



SAMURAI DAYORI



THE SPIRIT OF BUSHI(SAMURAI)

The Japanese sword is not just a weapon. It is called “the spirit of *Bushi*—*Bushi no tamashii*”. Everyone who studies swordsmanship know we need to treat the sword with respect. That is your own spirit and other people’s swords are their spirit. Once again that is the reason there is no *Tameshi-giri* on *Goza / Tatami* mat in *Mukushin-ryu*. Those are made for feet. Japanese consider our feet are not purified. It doesn’t matter how much you wash and clean they are still dirty. And we don’t want use our spirit to cut such a dirty thing.

With same reason, there was a group which was expelled from one of the *Toyama-ryu* association which *Ohashi souke* has a membership in Japan because they occasionally cut dead animals for *Tameshi-giri* with their swords. The top people of the association considered that was very disrespectful to the swords. They couldn’t accept to use their spirit to cut animals except when the animals attack us, and we need to protect ourselves.

Training in swordsmanship is not only to learn how to kill or cut the others. It is also to train your body and mind.

The great warriors respect not only their own weapons, but also their opponents, even on the battlefields. If one brave warrior came out from the soldiers, introduced himself (this was the manner at the battle field) and ask to the enemy- there was anybody want to challenge him, then somebody in the enemy came out, that became the one on one dual. All other soldiers waited and watched with respect to both of them. When one went down, another one came out from that warriors side, or became a big battle with all soldiers.

When they heard the famous warrior died, even if he was on their enemy’s side, they feel sorry to have lost such a great person from the world. Of course, if they were in middle of fighting with them, it’s another story. But still they showed the respect to their honorable death.

At the end of *Edo* era- it was the end of the *samurai* government. The emperors army went on to fight any clans against the new way. At the battle with one clan the army stopped firing for two great swordsmen in their opponents. They were a father and son. The father’s name was *Mori Youzou*. He was a one of the highest students of *Hokushin-Ittou-ryu* in *Edo*. They were fighting with supporting each other in the mass of their enemies. Their movements were beautiful like dance and they got along perfectly. The commander of the army ordered to stop shooting at them and decided to let them fight and die as swordsmen.

The swords is not the spirit of samurai as an object or a good weapon. It is the symbol of the warriors spirit who are not just skilled fighter, but also have the open mind which can even show the respect to their enemy.

It doesn’t matter how much cost your sword was, or it was made with Japanese traditional way or not. Once you get the sword, it is your spirit, it is yourself. Treat it as you want to be treated.

TRIP TO JAPAN -2

by Pete Campbell

On our trip to Japan last June, one of the field trips *Ohashi souke* took us on was a visit to a swordsmith in *Nara* prefecture. The shop was located in the mountains just outside *Yagyuu* Village. It consisted of two small structures of concrete block and tin roofs and both buildings had dirt floors. We arrived and met *Ezumi Aritoshi*, the owner and master swordsmith, or ‘*Toushou*’. In the first building, one small room about 20’ square, *Ezumi sensei* was working on a *wakizashi*, adjusting it’s sori (curve), by heating up a small block of steel in the forge, and placing the *mune* against it and then hammering the *ha* side with a block of wood. He was able to monitor the temperature of the forge by sight alone, watching the color of the flames. Charcoal, all cut to the same size to eliminate the possibility of hot spots was added to keep the forge at a constant temperature. For this reason, the only light in the room came from a single light bulb overhead.

One of the unique things about the blades made here, was that they make their own steel right there. Starting with iron ore about the consistency of sand, they operate their own smelter, adding carbon to produce steel. After talking with us awhile, *Ezumi sensei* resumed his work on the *wakizashi* and we moved to the second building with his 3 assistants.

Here they were taking pieces of the raw steel, and forging them into a solid block of steel. Where as *Ezumi sensei* had an electric bellows on the forge he was working, here the forge had a traditional hand operated bellows. After heating the pieces of steel to red hot, they were removed and the other 2 assistants would hammer them with large hammers to weld the pieces into a single block. They repeated this process several times, but then replaced the 2 men hammering with what was called a power hammer. This is what would normally be used, they were doing it the traditional way for our benefit, but since the power hammer “never gets tired, and never complains”, it is used for this job more often than not. When this process is complete, they would begin the process of folding the steel block.

There were some other process’ they had planned on showing us, but as it was a rainy day, they couldn’t. It wasn’t because they did them outside, but because things like barometric pressure, humidity, etc., would affect the physical properties of the steel itself.

In all, we spent a couple of hours there, asking questions and watching. Before we left, *Ezumi sensei* was asked how much one of his swords cost, he just smiled and went back to work. I figured that was his way of saying “if you have to ask, you can’t afford it”.

A very good book to read on the subject is “The Craft of the Japanese Sword” by Leon and Hiroko Kapp. (see Vol. 9, Aug.’06)

HIMEJI CASTLE

While we were in Japan we visited *Himeji* Castle one day. (This was not a field trip with *Ohashi souke*.)

Himeji Castle is famous as one of the most beautiful castles in Japan. It also called the White Heron Castle-*Shirasagi-jou*. It is a national treasure and the world heritage. It was originally built in the mid 14th century and passed down to the lord of domain and enlarged and remodeled. Most of the original structures survive without suffering war damages.

