

Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation



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SWKKF Policy #3 - Dojo Etiquette Manual

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INTRODUCTION

It is generally understood that karate begins and ends with *reihoh* (etiquette). The formalized manners and mental attitudes that should be followed have been developed over many generations. This formality is not imposed to force any sense of hierarchy or respect in the students; that should already be present. The main function of the rules of etiquette is to guide behavior and to ensure the safety of all participants.

Politeness and discipline must become a natural part of the *karateka*. No lapse of attention may be permitted when several people are punching and kicking or practicing with *shindo* in a confined space. There is no part of a karate class that does not have a purpose. Even the simplest actions are designed to instruct.

This being said, it is more important to work hard and honestly than it is to obsess on ritual. Please use these directions to guide you in understanding our art a little better and to feel comfortable with this knowledge. You will not be out of line in any club that you may be welcome to visit.

SETTING UP THE DOJO (PRACTICE HALL) - SEE FIGURE 1

In any area where you practice *karate* there will be a natural arrangement that best suits practice.

The following description is the preferred arrangement but every situation is unique so some variation is unavoidable.

If possible, select a rectangular shape.

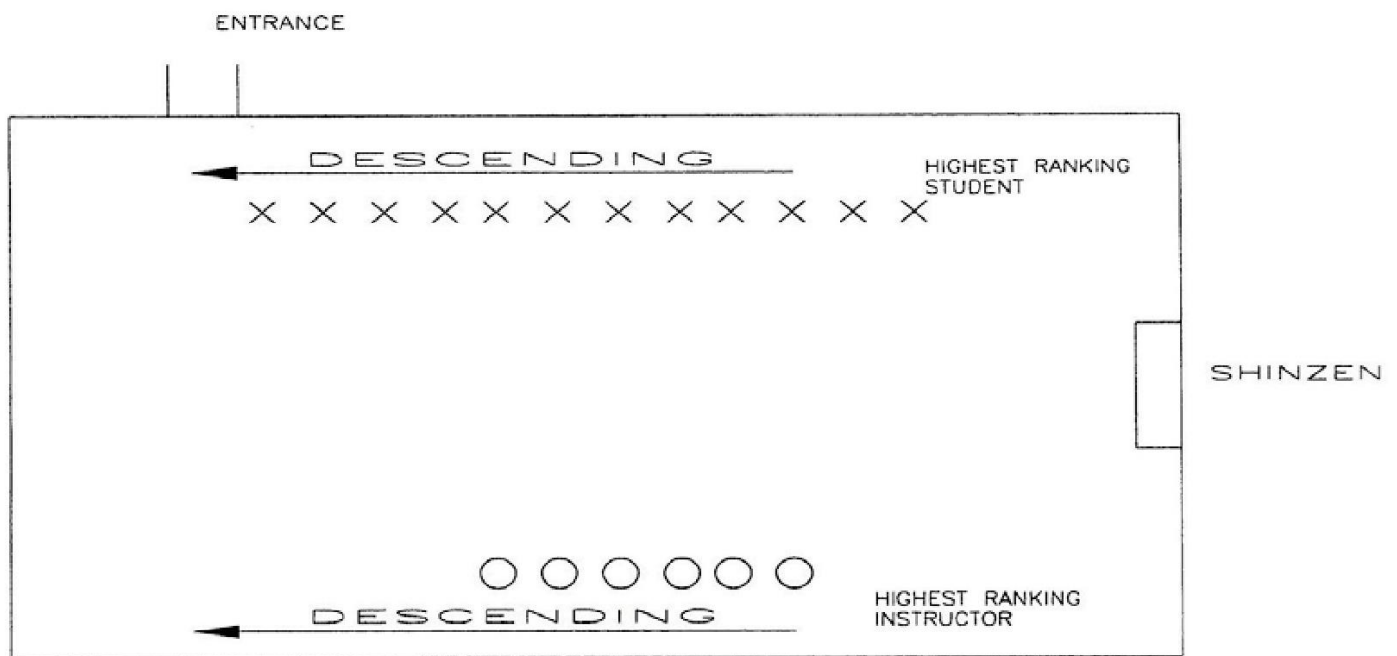
The entrance side to the *dojo* is called the *shimoseki* or *shimoza*. This side is where the students (kyu belts and non-instructing black belts) sit.

