

**Kenjutsu Kyouhan**  
**Fencing Manual**  
1894

Translated by Kenneth Kitta

This is a translation of the Movements and Definitions section of Part 1 of the Imperial Japanese Army's 1894 Fencing Manual. It covers the fencing positions, attacks, and ripostes used in the system.

Prior to this, the Japanese Army seemed to teach French fencing, and were using a translated version of the French Manuel d'Escrime 1877. The (very) simplified fencing system shown here would later be replaced by another, more Japanese, sabre fencing system, before disappearing sometime in the 1910s (for all but the cavalry) in favor of two-handed sabre fencing.

This text has been translated for educational purposes only.  
Images courtesy of the Japanese National Diet Library

**Part 1**  
**Military Sabre Fencing**  
**Definitions and Explanations of Movements**

**Parts of the Sabre**

When training the *shinai* is used, and they are separated roughly into two parts- the blade and the handle. The blade is made of the point, the spine, and the edge, and the handle is made of the grip and the guard. Made of these two parts, their length should be made roughly the length of a military sabre.

**Cutting Areas<sup>1</sup>**

*Men* (The top of the head)

Left (Right) *Men* (From the top of the head to the top edge of the ears)

*Dou*

*Kote (Migi Hiji)*

**Thrusting Areas<sup>2</sup>**

*Nodo* (The face)

**Holding the Sabre<sup>3</sup>**

Standing unmoving, hold the sabre slightly firmly in the right hand, and hold it forwards and to the right of your body. Direct the edge to the left and leave the point about 10cm from the earth. (Figure 1 [—])



<sup>1</sup> I have translated the cutting areas as Head, Left and Right Head, Torso, and Right Forearm respectively throughout this text.

<sup>2</sup> *Nodo* has been translated as throat throughout this text.

<sup>3</sup> Literally *The Method of Preserving the Sabre*.

### En Garde

Execute a half left-face, point your face forwards, and lightly grip with your hands whilst letting your arms hang. (Figure 2 [二])

Slightly extend your right forearm and raise your fist to a height slightly higher than the top of your hip bone. Direct the edge downwards, and the point roughly at the throat of your opponent. At the same time, move your right foot about 50cm forwards, slightly bend both legs, and step lightly. Stare into the eyes of your opponent. (Figure 3 [三])

### Attention

From the half-faced forwards position of *en garde*, pull the right leg back to the side of the left leg, and stand still.

### Advancing and Retreating

To advance, while in the *en garde* position, advance the right foot and immediately advance the left foot the same distance. Retreats are the opposite of this.

Warning: No matter the circumstance, step lightly with the balls of the feet, and step with both legs quickly, without letting them stiffen.

### Attacks

To execute attacks, while in the *en garde* position moulinet the sabre (and immediately) quickly retreat, (make a sawing movement,) or lunge.<sup>4</sup> However, your feet should always stay near the ground, and your eyes should remain locked with the eyes of your opponent.

### Engagement

It is standard procedure to engage on the left of the opponent. (Figure 4 [四])

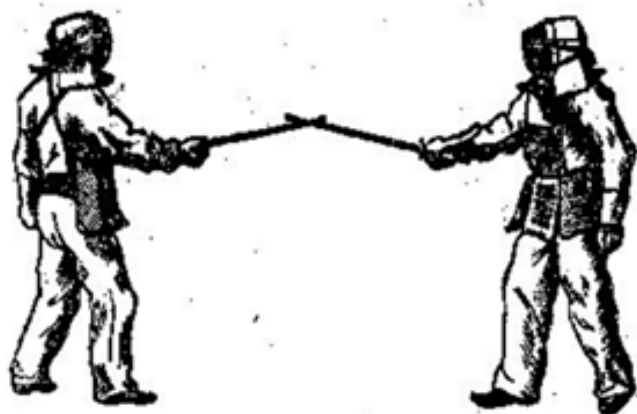
圖 二 第



圖 三 第



圖 四 第



<sup>4</sup> 擊退 (Lit. striking retreat,) 鋸斷 (Lit. saw cut,) 突進 (Lit. thrusting advance.) I believe *saw cut* refers to a movement towards and then away from an opponent.

