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BEGINNING OF KENJUTSU AND MUKUSHIN-RYU

CHAPTER 2 : BIRTH OF MUKUSHIN-RYU AND BUJUTSU, THE FEATURE OF WEAPONS

Probably everyone already knows *Mukushin-ryu* history by Vol.12, but let me talk about that again.

The founder of *Mukushin-ryu* 'Ohashi Kageyuzaemon Takayasu' was a successor of *Chuujou-ryu souke*, but he gave that position to 'Yamazaki Ukyounosuke Shougan' to search for a new stage and techniques. He trained and studied day and night. Since he had never lost interest in leaning and studying martial arts and felt "My mind is unlimited like the sky. It is empty." With this reason he named his style 'Mukushin-ryu' and kept going forward for the improvement.

As you read in Chapter 1 (Vol.12), *Mukushin-ryu* was born in the middle of *Sengoku Jidai*. We do our training on the assumption that we are in armor suits (kacchuu), also at the same time, I am trying to arrange it to modern way step by step.

Mukushin-ryu is an overall martial arts including *Kodachi*(short sword), *Jou-jutsu*(stick), *Yari-jutsu*(spear), *Tai-jutsu*(empty hands), *Shuriken*, *Han-jou*(Un-you)(half length stick) with *Kenjutsu* and *Iai* as main subjects. Other style could be the same way. Because martial arts is not only about sword techniques. In a close combat, you use the weapons like *Yari* or *Naginata*, but if you don't have those, you need to use a stick you can find around you. If you can't even find such a thing, you need to fight with your own body without weapons. That is *Bujutsu*.

It might be OK to do only one particular thing like *Kendou*, *Juudou* or *Karate* like modern days, but it is not enough when you consider the true *Bujutsu*.

In this connection I may add that 3 years was one period for going out about out about the country to perfect their skill in the martial arts from old times. Of course they didn't have much money for traveling, so they stayed in temples and shrines or camped out instead of inns or hotels. *Shuriken* was an indispensable items to catch their own food. If they were not good at *Shuriken*, they could not get small animals like rabbits or birds. I can imagine that most of them who gave up and came home were not good at *Shuriken*.

The image of *Shuriken* as a cross or star shape from *Ninja* movies, but ours or even other styles uses a spike shape *Shuriken*. Originally nails or short knives were used as *Shuriken*, and then each style improved their own shapes. Sometimes we throw the cross shape *Shuriken* for fun during our class. It might be harder than the spike type to throw right.

Many people might consider *Kodachi* techniques from *Chuujou-ryu*, but there is not *Kodachi* in *Chuujou-ryu*. As you read in Vol.11, usually *Toushin*(blade)'s length of

Uchidachi was 3 *shaku* 1 *sun* (about 36.5inches) and *Shidachi* was 2 *shaku* 3 *sun* (about 26 inches). On the battlefield they needed to make free use of well-trained skill for stopping enemy's long *Tsurugi*(*ken*-剣)(a type of sword) by *Uchigatana*(打刀)(regular Japanese sword we use now).

After *Chuujou-ryuu* was passed on to *Toda* from *Yamazaki*, *Kodachi* became famous as a pronoun of this style by the greatest blind swordsman 'Toda Seigan'. The student of *Seigan* who studied *Uchidachi* was the founder of *Gan-ryu* 'Sasaki Kojirou', who was well-known in 'Miyamoto Musashi' story. *Seigan* considered 'if I learn all there is to know about the long swords, my sword become shorter'. Then his sword became shorter and shorter. Finally he reached the point of 'when it keeps getting shorter, there would be nothing but my hands' and he developed empty hands techniques.

Meanwhile, *Sasaki Kojirou* saw the advantage of the long sword. He made the technique named 'Tsubame gaeshi(turning swallow)' and founded *Gan-ryu*. He became the lifelong rival of *Musashi* and he ended his life at the duel of *Gan-ryu-jima*(*gan-ryu* island) with *Musashi*. (see Vol. 7)

It was a natural result that many other styles came out from one original style.of *Kenjutsu*.

Now, let me talk about *Iai*. Nowadays some people think thatany way of drawing swords and cutting is *Iai*. It is wrong. *Kenjutsu* and *Iai* are alike but different.

In the first place 'Tachiai' means facing a enemy with a drawn sword in your hands. To use a wide variety of technique from *Tachiai* is 'Kenjutsu'. Beginning of *Kenpou* (the way of swords) starts from drawing the swords. No matter how long and how heavy the sword is, and no matter what your body size is. To draw the sword and attack smoothly and speedy, the way of *Battou* (drawing the sword) must fit any situation with the each way of loosing *Koikuchi*, putting the hand on *Tsuka*, using hip on the moment of drawing, foot work and gripping and wringing (*Shibori*) of the hands.

