

= Kyo Kusanagi =

Kyo Kusanagi (??? , Kusanagi Ky?) is a fictional character in SNK 's The King of Fighters fighting game series ; he was first introduced in The King of Fighters ' 94 as the leader of the Japan team . He is one of the iconic characters in the series and appears regularly on publicity material and merchandise . His name and abilities were designed in order to relate him to the Yamata no Orochi legend . Because he was highly popular , and his outfit changed throughout the series , designers created a few clones with his old appearance .

Kyo , heir to the Kusanagi clan , is first introduced as a cocky delinquent high school student who can use pyrokinetic powers . In The King of Fighters universe , his clan is one of the three clans that sealed the legendary snake entity , Yamata no Orochi . Because his clan 's past , Kyo fights against the Kusanagi 's enemies , his rival Iori Yagami , the last member of the Yagami clan , and the Orochi 's soldiers . He enters every The King of Fighters tournament representing Japan and uses his clan 's fighting style of kenpo combined with his pyrokinetic ability . Aside from the main series , Kyo also appears in several other media series including spin @-@ offs and crossover video games as well as comic adaptations of the series .

Video game journalists have praised his design and fighting style as one of the best of the series . Reviewers note that he is a necessary character in every video game produced from the series and that he has the best winning pose . A variety of Kyo collectibles have been created , including key chains and figurines .

= = Conception and creation = =

When designing characters for the first King of Fighters game , developers wanted a new , " snazzy " hero who would easily fight against Fatal Fury and Art of Fighting characters . Through most of his development , Kyo was meant to be called Syo Kirishima (??? , Kirishima Sh?) , and was dressed in martial arts clothing common in fighting games at the time . But late in production , his name was changed to Kyo Kusanagi in order to relate him to the Yamata no Orochi legend , which was used as the idea for the first story arc . His fighting style was changed as part of the series ' overhaul in The King of Fighters ' 96 . To appease fans , producers also included an older version of Kyo from KOF ' 94 into The King of Fighters ' 97 and placed The King of Fighters ' 95 version of Kyo in The King of Fighters ' 98 , which made both versions of Kyo popular during location tests . Developers of the game decided that Kyo 's main skill would be fire along with the other movesets from the other members of the original Japan Team inspired by the anime Getter Robo . In addition , the three members of the Japan Team had personalities similar to those of the main characters from such anime . Kyo was based on the main character who had a fiery persona . The elements and the personalities are also an homage to a Japanese phrase about giving birth to fire ; it is roughly translated : " lightning strikes the earth which sparks the flame " . According to Kyo 's designer , Ashita no Joe and Devilman were influences too .

The idea of having two Kyos at once led to the concept of his clones . During the early stages of the development of The King of Fighters ' 99 , SNK planned to avoid adding Kyo and Iori Yagami to the game , as the story 's focus was meant to center on the new protagonist , K ' . However , they reversed this decision as " they couldn 't leave these popular characters in limbo " . Kyo was redesigned for the game , but some designers wanted to return to his iconic school uniform . When they were nearing the end of their production schedule , staff members could not decide which uniform the Kyo clone should wear . The project head decided to make two clones instead . To save time , the project head drew designs for Kyo @-@ 1 and Kyo @-@ 2 on the character roster . The same event was repeated in The King of Fighters 2002 ; the designers created another clone from Kyo called Kusanagi to include his school uniform design .

Although Kyo retains his third outfit in The King of Fighters XII , his moves were modified to his original ones from the first two games of the series . This was done in order to make the character fight in close quarters rather than using projectiles , improving the balance of the roster , and making fights more entertaining . His signature move , the Orochinagi (???) , was given a mid @-@ air

variation for The King of Fighters XIII with designers keeping in mind the concept of coolness as well as the small difficulty in performing it . Kyo 's Neo Max technique , the " Ura 121 Shiki : Ama @-@ no @-@ Murakumo (?????? ????) " , was the first move of this category to be made for the game . As a result , all the other characters ' Neo Max techniques were made according Kyo 's in order to keep a balance of flashy moves .

Kyo 's appears repeatedly in the series at the insistence of the marketers and the main planners . Iori , and other SNK regulars also appear in every game , making it a challenge to decide the storyline for each title . Along with his rival Iori , it has been noted by several of the series ' designers that Kyo is one of the most difficult characters to illustrate because of his popularity among fans . Originally , Kyo 's girlfriend , Yuki , was not meant to be conceptualized , since her first mention ever in the story was in Kyo 's profile as one of his most cherished possessions . Her addition to his profile was done by one of the programmers mostly as a joke since Kyo was more popular with female gamers .