### Cuts to the Head (and Left and Right of the Head)

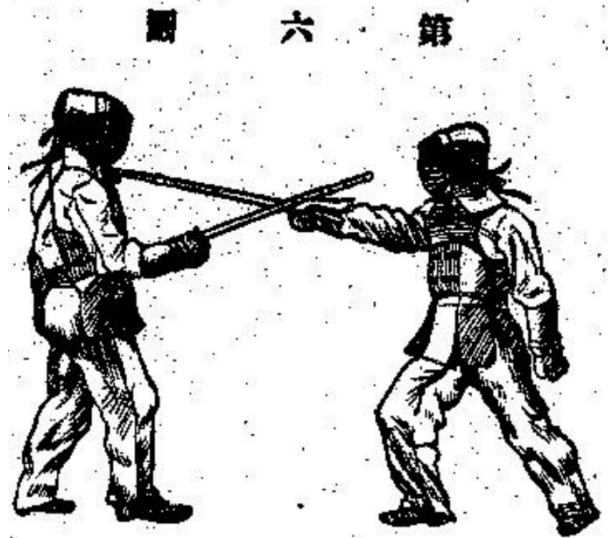


Moulinet the sabre to the rear (and immediately) cut the top of the opponent's head (or left and right of the head.)

(Figure 5 [五])

### Thrusts

Extend your forearm appropriately, or spin<sup>5</sup> your fist to the right (or left,) and lunge to thrust at the opponent's throat. (Figure 6 [六])

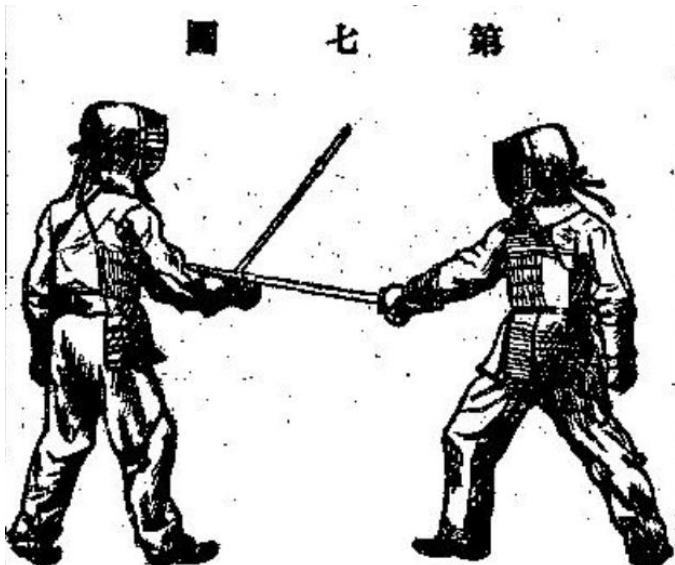


### Cuts to the Right Forearm

Moulinet your sabre rearwards and to the left (and immediately) cut the right forearm of the opponent. (Figure 7 [七])

### Cuts to the Right of the Torso

Moulinet the sabre to the left and cut the right of the opponent's torso. (Figure 8 [八])



<sup>5</sup> This is not the word used for moulinet in the rest of the text, but it seems to mean the same thing.

### Cuts to the Left of the Torso

Moulinet the sabre to the right and (immediately) cut the left of the opponent's torso. (Figure 9 [九])

圖 九 第



### Parries

Parries are done using your edge against your opponent's edge, as the flat and the spine are weak areas of the sabre.

#### Head (Left and Right head) Parries

When parrying cuts to your head, extend the forearm and raise your fist up and to the right (or left) to about the height of the eyes. Tilt your edge at an angle towards the opponent and direct your point diagonally in their direction as well, and parry far out in front of you. Or, parry by holding your sabre horizontally in front of the top of your head. (Figures 10, 11 [十、十一])

圖 十 第

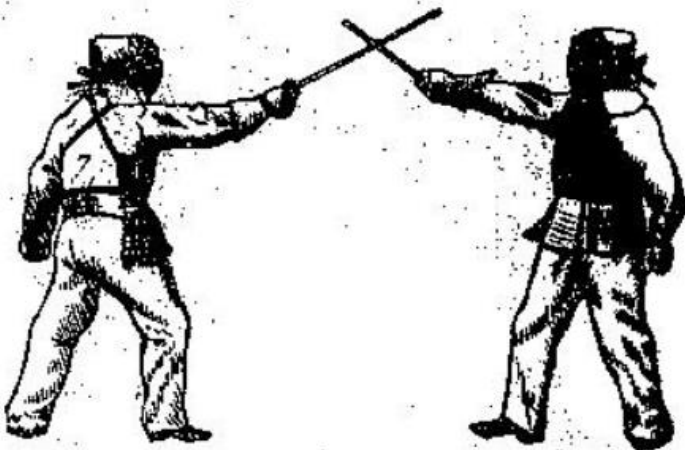
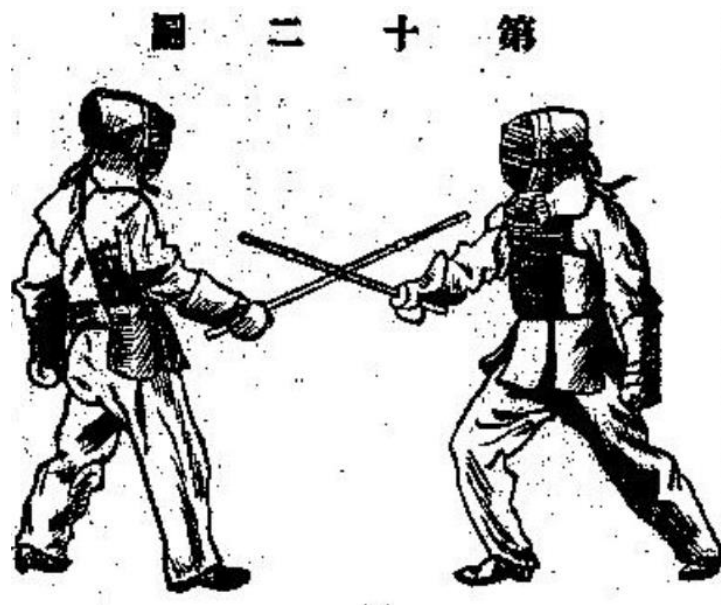


