

Holding the sword

Grip the **tsuka** lightly with your right hand and with the left grip it near the **tsukagashira** so that the little finger doesn't go over the **maki dome**.

Hold the sword with the last two fingers of both hands and relax the other fingers. Grip the tsuka lightly as if it were an egg.

Cleaning

A sword cleaning kit is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of your Iaito. A normal sword maintenance kit includes the following which is necessary in the proper care of your Iaito:

- Brass Awl and hammer to dismantle the sword
- Rice paper for cleaning oil from the blade, polishing and spreading oil on the blade
- Extra large uchiko (powder ball), the pad contains non-abrasive powder that absorbs extra oil
- Bottle of choji oil, to prevent rusting
- Plastic container to store oiled cloth

The Scabbard

The scabbard of your Iaito is finished in many coats of black lacquer. To preserve the sheen, the scabbard needs only to be wiped occasionally with a very soft cloth. Handle the scabbard only by holding the wrapped section otherwise fine scratches caused by handling the lacquered sections will dull the finish.

The Blade

Always hold the blade away from you.

Begin by using a sheet of rice paper to remove oil from the blade.

Tap the powder ball lightly against the blade every two inches or so along its length, dusting the blade very lightly with powder.

Then use a clean piece of rice paper or cotton cloth to carefully rub over the powder to polish the blade. Do this on both sides.

Apply a few drops of oil along the length of each side of the blade and use a piece of rice paper or cotton cloth to spread the oil evenly over the blade.

Be sure not to touch the blade again before resheathing.

Stain Removal

Should your sword be stained or show beginning signs of rusting, try the following: -

If the stains are light, try using a pencil eraser to see if the stains can be removed. This only works for very light stains.

For heavier stains, you will need to use wet sandpaper between 600 and 900 grit (depending on the particular blade) to take off the staining. Sand it wet and parallel to the blade until the stains have disappeared, then dry thoroughly and re-oil immediately.

Should the blade become so corroded that 600-900 grit sandpaper does not work, your

blade probably have developed some pitting. Most minor pittings only effect the blade cosmetically, should the pitting be extensive, you may want to consider retiring the blade and find a replacement.