Iai was created on a self-evident truth of "using the sword begins with drawing the sword". When you are facing the enemy, drawing the sword faster and putting your all spirit and life on the first attack, that is 'Iai' I believe.

This *Iai* was invented by 'Hayashizaki Jinsuke Sigenobu'(1542~1594). Why did I say "invented"? Because *Jinsuke* was born in *Sengoku Jidai*. It was a time when *Kenjutsu* itself was undeveloped and neglected. In such a time he put his attention on the way of *Battou* and established it. His *Iai* is still alive in every style which has the word 'Iai' in their names until now.

-----continue to Chapter 2 -2(next issue)

Mukushin-ryu 15th souoke, re-founder 1st
Ohashi Kenshin

MARU NI MUTSU KEN

--Six swords in the circle--

This is the *Ura-Mon* of the founder of *Mukushin-ryu* 'Ohashi Kageyuzaemon' and his family.

Mon is a Japanese which means a family crest. *Ura* means backside. *Ura-Mon* is a informal crest. The formal crest is called *Omote* (front side) -*Mon*, *Ka* (house/family) -*Mon* or just *Mon*.

Ohashi Souke gave this to *Mukushin-ryu* students here. Also, recently he put each sword the words which are important things to keep in your mind to study *Mukushin-ryu*.

Since *Ohashi Souke* considers all *Mukushin-ryu* students are one family, I thought it would be a great ideas to use this as *Mukushin-ryu* family crest of America.

Do you agree this? I would like to hear everyone's opinion. If nobody disagree with this idea, I will let *Ohashi Souke* know.

守破離- *shu ha ri*

Follow your master
Train yourself, and then
find the way to fit you

心技一体- *shin gi ittai*

Mind and techniques
should be united in one

残心- *zanshin**

Keep fighting spirit
after the fight



斬心-*zanshin**

Have fighting spirit
before the fight

剣禅一如-*ken zen ichinyo*

Sword is not only for killing.
It also is for helping others.

序破急- *jo ha kyuu*

Have slowness and quickness,
power and softness, or
tension and easiness.

*About 2 different *Zanshin*, see Vol.12

OLD WAY OF COUNTING AGE IN JAPAN

When you are born, you are 1-year-old. In fact it means the first year. There were no custom to celebrate each birthday. Everybody gained the age on the New Year's Day. The first New years day you will be 2 years old.(second year).

If you are born in the end of the year, you are 1 year old on December 31, and next day you will be 2 years old...??? Weird, isn't it.

The age counted by this way is called '*Kazoe-doshi*' and real age is called '*Man*'. *Kazoe* means counting and *doshi* is originally *toshi* which means age or year. *Man* means full. Some old people still use both way to count ages, and when we do some traditional ceremony that related to the age, we still use *Kazoe-doshi*.

So how old are you now in *Kazoe doshi*?

EVERYDAY JAPANESE

From this new year issue, for a while, I start some Japanese words which are used in the wrong way often.

Let's learn the correct meaning and the right words on the right way.

GI -- Uniforms for martial arts

There is not such a Japanese word at all. I realized this is a short-cut of *Karate-gi*, *Keiko-gi*, *Juudou-gi* or something like that. But we never do a short-cut on these words. *Gi* itself does't mean anything. We always say whole words.

INTERESTING FACTS

Ohashi Souke found a real *Ninja*! *Ohashi Souke* met a successor of *Kouga* style *Ninjutsu*. His name is *Siro-kage* (white shadow). They built a friendship quickly, and with his advise, *Ohashi Souke* started Kids *Ninja* school which is for age 3-5 in *Obama*. Boys wear blue samue style uniform and girls wear pink uniform. They practice many gymnastics and cardboard *Shuriken*.

RECOMMENDED MOVIES

There was a request from one of *Mukushin-ryu* students. He told me I should put some Japanese Anime here too. So here is the one of anime I love (it is not new).

Samurai Deeper KYO -- TV series

It starts from the biggest battle of the end of *Sengoku jidai*. Hero and some use the sword of famous swords smith *Muramasa* (see Vol. 6). It is a fantasy and completely fiction (of course), but there are many real people in the history. If you know those names it is more enjoyable.

**If you have any interest in recommended books and movies to read or watch, please contact me. I don't put on this newsletter anything I don't have.

In this newsletter:

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 *Shogun* instead of *Shogun*.

Have a questions or request? Contact me at:

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