圖 一 十 第



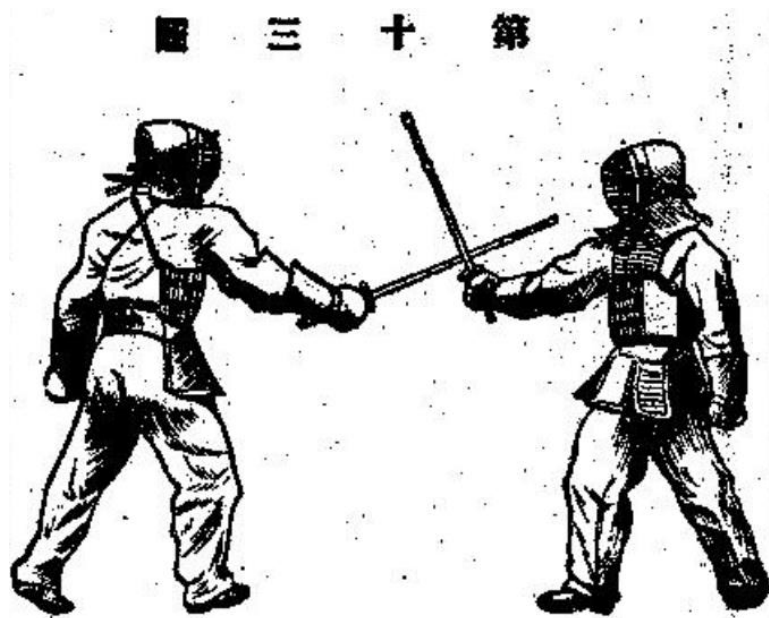
### Thrust Parries

When parrying thrusts, sweep the opponent's blade to the right (or to the left) in front of you (Figure 12 [十二])



### Forward Forearm Parries

From the outside (or inside,) receive the cut and push your fist slightly forwards to parry. (Figure 13 [十三])



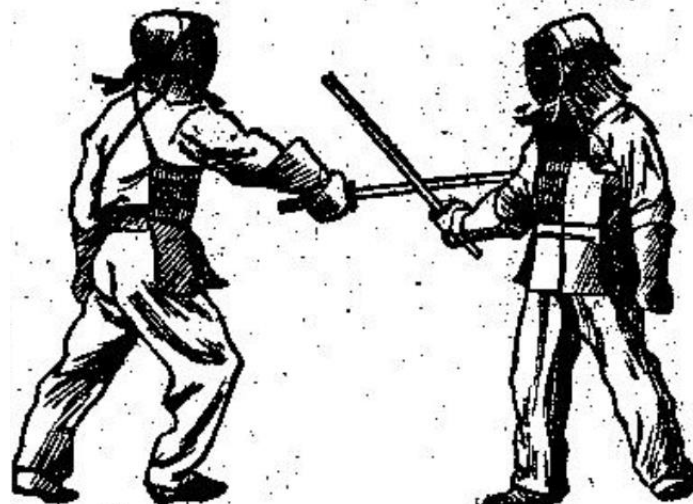
### Left (and Right) Torso Parries

When parrying cuts to the left or right of your torso, move your fist down and to the right (or left) with the point directed upwards at an angle. (Figures 14, 15 [十四、十五])

圖 四 十 第



圖 五 十 第



### Ripostes

Simply put, ripostes are generally to be done after parrying close to the body. Their order is similar to the following.

Target Areas	Riposte Targets
Head	Head and Left (and Right) head
Left Torso	Head or Right Head
Right Torso	Head or Left (and Right) Head
Thrust	Head or Left (and right) Torso

**End of the Definitions and Explanations of Movements section**