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Re: Questions and Answers

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Question 1: Nuke (抜け) versus Nuki (抜き)

Answer 1: Both Japanese words above are the forms of conjugation of two separate verbs.

First, the word “nuke” is conjugated from “nukeru” that corresponds to the form of the infinitive in English. (Note that no infinitive exists in Japanese. So you must know one of the inflected forms of a verb which is used to conclude a sentence when you look up a word in a dictionary.) The word “nukeru” is an intransitive verb that means “to come out, to go out of, or to emerge from.” For example, “ha ga nuketa” means “a tooth came out,” “nedoko kara nukeru” “to get out of bed,” and “tonneru kara nukeru” “to emerge from the tunnel.” In Aikido or weapons techniques, the word “nuke” merely means to pass through. In this case, the meaning of “nuke” is the same as the word ‘sudori’ (to pass through).

Next, the word “nuki” is conjugated from “nuku” that corresponds to the form of the infinitive in English. The “nuku” is a transitive verb that means “to pull out or to draw out.” For example, “ha wo nuku” means “to pull out a tooth (at a dentist’s),” “katana wo nuku” “to draw a sword,” and “sen wo nuku” “to uncork a bottle.” In weapons technique, “do wo nuku” or “do-nuki” means “to strike one’s opponent’s breastplate (an equipment of kendo) and follow through.” In this case, the word “nuki” means “to pull something up-, down-, or sideways.” For example, when you perform Nihon Kendo Kata, a feature of ipponme (No. 1) is “nuki-men” and a feature of nihonme (No. 2) is “nuki-kote.” “Do-nuki” appears in nanahonme (No.7).

Question 2: Omote (表) versus Ura (裏)

Answer 2: Both Japanese words above are the forms of noun.

First, the word “omote” means “the front.” For example, “omote-guchi” in a house means “the front entrance.” That is also called “genkan” or “the entrance.” In Aikido technique, ikkyo (omote), for example, is executed by nage who guides uke downward in front of nage walking a couple of steps forward. That is why it is also called “irimi” or “to step forward” in place of “omote.” When you put a sword or a bokken on a sword rack, the hilt’s side of a sword is usually positioned at the left side of a rack and a blade side is at the upper side. At that position, you can see the left side of a sword. That is why the left side of a sword is called “omote.” In weapons technique, when you take a taito posture, the left side of a sword is positioned at the outside near your left hip. When you take a chudan posture after doing a batto motion, you should recognize that the left side of a sword at your chudan posture is ‘omote.’

Next, the word “ura” means “the back.” For example, “ura-guchi” in a house means “the back door.” In Aikido technique, ikkyo (ura) is executed by nage who guides uke while turning nage’s body backward until uke falls down completely. That is why it is also called “tenkan” or “to turn backward” in place of “ura.” In a sword or a bokken, when you take a chudan posture, the right side of a sword is called “ura” as the opposite side of the left side of a sword.

Question 3: Ju (順) versus Gyaku (逆)

Answer 3: Both Japanese words above are the forms of both adjective and noun.

First, the word “jun” means “correct, ordinary or the correct (ordinary) way.” In weapons technique, the word “jun” means “to act on the ordinary way.” For example, when you take a chudan posture with the right foot forward, uchitachi attempts to strike you against your head (shomen). So you responds to block uchitachi’s sword by merely thrusting your sword out. That action is called “jun” and your handling is called “junte.”

Next, the word “gyaku” means “wrong, unusual or the wrong (unusual) way.” In weapons technique, the word “gyaku” means “to act on the unusual way by crossing your right wrist on the top using the right side (ura) of a sword.” That action is called “gyaku” and your handling is called ‘gyakute.’

Question 4: Maki-kaeshi (巻き返し) versus Nagashi-mawashi (流し回し)

Answer 4: Both Japanese words above are the forms of conjugation of separate two-word verbs.

First, the word “maki-kaeshi” is conjugated from “maki-kaesu” that corresponds to the form of the infinitive in English. The word “maki” is conjugated from “maku” that corresponds to the form of infinitive in English. The word “maku” is a transitive verb that means “to roll up or to wind.” For example, “kami wo maku” means “to roll up a piece of paper” and “fuirumu wo maku” “to wind the film.” The word “kaeshi” is conjugated from “kaesu” that corresponds to the form of the infinitive in English. The word “kaesu” is a transitive verb that means “to return or to turn over.” Thus the meaning of the word “maki-kaeshu” is “to roll back.” In weapons technique, when you take a chudan posture with the right foot forward, a tip of your sword moves toward the side of your face, but, eventually, your sword goes back toward your opponent by rotating your sword rolling back and hits the opponent on the head or the wrist. This action is called “maki-kaeshi.”

Next, the word ‘nagashi-mawashi’ is conjugated from “nagashi-mawasu” that corresponds to the form of the infinitive in English. The word ‘nagashi’ is conjugated from “nagasu” that corresponds to the form of the infinitive in English. The word ‘nagasu’ is a transitive verb that means “to pour or to spread.” For example, “mizu wo nagasu” means “to pour the water (out of the bucket)” and “uwasa wo nagasu” “to spread a rumor.” The word “mawashi” is conjugated from “mawasu” that corresponds to the form of the infinitive in English. The word “mawasu” is a transitive verb that means “to turn or to rotate.” For example, “handoru wo mawasu” means “to turn a handle or turn the steering wheel.” Thus the meaning of the word “nagashi-mawashu” means “to rotate something swinging around.” In weapons technique, when you take a jodan posture, you suddenly rotate your jo or a bokken over your head swinging around as if you were swing a flag roundly. This action is called “nagashi-mawashi.”

Question 5: Gedan kaku-kiri no kamae (下段欠く切りの構え)

Answer 5: This terminology only appears in Sangaku En no Tachi (No. 5) in Shinkageryu.

First, when you take a gedan posture in the style of Shinkageryu, the bottom of the hilt is positioned at the lower abdomen near the navel and a tip of a sword is pointing at your opponent's face or wrist of the raito (jodan) posture. No. 2 hidari-gedan (gyaku), No. 3 mi-gedan (jun) and No. 6 mi-gedan (jun) in Kihon Hassei begin with this gedan posture.

Next, you must realize that the gedan kaku-kiri no kamae is the posture of zanshin after shitachi executed gasshi-uchi (a mutual strike). In the same way, uchitachi takes this posture after losing to shitachi. The word 'kaku-kiri' literally means "a lack-cutting." In other words, you have no intention to cut again. That corresponds to "sonkyo no kamae" of Nihon Kendo Kata. In the gedan kaku-kiri no kamae, both knees bend deeply, a sword is positioned over the lap, and a sword is almost positioned horizontally. In this case, you don't need to worry about an angle of sword because some of you cannot bend knees deeply. Be natural and feel comfortable to take any zanshin posture. Shitachi takes a hidari-hanmi posture, and his or her right hand is positioned at yakute (see Answer 3) after retreating. Uchitachi takes a mi-gedan posture, and his or her hand is positioned at junte (see Answer 3) after retreating.

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