

SAMURAI DAYORI

Message from Ohashi Kenshin Sensei

HAVE AN OPEN MIND. DO NOT BE A CAPTIVE TO CONVENTION.

HAVE A DESIRE TO BE BETTER AND KEEP PRACTICING BASICS OVER AND OVER UNTIL YOU MASTER THEM. YOU MAY FEEL BORED BY REPEATING SAME THINGS, BUT BASICS ARE MOST IMPORTANT. IF YOU NEGLECT THIS PRACTICE , YOU WILL HAVE A HARD TIME TO LEARN ADVANCE TECHNIQUES. BE IN NO HURRY.

IF YOU KEEP THESE IN MIND, YOU WILL BE A GOOD SWORDSMAN.

SAMURAI

Another word *Bushi*. This word is more common in Japan. Sometimes they were called *Buke* it means family or house of *Bushi*.

Also called *Mononofu* in ancient time. The family of samurai were called *Yumi-ya- no- ie*. *Yumi* is a bow, *Ya* is an arrow. *Yumi-ya- no- ie* means a house or family of a bow and arrow. Because back then the main martial arts were *Kyuu-dou*(Japanese archery).

Samurai doesn't mean martial artist. It is a rank of society. You need to be born in Samurai family or hired and given the position as samurai.

HOW TO STAND SWORDS

Tsuka end down. The reason?

Stand the sword against a wall behind or to side of you. If the *tsuka* is down, you can grab, draw and stand in one quick motion. This was the war era's standard way to keep swords. Chairs were not common, everybody sat on the floor.

During the War era(1167-1590), most floors were wooden, *Tatami* was a luxury. Samurai didn't sit in *Seiza*. *Agura(anza)* was the common way to sit. Or, if for a short time only, *Fukyo(Mukushin ryu* one knee down) was the way. Imagine if you need to stand up quickly and run with weapons after sitting in *Seiza* on the wood floor for awhile, could you run or be ready to fight?

A LITTLE ABOUT JAPANESE HISTORY

A long time ago, samurai had no political power in central government. They were military of the emperor and royal families, bodyguards, security guards of palace and court houses, and police. The first samurai to have strong power in government was *Taira-no-Kiyomori (1118-1181)* in *Heian* period (794-1192). He rose to one of the highest position in government under the emperor.

The first shogun who established the government (*Bakufu*) by samurai in 1196, and took the political power away from the emperor was *Minamoto-no-Yoritomo (1147-1199)*. He fought with the *Hei-ke (Taira clan)* and swept them away.

INTERESTING FACTS

The world famous swordsman *Miyamoto Musashi(1584?-1645)* did not take a bath.

During *Edo* period -the days of *Tokugawa* shogunate (1603-1867), shogun had changed his sleeping pillow to clean fresh one each time when he got up to go to bathroom or for some other reason during night. Every night a few pillows were prepared near by his bed.

KIMONO AND YUKATA

Japanese traditional clothes, *Kimono* and *Yukata* look similar. They have the same shape, and there are no buttons, snaps or zippers. But they are different.

Kimono--silk, wool with linings or without linings for summer. Recently polyester *Kimono* came out for easy care at home. *Kimono* is always worn with an undergarment. One undergarment for men (*Juban*). Two layers for women (*Hada-Juban* and *Naga-Juban*).

There are many rules of colors and prints for seasons and occasions. Female *Kimono* is not easy to wear by yourself without lessons and practice. You can't imagine how many ties hiding under *Kimono* and *Obi*.

Yukata--cotton without linings. Some people wear undergarments and some people don't.

Yukata is only for summer. No *Tabi*. This is only for casual. Some of *Yukata* are only for lounging at home. They are easier to wear than *Kimono*.

RECOMMENDED BOOK

SAMURAI -AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

BY MITSUO KURE

You can see the history of samurai, weapons and armor with illustrations and beautiful pictures. It is fun to look at just those pictures. You can learn about some famous warriors and battles in history of Japan, and even how to put on Japanese armor.

EVERYDAY JAPANESE

itadakimasu--Say before you eat the meals. Direct translation is "I am going to have it." Real mean is "Thank you for serving the meal. I am going to eat it with appreciation."

gochisou sama deshita--Say when you finish the meal. It means "it was a good meal. Thank you."

we say these words each time when we eat even at the restaurant. If somebody buys the foods for you, you tell these to that person. This is one of our table manners.

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

Everybody must be busy with sending Christmas cards these days. In Japan, we don't send Christmas cards so much. New Years greeting cards are the most important for us. I am pretty sure everyone in Japan is busy with sending New Years cards.

If you put the sign of *Nenga*(new years greeting) in red ink under postage stamp, the post office will separate it from the regular mail, and they will deliver it on the morning of New Year Day.

We send them to family, friends, coworkers, bosses, and anybody who has relationship of business, teachers, etc. Companies send cards to their clients.

I remember when I was working in Japan it was my job to write each address by calligraphy brush on post cards. Greeting words are already printed with a branch manager's name. My boss thought printing everything is not polite and doesn't show our heart. So, I had to write each card by hand. I agree with his opinion, but ...150 cards! I had to make them in a few weeks in December. What do you think? After I came home I didn't feel to make my own New Years cards. I didn't even want to see them anymore.

Happy holidays for everyone!

In this news letter:

Japanese names are written by Japanese way. Family name comes first, then given name.

Japanese words are written close to Japanese pronunciations and writing, ie. Noutou instead of Noto or shougun, instead of shogun.

Have a question? Contact me at:

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