The students face the *shomen* (front) or *joseki* (high side) and this is where the ranking sensei and instructors sit.

To the students left, (instructor's right), far away from the entrance and ideally on the eastern wall, is the *kamiza* or *shinzen* (place of honor, photo, shrine, etc.).

Students sit in order of rank and seniority. Highest rank sitting closest to the *shinzen*. This means that they sit furthest from the entrance.

NOTE: It is not unusual for a visiting student or sensei to try to sit near the entrance. This is the most humble position in the dojo.



SHOMEN

figure 1

ENTERING THE DOJO

Step onto the dojo floor with the foot furthest away from the *shinzen*.

Turn to face the *shinzen*.

Assume *musubi dachi* (attention stance) [see figure 2] with the heels together, toes apart. The arms are at the sides in a natural, comfortable position. The fingers are together, not splayed.

Perform *ritsurei* (standing bow) [see figure 3].

Divert your eyes below the horizontal so as not to make eye contact with the *shinzen*. Bow 30 degrees from the hips. Keep the neck and spine straight. The pace is slow and respectful.

Proceed to your position for *hajime no saho* (beginning etiquette).

Move around the edges of the *dojo*, never through the middle, with a minimum of disturbance or distraction to others who may be practicing or preparing for practice. You have made the transition from the outside world. Be mindful of this.

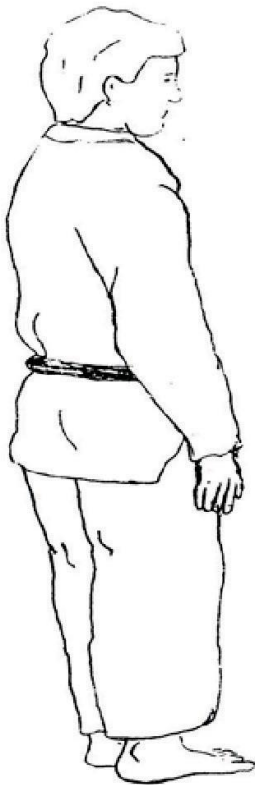


Fig. 2

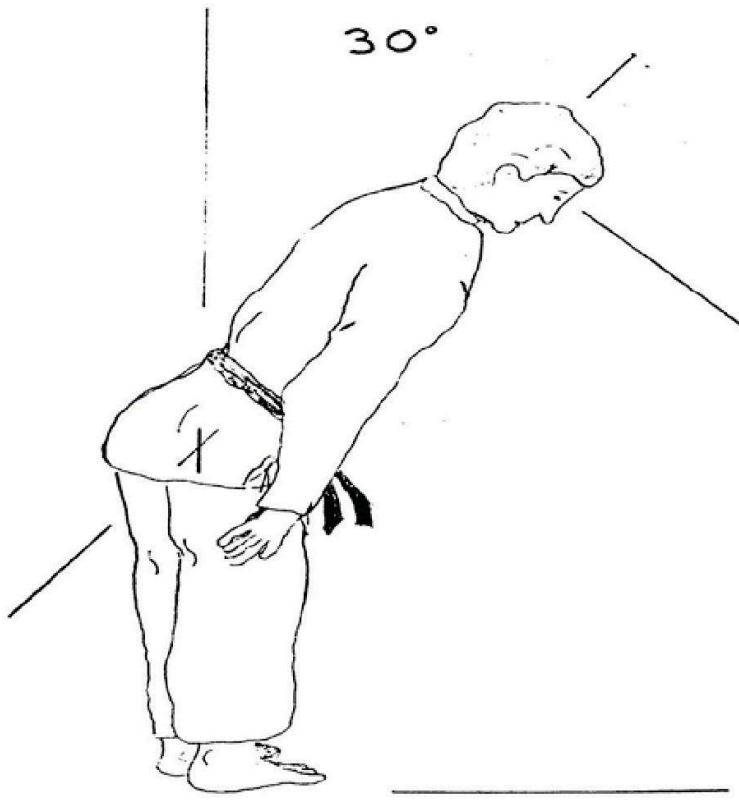


Fig. 3

HAJIME NO SAHO (BEGINNING ETIQUETTE)

Upon hearing *retsu o tsukeru* (line up!), go to your appropriate position on the floor for the beginning of practice and stand in *hachiji dachi* (natural stance).

