



Ekiden 駅伝



Ekiden is a long-distance multi-stage relay race in Japan. *Eki* means “station” and *den* means “message”. Schools in Japan will often hold ekiden races annually and teamwork is a very important part of the race!

Ekiden 駅伝



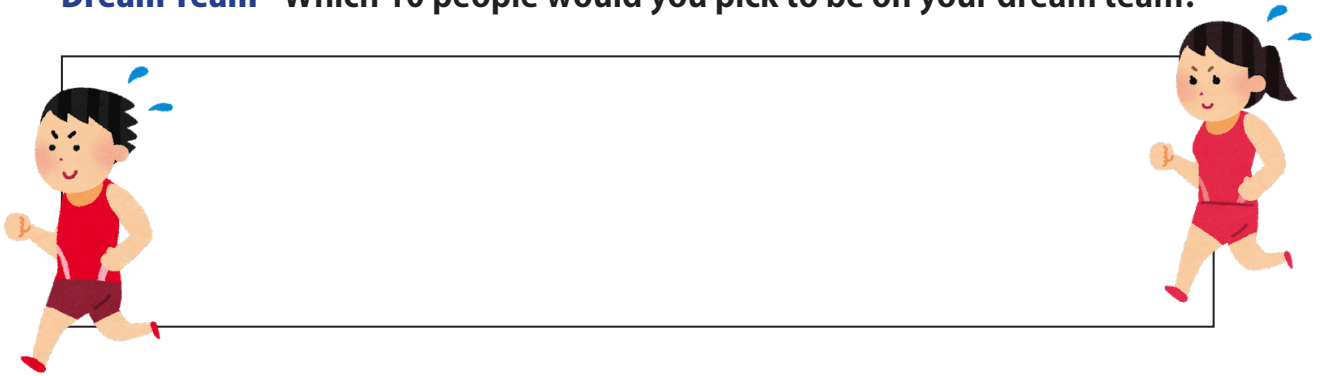
The name Ekiden comes from the old postal system in Japan. Many years ago, post and messages were delivered by different people from station to station instead of one postman or horse travelling the whole way.

The Hakone Ekiden is the most famous university ekiden race in Japan. Each team has 10 relay runners. The two-day race covers over 200km from Tokyo to Hakone which is longer than the distance between London and Liverpool!



By Dick Thomas Johnson, CC BY 2.0

Dream Team - Which 10 people would you pick to be on your dream team?



Try writing ekiden in Japanese kanji characters:

 eki			
 den			

Tasuki たすき

Runners don't carry batons in ekiden races. Instead they wear a sash called tasuki which is passed between runners as they finish their leg of the race – just like how messages were delivered in the past! It is a symbol of perseverance and hard work of each runner.



By Charlie fong, CC BY-SA 4.0

Design your team's tasuki

Try designing your team's name in a stylist font, add some simple patterns and design, or some inspirational words or cheers.

Front



Back



Inspiration:

一番 *ichiban*

This means "number 1"

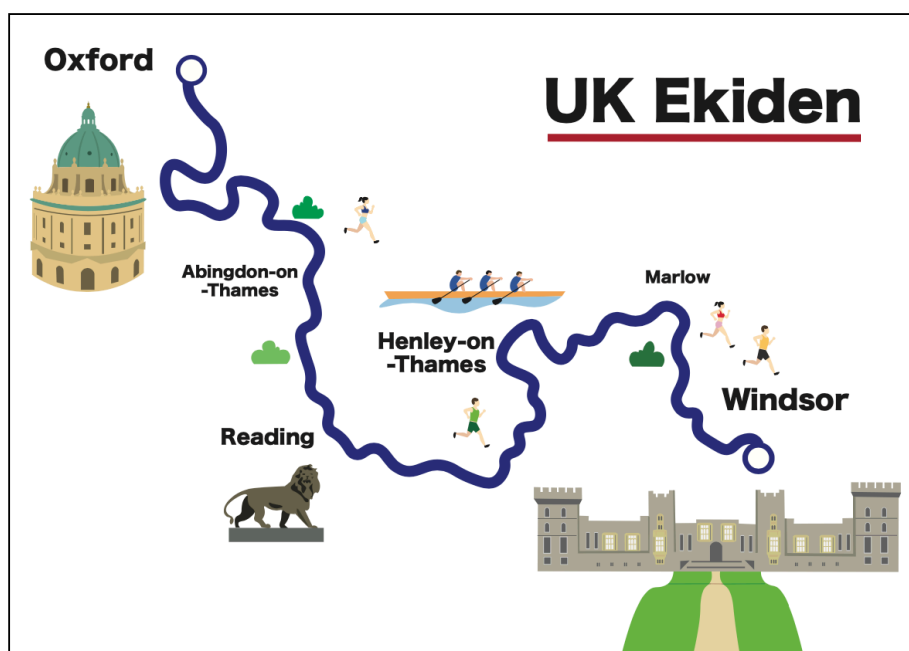
ファイト *fai-toh*

It sounds like "fight-oh",
but it means "go for it!"

Ekiden in the UK

The first UK ekiden race took place on 24 June 2024 to mark the 100th Hakone Ekiden event in 2024. It was also the same year Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako visited the UK for their official state visit on invitation from King Charles.

