

The Japanese art of sword fighting, from ken (sword) and do (way), has its origins in the samurai (warrior) tradition and was developed over several centuries. Modern kendo dates from the 18th century, when protective equipment and the bamboo sword were introduced. Kendo was banned after World War II because of its nationalistic and militaristic associations, but was revived as a sport in the 1950s. Like other martial arts, kendo is used as a way of building character, self-discipline and respect. Practitioners first master the basics of etiquette, footwork and swinging a sword. They then move on to exercises using armour, and learn the kendo kata (pre-set sequences of motion). Kendo offers a comprehensive guide to the basics of the sport. The text and step-by-step photography cover elementary stances and movements as well as a selection of more advanced movements and sequences. Important elements, such as proper respect for the equipment and clothing, and how to maintain it, is discussed in detail, so that newcomers have the opportunity to learn more about the traditions and rituals that underpin kendo.

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