

# **CAPITAL KATORI** **香取神道流**

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**NEW STUDENT GUIDE**

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# CAPITAL KATORI

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### I. General Information

- A. *The art you are studying is formally entitled Tenshin Shōden Katori Shinto Ryu. You should consider this a very fortuitous thing. The odds of being able to study an art which was founded in the mid 1400's, with an undisputed provenance, are extremely slim. You should be proud to be included in the Ryu, and a very good place to begin studying the history of this art is the lookup the Wikipedia article of the same name ([link](#)).*
- B. *As you will learn by research, there are several lines of TSKSR and the one we study is led by Tetsutaka Sugawara Sensei. Another way of saying this is that we study Tenshin Shōden Katori Shinto Ryu, Sugawara ha.*
1. *Sugawara Sense's website is <http://www.sugawarabudo.com/>*
  2. *Capital Katori's website is <http://capitalkatori.com/>*

### II. Administrative Information

- A. There are several forms you will need to fill out prior to your first practice. It is your responsibility to submit and we ask you to please not delay.
1. **Keppan** – This is an oath, once a blood oath but no longer so, once required by many traditional *ryu*. Many *ryu* were once close societies, and techniques were their stock in trade; hence those techniques were not taught without requiring certain responsibilities from members. In modern times the *keppan* is a simple statement that you will not do certain things. Please be aware though that Sugawara Sensei takes this statement very seriously.
  2. **Registration Form** – This is simply Sensei's way of knowing who you are and signifies you joining his organization. There is a ONE TIME registration fee of \$80 to register. Your acceptance into Sensei's organization is a lifetime membership.
  3. **Release form** -- This is what every dojo will ask for prior to your first practice.

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### **III. Monetary Details.**

- A. Capital Katori is generously hosted by Capital Aikikai. All dues go to them. Your monetary obligation will be one of the following:
1. IF you are already a member of Capital Aikikai there is no fee to study TSKSR. Your Aikido dues cover your tuition. (Please do be aware though that TSKSR is NOT aiki weapons, and does require a separate and somewhat substantial commitment.)
  2. IF you are a member of another local dojo, (with prior approval) we will not ask you to pay another dojo membership, but you will be required to pay a mat fee of \$10.00 per class. This is a courtesy extended to us by Capital Aikikai. Please do not abuse it.
  3. IF you are not a member of another dojo you will be required to join Capital Aikikai. At present time their fee structure is:
    - a) \$75.00 per month, or
    - b) \$65.00 is paid in three month installments.
  4. Whatever your fee structure, you may pay Capital tuition/mat fees by putting money in a box in the dojo. Capital also has a pay pal link which can be found on their web site which is:
    - a) <http://www.capitalaikikai.org/schedule.html>
  5. Please remember, being current with tuition and/ or mat fees is your responsibility.

### **IV. Bogu (Training Equipment)**

- A. Katori requires a variety of training weapons. These should be of good quality (see links below, and, for a beginner at least, we will ask that you have all your training weapons approved by one of the instructors prior to using them in class). There are a lot of inexpensive and unacceptable substitutes around. These are generally, unreliable, badly balanced, easily broken and hence rather dangerous.

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### 1. Wooden Weapons.

#### a) Bokken

- (1) In the beginning you will only need a bokken (wooden sword). The dojo has a few loaners for new students, but it is your responsibility to acquire what you need, and we ask that you do so quickly. Katori uses a bokken with a weight and dimensions within certain parameters, and it is best to follow these guidelines. Bokken should be made of Japanese white oak, or impact grade hickory and not have a tsuba (guard). The links below sell bokken specifically designed for TSKSR, but there are some acceptable substitutes among the various types of bokken used for aiki weapons.
- (2) Please note: it is considered **extremely rude** to use someone else's bokken (or weapons) without their express permission.

#### b) Long Weapons (bo, naginata, spear)

- (1) It will be some months before you practice with the long weapons. While you may wish to purchase your own for private practice, the dojo normally provides these for student use in class.

