only once a week during June. Also remember that the summer practice fees are due at the beginning of May.

"Kendo-ese" 101

In this installment of "Kendo-ese" 101 we answer that burning question: "So what are we doing at the start and end of practice, and what are we actually saying?" Well, here it is! The sempai (senior student), or a sensei-designated student, will conduct the proceedings.

At the start of practice:

1. They will first call everyone to line up. When this happens, hurry to line up...don't dawdle. You should line up in order of seniority, with higher ranking students closer to the senior student. For students without bogu, please line up after those with bogu. The line should be straight, using the most senior student as the reference.

2. The senior student will then say “Keyosuke” – Stand at attention with your feet together and hands at your side.
3. The next call is “Seiza” – This is the kneeling stance. Your shinai should be on your left hand side with the tsuba in line with your knees and string side down.
4. “Mokusoh” follows – This is meditation. Place your left hand in your right hand with your thumbs together. Keep your hands in front of your belly button, and with your eyes closed, breath gently. Use this time to clear your mind of all the days troubles, highs and lows. “Yame” stops the meditation.
5. The next command is “Shomen-ni” – face the front of the dojo (shomen). This is followed by “Rei”, or bow. Place your left hand then your right hand in front of you and form a triangle. Bow your nose towards the triangle. Keep your back straight during your bow.
6. Next is “Sensei-ni” – turn from facing the front of the dojo to facing the sensei. Again “Rei”, but this time say “Oneigashimasu”, let’s practice please.
7. “Otagai-ni” follows – Face forward, but you are bowing to the other students. Again, Rei is done while saying “oneigashimasu”.
8. Finally, the senior student will say “Mensuke”, put on your men. At this point, all student with bogu will proceed to put on their men and kote for practice.

At the end of practice...This is similar to the start of practice, with a slight wrinkle:

1. Line up
2. Keyosuke
3. Seiza
4. The senior student will then say “Mentore” – Take off your men. Those with bogu will first take off their kote (left then right), and place them with the strings down in front of them. The right kote should be closer to you with the fist facing your left knee; the left kote faces your right knee. Then untie the knot behind your men and gather all himo (strings) in their left hand. Shift the himo to their right hand and hold the front of men with your right hand. The left hand is used to remove the men. While the men is in front of your face, take off your tenugi and use it to wipe the sweat from your face. Place the tenugi inside the men, followed by the himo. Place the men on top of the kote, and move it out in front and to the right of you.
5. Mokusoh / Yame
6. Shomen-ni / Rei
7. Sensei-ni / Rei – At the end of practice you say “Arigato Gozaimashita”, Thank you for practicing.
8. Otagai-ni / Rei – Again say “arigato Gozaimashita”

At this point, there may be announcements, or some final words that Sensei wishes to say. After that, Sensei will signal that everyone can relax and are free to go.

The Iron Monk

By now, you may have had the opportunity to check out Troy's web-site, www.ironmonk.com. Here you'll find shinai, bokken, gi and hakama, bogu, as well as links to various sites on the web, and place to recycle your gear to a good home if you are thinking of upgrading. If you are looking for a specific item, you can talk to Troy at practice, or check out the Iron Monk site and send a message. Troy has put a significant effort, and we all appreciate it...Thanks Troy!

Well, that's it for this edition of the EKC Newsletter. If you have any ideas of things to include in an upcoming edition, please let us know!

Gerald