

剣道

JAPANESE SWORD SCHOOL

Kenjutsu Styles

Kenjutsu (剣術) is the traditional martial art of the Japanese sword, from which modern kendo is derived. Each school (ryu-ha) has developed its own unique techniques.

Katori Shinto Ryu (香取神道流) – 15th century

- One of the oldest styles, still practiced today.
- Includes sword techniques (kenjutsu), spear (sojutsu), halberd (naginatajutsu), and more.

Kashima Shinto Ryu (鹿島神道流) – 16th century

- Famous for its use of ki (energy) and fluid movements.
- Has influenced many other kenjutsu styles.

Kashima Shinryu (鹿島新流) – 16th century

- Different from Kashima Shinto Ryu, but with similar origins.
- Strongly focused on the concept of 'killing with a single strike.'

Itto Ryu (一刀流) – 16th century

- One of the most influential styles, father of many other schools.
- Founded by Ito Ittosai Kagehisa, it heavily influenced modern kendo.

Yagyu Shinkage Ryu (柳生新陰流) – 16th century

- Practiced by the Tokugawa clan, it was the official style of the shoguns.
- Known for the concept of katsujinken ('the life-giving sword').

Shinkendo (真剣道) – 20th century

- Founded by Obata Toshishiro.
- Combines traditional techniques with a modern approach.

Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu (天真正伝香取神道流)

- One of the oldest Japanese martial arts schools.



Ono-ha Itto Ryu (小野派一刀流)

- Directly descends from Itto Ryu.

Hyoho Niten Ichi Ryu (兵法二天一流) – 17th century

- Founded by Miyamoto Musashi.
- Famous for the use of two swords (Niten Ichi-ryu).

Shinkendo (真剣道)

- Created by Toshishiro Obata.
 - A modern system based on traditional techniques.

Famous Samurai Families

The following families had a significant impact on Japanese history:

Tokugawa (徳川)

- The shogun family that ruled Japan from 1603 to 1868.
- Established the long peaceful period known as the Edo era (Edo jidai).

Minamoto (源)

- One of the most powerful military houses of the Heian period.
- Minamoto no Yoritomo became Japan's first shogun in 1192.

Taira (平)

- Rivals of the Minamoto during the Genpei War (1180–1185).
- Their defeat marked the end of aristocratic dominance.

Takeda (武田)

- Famous for the legendary warlord Takeda Shingen.
- Known for their cavalry tactics and code of war.

Uesugi (上杉)

- Rivals of the Takeda and key players in the Sengoku period wars.

Oda (織田)

- Oda Nobunaga was the first to attempt to unify Japan in the 16th century.

Toyotomi (豊臣)

- Toyotomi Hideyoshi completed the unification started by Nobunaga.
- After his death, the Tokugawa took power.

Date (伊達)

- Led by Date Masamune, a warlord known for his distinctive crescent-moon helmet.

Sanada (真田)

- Known for their resistance against the Tokugawa, especially Sanada Yukimura.

Hosokawa (細川)

- One of the oldest noble families, still influential in the modern era.