

Toshishiro Obata and Shinkendo Samurai Swordsmanship

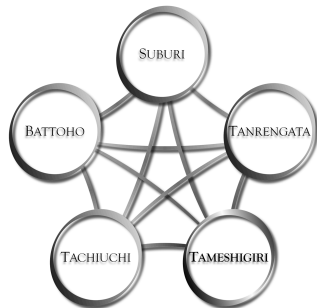
Of samurai family lineage, Obata Toshishiro was born in Japan in 1948. Mr. Obata is a descendant of Obata Masamori, who served as a general and strategist (one of the famous 24 strategists) for the Takeda family during the Warring States period or Sengoku era.

From a young age, Mr. Obata was enamored with swordsmanship, and dreamed of studying it seriously someday. In 1966, the 18-year-old Obata set out to Tokyo to become a professional martial artist. Upon visiting the Yoshinkan dojo, he witnessed a demonstration by a Honbu Shihan and became fascinated with Aikido. Soon after, he was accepted as an *uchideshi* (literally, "house student," or live-in apprentice) under the late Master Shioda Gozo, and remained as such, teaching at Yoshinkan Honbu as well as universities, the Metropolitan Riot Police, and the Japanese Self Defense Army for seven years.



After his term as an Aikido instructor, Mr. Obata was welcomed into Tate Dojo to be a Bujutsu Shihan, and became a member of the Tokyo Wakakoma, an elite group of martial artists who serve as fight scene choreographers and stuntmen for Japanese television and movies, for which he was a trainer for several years. During this time, Mr. Obata was able to seriously study classical sword arts as well as other budo while developing skills as an action coordinator and actor, receiving widespread acclaim for his efforts in the budo community.

Mr. Obata has received worldwide recognition for his accomplishments and contributions as a martial artist. For 7 consecutive years, Obata-kaiso was the All Japan Battodo Champion, Ioriken Battojutsu Champion for 5 years, and Toyama Ryu All Japan Champion for 2 years. Some of Obata-kaiso's ranks include Menkyo Kaiden, Keisho Denju, Shihan, as well as various other certifications, and a combined total of 75 *dan* rankings. He is also the author of a number of books, including a forthcoming volume on samurai philosophy, Modern Bushido. Mr. Obata is also well known for his performance of a traditional *kabutowari* (helmet-splitting test) in 1994, which set a world record.



Obata Toshishiro is the founder and headmaster of Shinkendo Japanese swordsmanship. *Shin* (眞; true) - *ken* (劍; sword) - *do* (道; way) is a system of Japanese swordsmanship that incorporates all aspects of sword study: Suburi (swinging methods), Battoho (combative sword-drawing methods), Tanren Kata (solo forms), Tachiuchi (sparring), and Tameshigiri (test-cutting). The Shinkendo World Headquarters is located in Los Angeles, CA, USA, where Obata-kaiso teaches swordsmanship, Aikido, and other Japanese martial arts full-time.

