

# **KIAI**

(pronounced key-eye)

In martial arts, the term commonly refers to a short yell that some martial artists shout before or during a fight or technique. In bujutsu (Japanese arts of war), it is usually linked to the inner amassing of energy released in a single explosive focus of will. Students of martial arts use kiai to focus energy when executing a technique. It also refers to the shout that accompanies some techniques. It is the coordination of breathing with the physical activity which is important. A relaxed and powerful exhalation can add power to movement. A sound is just an audible indication of good kiai (aligned body structure, focused intent, and good breathing). It's not the sound that is important.

The noise from a kiai is said to emit from the hara or tanden, and it involves the abdominal muscles and diaphragm. It should not be sounded in the throat.

## **Typical usage**

The kiai can be thought of as having physical advantages, such as to:

- startle and demoralize your enemy.
- prime yourself for combat, by "pumping yourself up, getting the adrenalin flowing".
- protect the upper body from a strike by providing an escape route for exhalation of air.
- protect the lower body by rapidly contracting the transverse abdominals and other core muscles, shielding the internal organs.
- provide solid (focused) support for striking techniques.