

# What is Budo Taijutsu?



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# Budo Taijutsu/Ninjutsu

What is Budo Taijutsu?

Budo Taijutsu, literally translates as *“Martial way of skills with the body.”*

Taijutsu forms the basis for all training in the Ninjutsu warrior methods. Taijutsu strives to develop natural responsive actions with the body. As the practitioner progresses, one can use the lessons gained in the physical, as models for the psychological and tactical training in advanced studies. To understand the fighting art of the ninja, one must understand a bit of the history that has developed the combined system.

Contrary to the most common Hollywood stereotype, the ninjutsu ryu were not comprised of assassins, thieves and cut throats. A few of the more notable clans held samurai status, or had at one time held such office.

The majority of the ninjutsu clans were founded by warriors who had the misfortune of being on the losing side of a war and chose to live by taking their families into the mountains, rather than facing the option of seppuku, or ritualistic suicide as the samurai code would demand. Other ryu were founded by simple peasants and farmer, or even pirates who were basically considered less than human by the military government.

When studying koryu martial arts of Japan, one will note that there are many traditional Japanese Bujutsu Ryu contain or have that contained a ninjutsu curriculum within its warrior curriculum.

Within these lessons, the fighting art being described and taught is Budo Taijutsu, (there will be lessons outside of this curriculum but those will be specifically highlighted) as such 9 arts comprise the basic teachings. Contained and overlaid on these fighting tactics are the principles and strategies from the ninjutsu ryuha. Below is a short description of each of the 9 ryu.

### **The Nine Ryuha of the Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu**

#### **Gyokko ryu kosshijutsu**

Founded by Tozawa Hakuunsai. Its name translates as ***jewel tiger***. It is the oldest of the Bujinkan ryuha and it contains the fundamental techniques known as the kihon happo, sanshin no kata and muto dori gata.

#### **Koto ryu koppojutsu**

Founded by Sakagami Taro Kunishige, its name translates as ***knock down the tiger***. Famous for its koppojutsu and unusual biken style of fighting.

#### **Togakure ryu ninjutsu**

Founded by Daisuke Nishuna, its name translates as ***hidden door***. This is the second oldest ryuha contained within the Bujinkan dojo. It is also one of the most famous to the outside world.

### **Gyokkushin ryu ninjutsu**

Founded by Sasaki Goemon Teryoshi, its name translates as ***jewel heart***. Very little is yet known of this ryuha.

### **Kumogakure ryu ninjutsu**

Founded by Iga heinaizaemon no jo Ienaga, its name translates as ***hidden cloud***. Most famous for its jumping techniques and the kamayari.

### **Shinden Fudo ryu daken taijutsu**

Founded by Izumo Kaja Yoshitero, its name translates as ***immovable spirit***. Most famous for its rough taijajutsu techniques and the use of naturalness in its training.

### **Kukishinden ryu happo hikenjutsu**

Founded by Izumo Kaja Yoshitero, its name translates as ***nine demon gods***. Most famous for the variety of weapons skills and its unarmed techniques.

### **Takagi Yoshin ryu jutaijutsu**

Founded by Takagi Oriuemon Shigenobu, its name translates as ***raise your spirits to high trees***. Sometimes known as the bodyguard school for its fast and effective jujutsu techniques.

## **Gikan ryu koppojutsu**

Founded by Uryu Hangan Gikanbo, its name translates as ***example of justice***. Most famous for its difficult kamaes and its Koppojutsu. Little of this ryuha has yet been taught.

Within these 9 schools are fighting tactics that have survived and evolve over centuries. Unlike many martial arts, Budo Taijutsu has continued to evolve and adapt to each passing generation. As some traditional styles are locked into practicing techniques designed to be effective against now defunct weapons and strategies, Budo Taijutsu teaches the practitioner how to deal with the dangers of an ever-changing modern society.

With this basic understanding of the history and component schools that make up Budo Taijutsu, what follows is a categorization break out of the components of the system.

## **Main Divisions in Budo Taijutsu**

There are three main divisions in Budo Taijutsu, each section then breaks into several subdivisions.

### **TAIHENJUTSU (body skills)**

The first area covers the fundamental methods in which to move, climb, leap and tumble.

The subdivisions include:

**Ukemi** – rebounding from the ground

**Kamae** – body positioning

**Tobi** – Leaping

**Shotenjutsu** – climbing skills

**Hoko no jutsu** – walking skills

**Mutodori kata** – avoiding the sword

### **DAKENTAIJUTSU (striking)**

The second area contains the body of knowledge involving striking. The subdivisions include:

**Koppojustu** – Bone & muscle smashing

**Kosshijutsu** – Muscle stabbing, pinching, clawing

## **JUTAIJUTSU** (grappling/wrestling)

The final area includes Budo Taijutsu's grappling skills. Sometimes similar to techniques in the martial arts such as Judo, Aikido, Aikijujutsu, these techniques were designed to immobilize, throw or force an opponent to submit by a variety of methods. Subdivisions include:

**Torite waza** – Joint locking

**Nage waza** – Throwing

**Shime waza** – Choking

**Hajutsu waza** – Escapes or counters

### **Training Hint:**

In ancient times the Ninja were often employed to gather intelligence information on one's enemies. In the modern times, you should employ this historical aspect as part of your everyday training. It can start with gathering information about your training and what was taught in your class. But, later can expand to include gathering information regarding topics that are outside of the realms of your everyday experiences.

## **KATA**

All of the skills and principles contained in these three areas are taught in a series of prearranged drills known as kata. The kata contain techniques that give a practitioner a reference point in which to examine how to handle various combative situations.



The ryuha (schools) of the Bujinkan Dojo are considered **Koryu** (old style) arts, and as such the kata tend to be fairly short. No more than 10-15 moves. Each kata relates to teaching a particular principle, or principles, rather than just to perpetuate a form.

In olden times, kata were the safest method to teach a martial art. With the nature of practice being very dangerous, many people were often injured or even died during their training. To help prevent this from occurring as well as teaching effective lessons in the quickest manner possible, the development of kata filled the bill.

Soke Hatsumi often refers to what he calls "dead techniques". This is like performing kata for the sake of the kata. It is doing techniques without understanding **why**. Technique must have spirit and feeling. This is difficult to explain, and unless you train, you will not understand. Many people involved in martial arts feel as though learning a new kata means that they are progressing in the art, or that they are "preserving" the art for posterity. This is not so. To learn a new kata without understanding the application is the essence of this "dead technique". To mindlessly perform repetitive movements does nothing to preserve a traditional martial art. It is good for little aside from aerobic exercise.

In ancient times, membership in a ninjutsu ryu was restricted to those who were born into the ninja families every day was spent ensuring the families' survival: farming, martial training, living off the land, evasion and escape practice, etc. very little was left to chance in their daily training, and within the lessons contained here at Ninjutsu Training Online you will find the same approaches and strategies for your development.

Now that you have a deeper understanding of what Budo Taijutsu is and what it contains, I would like to leave you with the following quote from Toshitsugu Takamatsu:

*“The essence of all martial arts and military strategies is self protection and the prevention of danger. Ninjutsu epitomizes the fullest concept of self protection through martial training in that the ninja art deals with the protection not only of the physical body, but the mind and spirit as well. The way of the ninja is the way of enduring, surviving, and prevailing over all that would destroy one. More than merely delivering strikes and slashes, and deeper in significance than the simple outwitting of an enemy, ninjutsu is the way of attaining that which we need while making the world a better place.*

*The skill of the ninja is the art of winning”.* **Toshitsugu Takamatsu**