### 2. Metal Weapons (Iaito, Shinken)

#### a) Iaito

- (1) For Iai (sword drawing practice) most people use an Iaito, or training sword. While they have the same fittings (handle, scabbard, wrapping) as a real sword, the blades are usually an alloy blend, and neither sharp, nor capable of being sharpened. There are however, some steel Iaito, which are very durable, but are not to be considered real swords. Because a serviceable Iaito will be an investment of several

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hundred dollars, it is perfectly fine to use your bokken in the beginning. When you do purchase an iaito, be very aware of cheap practice iaito. While a serviceable iaito CAN be had for \$300.00, most cost more. We can help you find your first iaito, but as previously mentioned, whatever you buy, we need to approve for practice in class. Because something looks like metal, has a handle, and comes in a scabbard, that does not mean it is appropriate for practice. Be patient and wait until you can spend a little more. Again, we will help you in any way we can.

### b) **Shinken (Live Blades)**

- (1) A true Shinken will be hand made by a smith in the traditional Japanese fashion, be differentially tempered, quite beautiful, and rather expensive. Even if you currently possess one, **for safety reasons you may not practice with them in a class setting without express instructor permission.**

### 3. **Clothing**

- a) Normal attire for Katori practice consists of:
  - (1) **Keiko gi or uniform top** – these are normally indigo in color, but many people wear plain white gi tops. If you already have a white gi top, that will be perfectly fine to start.
  - (2) **Hakama** – Black (preferable) or indigo blue (acceptable).
- b) If you already practice aikido, and have a hakama, you are ready to go.
- c) Please note, if you do not have a keiko gi we will ask that you acquire one with 30 days of beginning training. Good quality attire can be had relatively inexpensively and hence

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is a modest commitment to studying Katori.

4. Bogu Suppliers
  - a) E-bogu <http://www.e-bogu.com/>
  - b) AOI Budogu <http://www.budo-aoi.com/index.php>
  - c) Nine Circles <https://www.ninecirclesusa.com/>
  - d) Tozando <http://www.tozandoshop.com/>
  - e) We urge you to ask for advice if you have any questions.

## V. Dojo Etiquette

A. **Dojo Structure.** One of the joys of training in TSKSR is the building of friendships with our colleagues. As these relationships develop, please remember that within the dojo you are going to be in one of three relationships to other members. They will be either your:

### 1. Teacher (Sensei)

- a) **Kyoshi** - A Katori sensei will have, by definition, a teaching license (*menkyo*) from Sugawara Sensei, and will hold the rank of *Kyoshi*. Normally they have trained for a minimum of 12 – 15 years. While we are not overly formal, and want practice to be fun, until you are instructed otherwise it is best to address the teacher as “Sensei”. Sugawara Sensei should always be address as “Sensei”. Only Kyoshi may teach, and, when Sugawara Sensei is on the mat, only he will be teaching.
- b) Katori does not have ranks aside from that of Kyoshi. However, those who have been taught a certain portion of the Ryu, and have been given a *mokuroku* (essentially means “catalogue” and generally means about 5 -7 years of training) may act as assistant instructors. Their role is to assist you to learn what you’ve already been taught. Only a Kyoshi may teach new kata (forms).

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### 2. Senior

- a) If you are senior to the person you are working with, then it is your responsibility to work at a speed and in a manner which is optimal for their development. You may wish to go faster or stronger than is appropriate and you should resist this urge. If you are working with someone junior to you, please be aware that you are there assist in someone their training. We all want to get a vigorous workout and there will be ample time to do so when you are working with someone senior to you.

### 3. Junior

- a) In the beginning you will be junior to everyone. In no way should that be discouraging. We were all where you are, and you'll find everyone quite happy to train with you and help you in any way they can. Just be aware of your limitations. Also be aware that, regardless of prior experience in other martial arts, TSKSR is a nearly 600 year old art that does not require your innovation. There is a right way and a wrong way to do the kata and it is your responsibility to adapt to the ryu, not the other way around. Just relax and train hard, and all will be well.