On the command *tski* (attention!) assume *musubi dachi*.

On the command *suarte* (kneel down), the ranking *sensei* kneels first, then everyone else in order of descending rank.

To kneel from the standing position, turn about 30 degrees toward the *shinzen*. Slide the left foot back and go down onto the left knee [see figure 4]. Bring the right foot back to join the left, leave the knees about two fists apart, straighten the toes and sit on the heels with the big toes together but not overlapping [see figure 5].

On the command *seiza* (sit up!), sit up straight. The hands should lie on the thighs, rolling a little toward the inner aspect of the thighs with the palms down and fingers together, not splayed. The posture should be crisp but not stiff. The head, neck and spine are in a straight line. The shoulders are back and relaxed. The elbows and arms are tucked in but relaxed. The body is still, the breathing quiet and the eyes are unfocused at a distant spot: *enzen no metsuke* (gaze at the far mountains) [see figure 6].

When *mokuso* (meditate) is called, the hands should turn to face palms upward in a display of openness. Sensei Shintani described this position as a gesture to acknowledge the opening of our hearts and minds to the spirit of sensei Otsuka [see figure 7].

When *yame* (stop) is called, the eyes open and the hands resume their previous palms down position. At the command, *shinzen ni* (turn in the direction of the place of honor) everyone turns to face the *shinzen* end of the dojo.



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6(a)



Figure 6(b)



Figure 7(a)



Figure 7(b)

Rei (bow) is called. *Zarei* (the most formal kneeling bow) should be performed slowly and without unnecessary movement. What this means is that the head and neck remain in line with the straight spine. The head should not fall forward onto the chest nor reveal the base of the neck. The elbows remain tucked into the sides of the body so that no gaps can be seen against the body. The forearms and hands move slowly and non-offensively along the outer aspect of the thighs to join at the index fingers and thumbs in front of the knees thus forming an open triangle which you aim for with your chin as you bow down and which protects your face should something or someone force your head downwards [see figure 8].

Resist the tendency to fling your arms in a broad semicircle and do not move forward in the bow by raising your rump. Move downward within yourself, hold for a heartbeat. Return to *seiza*.

At the command: *sensei ni* (turn in the direction of the instructor) Everyone turns to face the instructor(s).

At this point you may address each other during the opening bow with the courteous phrase: *onagai shimasu* (let us practice together); then return to the upright *seiza* position with the hands returning along the same path as before.

The ranking sensei stands up first, then everyone else sequentially in order of rank.

To stand from *seiza*, keep the hands on the thighs, rise up onto the toes, slide the right foot forward about thirty degrees toward the *shinzen* and then bring up the left foot as you assume *musubi dachi*.

The ranking sensei makes announcements, introductions, etc. And then begins the class by giving the instructors, if any, their assignments. The ranking sensei bows 15 degrees [see figure 9] and everyone bows 16 degrees in return. Then everyone takes up there appropriate positions for practice [see figure 10].



