

What's The Difference Between Kempo And Kenpo?

Nothing. Actually, the only difference is in the translation of the Kanji to its English form. The rules of Kanji holds, that when a character (written word) ends in an "n," the "n" is pronounced, when spoken; with the exception, that when the "n" is followed by another character (word), which begins with a "p," the two characters are unchanged in the written form and the "n" is pronounced "m". Ken-po follows this rule. So, if following the correct Kanji translation, it is spelled "Kenpo" and pronounced "Kempo". It is only in transliteration that Kenpo is written Kempo. Thanks to Mr. Will Tracy for the Kanji translation lesson!

The words Kenpo and Kempo are both pronounced the same and both mean "Law of the Fist." It's sort of like saying "Qi" or "Chi", "Gung" or "Kung." Generally, though, the more "traditional" (lightly used) forms of Kempo use the "Kempo" form, while the more non-traditional or contemporary versions use "Kenpo." According to American Kenpo Grandmaster Ed Parker's book, *Infinite Insights into Kenpo, Volume I*, William K.S. Chow was the first person to use the term Kenpo to show his break from the Mitose family Kosho Ryu Kempo. The current head of Professor Chow's system uses the "Kempo" spelling.

Kenpo is the Japanese translation of the Chinese for **Fist Method/Path/Law**. The old style Mandarin (Wade/Giles) would be Ch'uan Fa. The modern Mandarin (PinYin romanization) is Quanfa. Remember that Quanfa is a completely generic term (like Wushu or Kung-Fu today) and does not refer to a specific system or style. In Cantonese, it's Kuen Fat. Kuen means, the fist and is often expanded to mean Boxing or Boxing style. Fa means, a method, path, or law. The Chinese translations are from [Rene Ritchie](#). Thanks!