## B. Training Flow

1. A Katori class is quite vigorous. Within a class you will get to train with multiple partners. In order for everyone to get the most out of their training, during class, the following rules should be observed.
  - a) ***During class you should change training partners often, and work with many different partners.*** Everyone has favorite training partners, and things they like to work on. Regardless, during the average class you should have worked with most, if not all of those present. Under normal circumstances you should not spend extended amounts of time with any one person.
  - b) ***If you are in senior to the person you are working with,***

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***you have an obligation to help them improve.*** Moreover, you should seek out juniors to work with, and a substantial portion of class should be spent training with them.

- c) ***If you are a junior member of the dojo it is your obligation to seek out senior members to train with.*** While seniors are there to help you, there is a long tradition of juniors having to “steal” technique from seniors. This will become clearer as you gain experience.

### C. Other Etiquette

1. You should bow to *Shomen* (dojo shrine) when entering or leaving the training mat.
2. To request someone to train with you, you should approach them, bow, and politely ask them to train (“onegai shimasu” is typically used).
3. You should bow to your training partner at the start of every set of kata (again “onegai shimasu” is typically used).
4. You should bow to your training partner at the end of every set of kata (“domo argiato” is typically used).
5. For laijutsu, you should bow in prior to starting your kata.
6. For laijutsu, you should bow out after finishing your kata, including bowing to the most senior *kyoshi* present and waiting for them to return the bow before leaving the practice floor.
7. If you make a mistake or accidentally strike an opponent, apologize. (“Gomen nasai” is appropriate).
8. Do not step over a weapon. Do not lean on a weapon.
9. Do not borrow or use someone else’s weapon without permission.
10. After receiving instruction, it’s polite to thank the instructor, perhaps even with a bow.



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### VI. Basic Training Advice

- A. **Be committed.** You should strive to make training a part of your daily routine, even if it's nothing more than mentally reviewing kata. You'll make better progress with a little bit of training once a day than you will with hours of kata once a week.
- B. **Vary your training.** Don't train the same way over and over. Katori is built on a set of principles that must be experienced many different ways in order to be understood.
- C. **Keep a beginner's spirit.** Always seek to learn more and be willing to learn from everyone, including those junior to you. Keep an open mind. Striving to be "right" and to prove someone else "wrong" is the quickest way to lose your beginner's spirit.
- D. **Incorporate self-study and self-reflection.** Katori will push you and you will continually reach sticking points in your training. The surest way to overcome these plateaus is to think critically about Katori and honestly about what you need to do to improve. Asking "why" is sometimes more important than "what".
- E. **Focus on understanding principles, not learning kata.** The katas of Katori are a means to an end, not an end unto themselves. Katas are tools to help a student understand the principles of Katori and how they are applied in certain situations ("techniques"). It is far better to understand 1 kata fully than to learn 10 katas by rote.
- F. **Use the resources at your disposal.**
  - 1. **The Website.** The Capital Katori website has a number of resources including videos of the kata.
  - 2. **The Member's Only Area.** Using the login provided to you, visit <http://capitalkatori.com/members-area/>. Here you'll find more training references, including detailed notes on every kata and a discussion area about Katori.
  - 3. **Other Katori Kyoshi and students.** Whenever possible, take advantage of the opportunity to train with other students/teachers.

# Written Oath and Pledge

to the

## Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu

When I become a member of the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu, which has been handed down by the Great Deity of the Katori Shrine, I herewith affirm my pledge of absolute secrecy about matters of this ryu.

I will not have the impertinence to discuss or demonstrate my martial technique to non-members.

I will never make disreputable use of my martial knowledge.

I will not cross swords with any followers of martial traditions without a certificate of full proficiency in my art.