Figure 8(a)



Figure 8(b)



Figure 8(c)



Figure 9

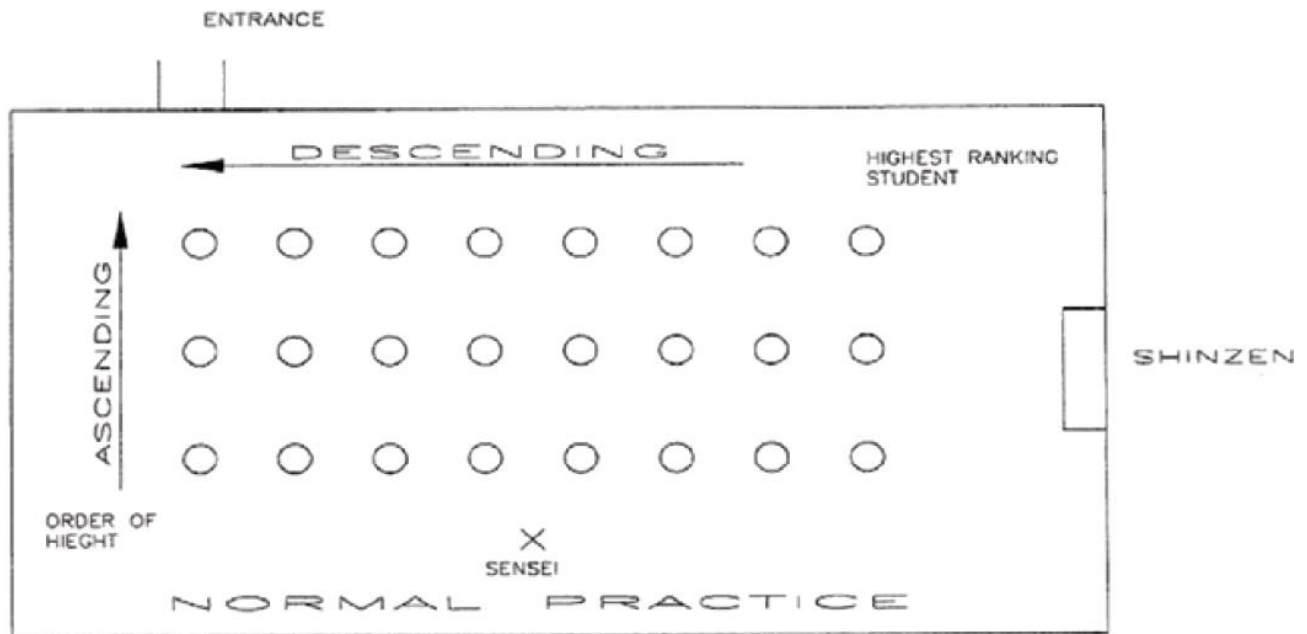


Figure 10

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

When working with partners, the senior instructor takes up position closest to the *shinzen* on the *shomen* side and remains there for the duration of the exercise so that everyone has the honor of practicing with that *sensei* [see figure 11].

If you arrive late for practice, step onto the floor and bow-in as above but then step away from the entrance and assume *seiza*.

Wait for the ranking *sensei* to acknowledge your presence, then perform *zareii*. Step up with the right foot first and join the practice.

NOTE: If you suffer with a severe knee or limb problem and cannot kneel in *seiza*, stand in *musubi dachi* and perform a 15 degree standing bow instead.

When a ***sensei* of higher rank** than the instructing *sensei* or any *godan* or higher arrives at the dojo during practice; the instructing *sensei* will stop, call *tski, rei*, and everyone bows to the respected *sensei*. The class resumes or at the discretion of the instructing *sensei* the higher ranked *sensei* may be offered to take over the practice. This is a courtesy and may be respectfully declined.

To exchange control of the practice, the instructor of the moment shall return to the original bow-in position, call: *tski, rei* and exchange bows with the class. The instructor calls up the replacement instructor. They bow to each other and then the previous instructor leaves or joins the class.

The new instructor calls *tski, rei*. Everyone bows and the practice resumes.