For The King of Fighters XIV , Kyo was made slimmer and given a modern redesign . Kyo 's Japanese voice actor , Masahiro Nonaka , related with his character as he was young and reckless until he " grew up " ; in his later appearances he expressed some difficulty accepting Kyo on the same level . Tomoaki Maeno replaced Nonaka for The King of Fighters XIV . Maeno said he was putting all his efforts when Kyo and expected the fandom to enjoy his work .

= = Attributes = =

Kyo is an overconfident but well @-@ meaning person , more interested in enjoying life than taking on responsibilities . He is quick to dismiss subjects that do not interest him and will often carry out his actions with a devil @-@ may @-@ care attitude . He treasures his friends and family , enjoying their presence and particularly dotes on his girlfriend , Yuki . His strong sense of justice and zeal to fight stronger opponents are what he believes drives him to carry out his destiny . Kyo enters most of The King of Fighters tournaments representing the Japanese team along with teammates Benimaru Nikaido and Goro Daimon . In his fights he uses the clan 's martial art , the Kusanagi @-@ style of Kempo (Kusanagi @-@ ry? Kenp?) , attacking opponents using flames along with several hits . In later series ' tournaments he would combine fire with a personal style of kenp? .

Kyo is one of the last members of the Kusanagi clan who can create fire . 660 years ago , the Kusanagi and Yasakani clans were allies . However , due to the latter 's jealousy over the former 's fame , the Yasakani made a pact with the demon Orochi for more power . Since then , the clans have had a generation long grudge with casualties on both sides . His rivalry with Iori is one of mutual hatred and was not spurred by their clans ' history . When they join forces , it is begrudgingly as a last resort solution to the conflict at hand . Kyo takes his responsibilities to his clan on a more personal level , disregarding ancient legends and predestined events as any reason for his actions .

= = Appearances = =

= = In video games = =

In the first The King of Fighters video game , Kyo stars in the famous fighting tournament as the leader of the Japan team along with Benimaru Nikaido and Goro Daimon . They become the champions and defeat the host Rugal Bernstein . In the next video game , the Japan Team once again faces Rugal as well as Kyo 's brainwashed father , Saisyu . While Rugal dies , Saisyu is saved from Rugal 's control . Prior to the events of The King of Fighters ' 96 , one of the Four Heavenly Kings of the legendary creature Orochi , Goenitz , easily defeats Kyo . The current host , Chizuru Kagura , wants to gather Kyo and Iori Yagami on her team to defeat Orochi in the same way as their ancestors and stop Goenitz . In The King of Fighters ' 97 Kyo faces Orochi 's remaining followers and eventually Orochi himself , possessing one of them . However , Kyo and Iori defeat him . In KOF ' 98 , Kyo appears as a playable character on the Japan Team with Benimaru and Daimon . An

alternative version of his character , with movesets used in previous games , is also playable .

Kyo is a secret character in most versions of The King of Fighters ' 99 , and has no team . In the story , Kyo is kidnapped by the NESTS syndicate to use his DNA to make various clones of himself . He tries to obtain answers personally from his captors entering their base but is forced to retreat when the place around him begins to collapse . Depending on how many points the player has when the game finishes , Kyo can be faced as a bonus fight . He continues his fight against the NESTS alone in The King of Fighters 2000 and in the next game , Kyo reunites with his old teammates , and his student Shingo Yabuki , to make a comeback on the Japan Team . In KOF 2002 , Kyo is a playable character on the original Japan Team .

In The King of Fighters 2003 , Chizuru appears to both Kyo and Iori , asking that they form a team to investigate suspicious activities concerning the Orochi seal . During the investigation , the team is ambushed by the fighter Ash Crimson who plans to get their clans ' powers , and steal them from Chizuru . In The King of Fighters XI , Kyo and Iori once again form a team with Shingo filling Chizuru 's spot to stop Ash . However , the growing presence of the Orochi causes Iori to go berserk , forcing him to harm his teammates . Ash then appears and steals Iori 's abilities after defeating him . In King of Fighters XII , Kyo is a playable character , but like each of them , he does not have a team . Kyo reunites with the original members of the Esaka Team in The King of Fighters XIII . Additionally , an alternative version of himself , with different moves called NESTS Style Kyo , is available as downloadable content .

He is set to return in the upcoming The King of Fighters XIV with his old comrades , whereas his classic form will appear as a pre @-@ order bonus and downloadable content .

A role @-@ playing video game was created with the name of The King of Fighters : Kyo in which Kyo travels around the world to prepare for The King of Fighters tournament until the events of KOF ' 97 . Kyo appears in the spin @-@ off video games of the series Neowave and Maximum Impact series . In Maximum Impact 2 , he is also playable as his classic version from the first games as well as with a new outfit . In each North American edition from Maximum Impact , Kyo is played by Andrew Roth , an English voice actor . During The King of Fighters EX : Neo Blood , Moe Habana , the heir of one of the ten sacred treasures , finds Kyo seriously wounded after his fight against Orochi . After healing him , Moe joins Kyo along with Benimaru to participate in a tournament developed by the criminal Geese Howard , who is searching for the power from Orochi . In the game sequel , The King of Fighters EX2 : Howling Blood , Reiji Okami , another member of the ten sacred treasures , asks Kyo to join him as his teammate in a new tournament so that they can investigate who is interfering with the Orochi seal .