I now pledge to firmly keep each of the above articles. Should I break any of the articles, I will submit to the punishment of the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu. Herewith I solemnly swear and affix my signature to this oath.

To : Sugawara Martial Arts Institute

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration for  
Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu  
in the  
Sugawara Martial Arts Institute  
To : Sugawara Martial Arts Institute**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # Home \_\_\_\_\_ Office \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_

Prior Martial Arts Experience \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Sports \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Registration # \_\_\_\_\_

# Release and Waiver of Liability and Indemnity Agreement

(Read Carefully Before Signing)

In consideration of being permitted to participate in any way in the Martial Arts Program indicated below and/or being permitted to enter for any purpose any restricted area (here in defined as any area where in admittance to the general public is prohibited), the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of the minor participant named below agree:

1. I will inspect the facilities and equipment to be used, and if I believe anything is unsafe, I will immediately advise the officials of such condition and refuse to participate. I understand and agree that, if at any time, I feel anything to be UNSAFE; I will immediately take all precautions to avoid the unsafe area and REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE further.
2. I/We fully understand and acknowledge that:
  - a. There are risks and dangers associated with participation in martial arts events and activities which could result in bodily injury partial and/or total disability, paralysis and death.
  - b. The social and economic losses and/or damages, which could result from these risks and dangers described above, could be severe.
  - c. These risks and dangers may be caused by the action, inaction or negligence of the participant or the action, inaction or negligence of others, including, but not limited to, the Releasees named below.
  - d. There may be other risks not known to us or are not reasonably foreseeable at this time.
3. I/WE accept and assume such risks and responsibility for the losses and/or damages following such injury, disability, paralysis or death, however caused and whether caused in whole or in part by the negligence of the Releasees named below.
4. I/We HEREBY RELEASE, WAIVE, DISCHARGE AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE the martial arts facility used by the participant, including it owners, managers, promoters, lessees of premises used to conduct the martial arts event or program, premises and event inspectors, underwriters, consultants and others who give recommendations, directions or instructions to engage in risk evaluation or loss control activities regarding the martial arts facility or events held at such facility and each of them, their directors, officers, agents, employees, all for the purpose herein referred to as "Releasee"...From all liability to the undersigned, my/our personal representatives, assigns, executors, heirs and next to kin For any and all claims, demands, losses or damages and any claims or demands therefore on account of any injury, including but not limited to the death of the participant or damage to property, arising out of or relating to the events(s) caused alleged to be caused in whole or in part by the negligence of the releasee or otherwise.
5. I/We HEREBY acknowledge that THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EVENT(S) ARE VERY DANGEROUS and involve the risk of serious injury and/or death and/or property damage. Each of THE UNDERSIGNED also expressly acknowledges that INJURIES RECEIVED MAY BE COMPOUNDED OR INCREASED BY NEGLIGENT RESCUE OPERATIONS OR PROCEDURES OF THE RELEASEES.
6. EACH OF THE UNDERSIGNED further expressly agrees that the foregoing release, waiver, and indemnity agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the law of the Province or State in which the event is conducted and that if any portion is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding continue in full legal force and effect.
7. On behalf of the participant and individually, the undersigned partners(s) and/or legal guardian(s) for the minor participant executes this Waiver and Release. If, despite the release, the participant makes a claim against any of the Releasees, the parents(s) and/or legal guardian(s) will reimburse the Releasee for any money which they have paid to the participant, or on his behalf, and hold them harmless.

I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY, ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND HAVE SIGNED IT FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT, ASSURANCE, OR GUARANTEE BEING MADE TO ME AND INTEND MY SIGNATURE TO BE COMPLETE AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF ALL LIABILITY TO THE GREATEST EXTENT ALLOWED BY LAW.

Martial Arts School: Capital Aikikai and Capital Area Katori

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Received by \_\_\_\_\_  
*Registrar Signature* *Printed Name* *Date*