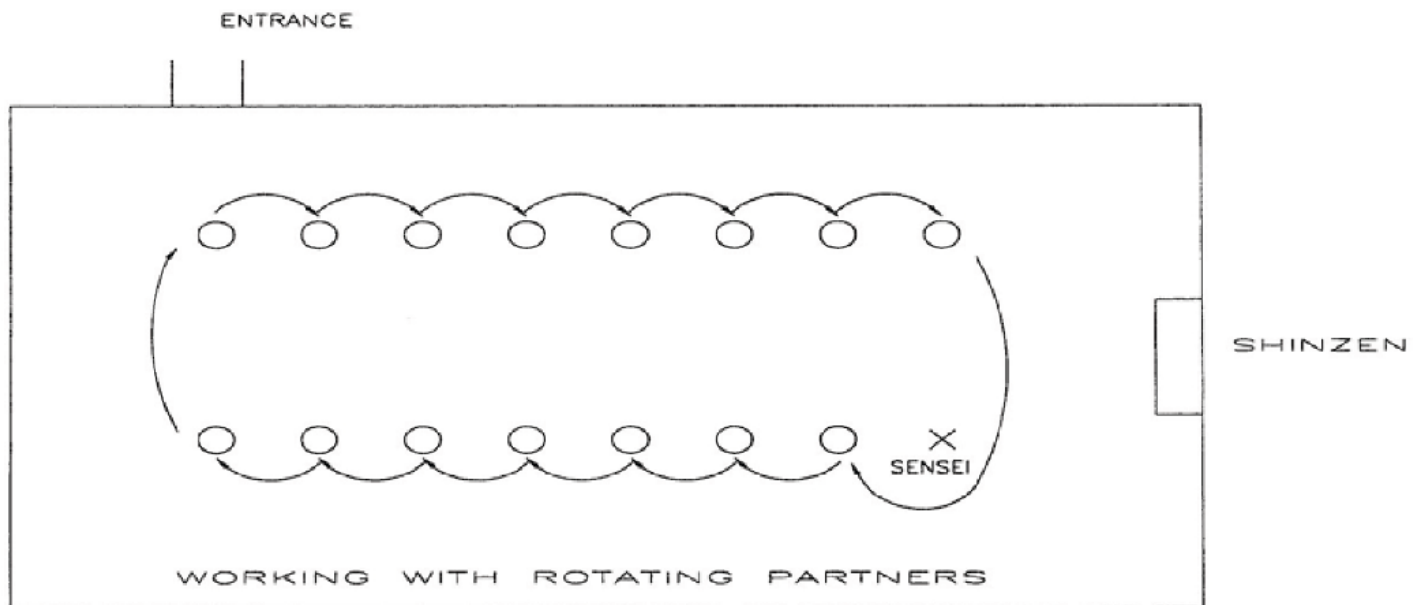


Figure 11

KATA ETIQUETTE - SEE FIGURE 12

Enter the on-deck box (waiting area) when your name is called. Stand quietly in *hachiji dachi*.