The route stretched from Oxford to Windsor along the Thames Path. This particular route was chosen because Emperor Naruhito studied at University of Oxford from 1983 to 1985 and wrote a book called *The Thames and I* as a record of his time as a student in the UK. This section of the River Thames connects Oxford, where the Japanese Emperor studied, with Windsor, the home of the British royal family.

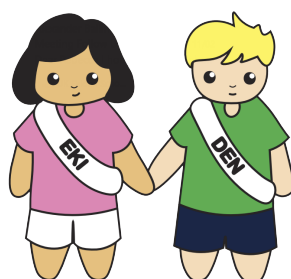


UK Ekiden route in 2024.

© UK Ekiden

Did you know?

The route from Oxford to Windsor along the River Thames covers approximately 76 miles or 122 km, the equivalent of 353.5 laps around a standard UK football pitch!



© UK Ekiden



Fun Facts Quiz

Take the quiz below to test your knowledge and learn about Ekiden and Japan.

(Answers on next page)



1. In which year do you think the first ekiden race was held?

- a. 1917 b. 1960 c. 2000

2. In the first Ekiden, runners ran along the Tokaido Road between Kyoto and Tokyo, covering a distance of

- a. 200km b. 350km c. 500km

3. In the UK, we have Kings and Queens, Japan has an Emperor and an Empress. Both Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako studied at University of Oxford.

True or False?

4. Which flower is the symbol of the Japanese emperor and his family?



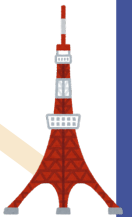
a. Cherry blossom



b. Chrysanthemum



c. Camellia



5. The Satsuma students are considered one of the first groups of Japanese students to study in the UK. Where did they study when they arrived in 1865?

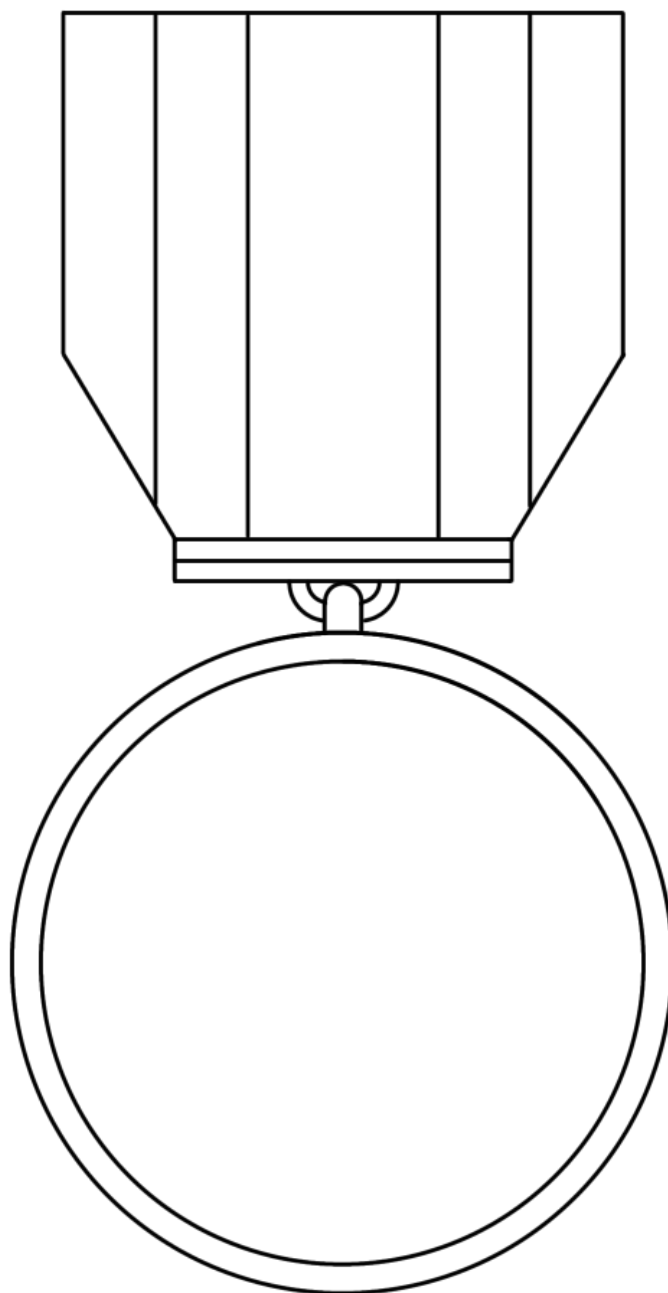
- a. Univeristy of Oxford b. University College London c. University of Cambridge

6. In Japanese, *eki* means 'station' and *den* can be translated as

- a. 'to run' b. 'to pass on' c. 'to communicate'

Design your own Ekiden Medal

Use the template below to design your own medal for the UK Ekiden race. You can include different symbols and elements about the UK or the areas around the Thames Path around Windsor.



Want to learn more about Ekiden and Japan? Scan the QR codes below or visit www.japansociety.org.uk for a range of resources on different topics - including the many festivals and seasonal celebrations - and lots of fun activities to try!

More info about
ekiden and how to
plan your own race



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