The first lord was the local powerful clan *Akamatsu Norimura*. Later, in the history of the castle, there are some famous lords who owned this castle especially through *Sengoku Jidai* to the early of *Edo Jidai*. *Kuroda Kanbee* and his father owned once. Then when *Oda Nobunaga* started enlarging his power to this area, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* and his army were sent to this area as a general commander. *Kuroda Kanbee* decided to follow *Oda Nobunaga*. He welcomed *Hideyoshi* and gave the castle to him to use as a base camp.

After *Nobunaga*'s death *Hideyoshi* became his successor and he gave this castle to his brother in law, *Kinoshita Iesada*. Then *Hideyoshi*'s death brought up the biggest fight between *Toyotomi Hideyori*, the son of *Hideyoshi* with the clans who kept supporting *Toyotomi* family and *Tokugawa Ieyasu*(the battle at *Sekigahara-Sekigahara no tataikai*)

Toyotomi's side lost the battle and *Himeji* Castle was given to *Ikeda Terumasa* by *Tokugawa*. But the 3rd *Ikeda* lord was moved to another smaller domain because he was too young when his father died. Then *Honda Tadamasu* became the lord. His son married *Ieyasu*'s daughter who had been married once to *Toyotomi Hideyori*. When *Ieyasu* finally attacked there to destroy *Toyotomi* family completely, she was able to escape to *Osaka* Castle which was built by *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* and his son, *Hideyori* lived there also.

Until the end of *Edo jidai*, there were few more changes.

When we visit such a historical place, we always have some feelings with thinking about them. They were here. They were not just the character's of exciting stories. They walked the same place's we walked, they fought here, they enjoyed the same garden we see now, and we could see *Ieyasu*'s daughter's room. She was sitting right there several hundreds years ago!

Visiting such a place is not just fun or interesting thing. It is something else.

EVERYDAY JAPANESE

There are many different words even just for "I".

Watashi--most common), *Watakushi*--polite/refined word)

Boku--common in young boys. Adults use too, but only men.

Ore--For male. Casual.

Uchi--For women. This word is used in west side of Japan.

Washi--Used to be for women but now for men

Jibun--Military or police word,

Chin--Only for the Emperor and Shogun

Sessha, Soregashi--Samurai word

Warawa--High society women during Samurai time

Ora, Oira, Wai, Watai, Atai, Atashi, Ware, wachiki, etc.

I think there are more but I can't think of anymore now.

INTERESTING FACTS

One of the most famous duels and the climax of the episode of *Miyamoto Musashi* is the duel at Funa island with *Sasaki Kojirou*. In the book of '*Musashi*' by *Yosikawa Eiji* and the movie '*The samurai trilogy*' which based on the '*Musashi*'(see Vol.3 & 4), *Sasaki Kojirou* was a young swordsman who was kind of selfish, egotistical and showy. But truth is at the time of the duel he was about 70 years old and *Musashi* was 29.

There is a legend. On that day when *Kojirou* went aboard a ferry, the ferry man recommended to not go to the island. He heard the rumor that *Musashi* would bring many of his students to support him and surely *Kojirou* would be killed. *Kojirou* appreciated the advice but he said "You may be right but I do not think I have to win. I promised to go. Even I know I might die, I can't break my promise. I have a feeling I'll lose the duel today. Please pray for my soul to sleep in peace.

.***Ohashi Souke* took us to the waterfall where *Sasaki Kojirou* trained himself and developed his style nearby *Asakura* village.

RECOMMENDED BOOK

BUSHIDO*---by *Nitobe Inazo

Nitobe Inazo was born into a samurai family. He was a philosopher and an educationalist of Meiji Era. He was also undersecretary General of the League of Nations. This book was written in English to explain what kind of people Japanese were to the world.

This is a great book to understand the way Japanese think. *Bushido* is not only for *Samurai*. All Japanese have some kind of *Bushido* in their spirit still now. Some Japanese say "It is in our blood. We are born with it."

MUKUSHIN-RYU NEWS

The *Asakura* Festival was held at the *Asakura* remains on August 28. Because of the relationship between *Asakura* clan and *Mukushin-ryu kaiso* and it was the place *Muiushin-ryu* started, *Ohashi souke* and some of his students in *Obama* including *Ohashi souke*'s son and *Suzuki Shihan*'s son performed *Mukushin-ryu* on stage. They did *Iai kata*, *Taijutsu*, *Hanjou*(short staff), *Yari*(spear) and *Tamashi-giri*(bamboo cutting). Also they set up a *Syuriken Dojo* and opened for anybody at this festival. *Ohashi souke* said it was a hit. Everybody who tried *syuriken* enjoyed a lot.

September 16th, 1pm

Open class at Rising Sun Martial Arts' (2220 E Hwy 192)

For all students of Mukushin-ryu

Anybody who has interest in the Sword class are welcome to observe.

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 *Shougun* instead of *Shogun*.

Have a questions or request? Contact me at:

Rie Campbell Email--rie@mukushin.com