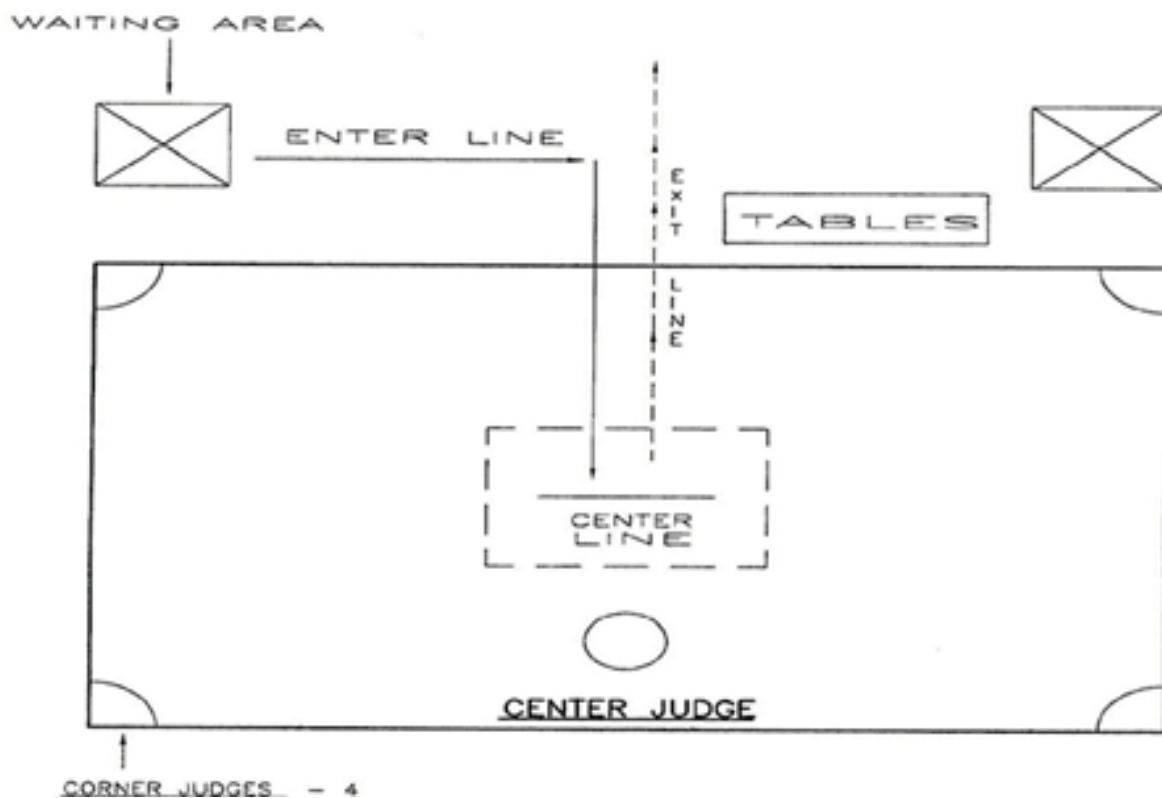
When your name is called again, assume *musubi dachi* and bow 15 degrees to the competitor who preceded you, unless you are first up.

Walk to the edge of the ring and stop at the center line. Assume *musubi dachi*, and bow 15 degrees to the center judge. Step into the ring with the left foot first and proceed to your starting position and stand in *hachiji dachi*.

Announce the name of your *kata*. The center judge will repeat the name. The *kata* will begin at this moment with no further bowing until the end.

When you finish *kata*, assume *hachiji dachi* then *musubi dachi*, bow 15 degrees to the center judge and then if necessary step aside to allow the scorekeepers to see the scores as they are called. Wait in *hachiji dachi*, once all the scores have been called, assume *musubi dachi*, bow 15 degrees to the center judge, and then step backwards out of the ring, exiting with the left foot first. Turn 90 degrees to your right, bow 15 degrees to the competitor in the on-deck box, turn and leave the ring area.

KATA: BOWING IN/OUT OF RING



Figure

12

KUMITE ETIQUETTE - SEE FIGURE 13

Competitors go to the on-deck area and stand in *hachiji dachi*.

When names are called, competitors walk along the sides of the ring to the center line and stand in *hachiji dachi* facing each other.

Assume *musubi dachi*, bow 15 degrees to each other and step into the ring with the left foot first. Walk to the floor marks and stand in *hachiji dachi*. The center referee will place a red ribbon through the back of the belt on the competitor to the right of the center referee.

The center referee calls *tski*. The competitors stand in *musubi dachi*, bow to each other and resume *hachiji dachi*.

The competitors listen to the center referee's instructions and/or commands to begin.

NOTE: [please refer to the tournament section for details on how to run a ring]

When the match is over, the center referee calls the competitors back to their starting lines. They stand in *hachiji dachi*. The center referee announces the winner then calls *tski!* The competitors stand in *musubi dachi*, bow 15 degrees to each other, then walk backward to their entry points, step out with their left foot first, bow 15 degrees to each other, turn and leave the ring area.