Kyo has also appeared in video games outside The King of Fighters series . He is a playable character in the shooter game Sky Stage . In the crossover video games Neo Geo Battle Coliseum and SNK vs. Capcom series , Kyo appears as a playable character ; in the former game he appears with his 99 costume , while in the latter he is in his school uniform . Kyo is also meant to be featured in the card battle video game Lord of Vermillion Re : 2 's Tie @-@ Ups .

= = = In other media = = =

Aside from the main series , Kyo has also appeared in other media from The King of Fighters series . In the anime , The King of Fighters : Another Day , he is featured prominently in the fourth chapter . A number of image songs and audio dramas featuring Kyo 's character have been released , including the contents of his own character image album consisting of a number of his theme songs . Kyo also appears in the manhua adaptation of The King of Fighters : Zillion that was created by Andy Seto . This manhua tells Kyo 's and Iori 's story between their fight against Orochi until the one against NESTS . He stars in further manwhua for the games , starting with The King of Fighters 2001 through the King of Fighters 2003 along with the Maximum Impact series . He also has a spin @-@ off manga story based on the events following The King of Fighters ' 95 entitled , The King of Fighters : Kyo created by Masato Natsumoto , who also did the character design for the eponymous action RPG (set as a parallel story to the events of The King of Fighters ' 97) for the PlayStation . In the The King of Fighters movie Kyo is played by Sean Faris , and is portrayed as Japanese @-@

American .

= = Reception = =

Kyo 's character has received praise and criticism from several video game publications and other media . The website IGN 's writer A.E. Sparrow , has commented that Kyo is one of the most enjoyable characters to play in the King of Fighters series praising the dynamism of his moveset and fighting style . In another review , they considered him to be one of the most useful characters from the games and one of the best ones for " veteran players " . However , they lamented the fact that Kyo has a few appearances in the volume from the manhua The King of Fighters 2003 in comparison to Ash Crimson , who is the greater focus of the series . His recurring interactions with Iori Yagami during fights were called appealing despite the fact English @-@ speaking gamers are not able to understand them ; they add depth to the games , even though some lack a storyline . The ending of Kyo in The King of Fighters ' 97 has been considered by 1UP.com as one of the strangest parts of the story . However , they considered Kyo 's winning pose as the best from the series . On the other hand , 4thletter enjoyed Kyo 's ending with Chizuru Kagura and Iori , stating " this [is how you write a climax to a four @-@ year @-@ long story] " as it was closing the ending of the Orochi story arc from the series . Damien McFerran of Virtual Console Reviews considered Kyo one of the most excellent creations from The King of Fighters series , as well as the most original one . Lucke M. Albiges of Eurogamer praised Kyo , along with Iori , and considered him a veteran character with one of the most unpredictable appearances in the series . In a retrospective view of the series ' debut , Videogamer.com called Kyo one of the most popular video game characters from Japan . GameSpot has criticized the addition of the Kyo clones in The King of Fighters ' 99 , commenting they do not add new elements to the game since they share most of the moves of the original Kyo . In 2012 , Complex ranked Kyo as the 11th Most Dominant Fighting Game Character praising his special moves and labeling him as a " cool " character .

Kyo has been well @-@ received by gamers , with his character appearing in several popularity polls . In Gamest 's 1997 Heroes Collection , Kyo was voted as the staff 's second favorite character , behind his rival Iori . In a 2005 poll made by SNK @-@ Playmore USA , he was voted the sixth fan favorite character with a total of 176 votes . Additionally , in the January 30 , 1995 issue of Gamest magazine in Japan , Kyo was featured at No. 4 in the Top 50 Characters of 1994 . In the character popularity poll on Neo Geo Freak 's website , he was voted as the third favorite character with a total of 2 @,@ 574 votes . For the special endings in The King of Fighters ' 97 , three video games journals , Gamest , Famitsu and Neo Geo Freak , had to create a team composed of three characters from the game so that they would be featured in an image after passing the arcade mode . The Neo Geo Freak 's team created a team composed of Kyo , Mai Shiranui and Billy Kane . The special ending only appears in Japanese versions of the game . In an ASCII Media Works poll in which fans voted on whose video game or manga character they would like to name their children after , Kyo 's name was tenth in the male category . Merchandising based on Kyo 's appearance has also been released . Yutaka released an articulated action figure and a puzzle of Kyo from KoF ' 97 . With the release of new video games in the series , SNK developed new action figures as well as key @-@ chains .