KUMITE: BOWING IN/OUT OF RING

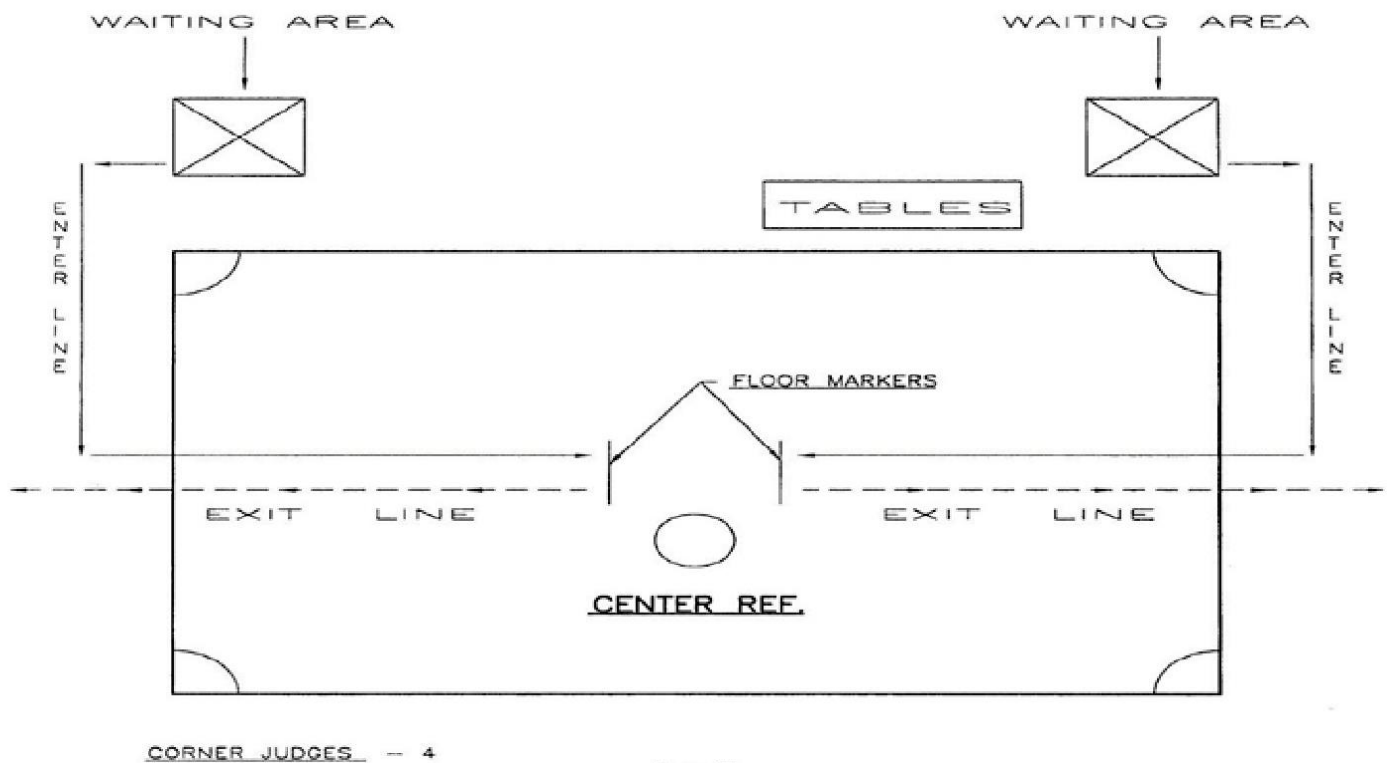


Figure 13

OWARI NO SAHO (ENDING ETIQUETTE)

When *retsu o tsukeru* (line up!) is called, everyone returns to their places as in the beginning etiquette and stand in *hachiji dachi*.

At the command *suarte*, the ranking sensei kneels down first and faces *shimoseki*. Everyone else follows sequentially in descending order of rank.

Follow the commands as before:

- Seiza! Mokuso! Yame!
- Sensei ni! (Turn toward the instructor). Everyone turns to face the ranking sensei;
- Rei! Everyone bows. As the ranking sensei bows and says *arigato* (thank you) everyone else also bows and says *domo arigato gozaimashita* (thank you very much).
- Shinzen ni! (turn toward the shinzen).
- Rei!

Everyone then turns back to face each other. The ranking sensei stands up first, then everyone else sequentially in order of rank.

The instructors may perform a standing bow to each other before leaving the floor.

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