



# SAMURAI DAYORI



## THE FIRST BATTLE

What age did *samurai* start to fight on the battle field?

Most common was when they were teenagers. During *samurai* era, and even before that, boys were considered to become adults sometime between 11 and 17 or 18 years old. There were no certain rules for what age. It depended on their family or guardians. When they thought their son was old enough, and mature enough to learn grown up things be treated as an adult, they picked the good day for ceremony. At that ceremony he was given another name as an adult, changed their hair style and life style from that day. No more kiddy stuff.

After this, when his father or guardian thought he was ready to join the military, he would take his son with him. It doesn't mean his fighting skill was good enough. If the father or guardian were high rank warriors, sometimes they took young warriors to show what the real battle was like, to learn the strategy, or just to have some experience to be in the military. Also this helped to overcome their fear. But most of the time even if they were still young and didn't have any real experience, they were given the position as a commander because of the family's rank in the society. Of course lower rank samurais went to the battle as the soldiers and had to fight even though they were young.

When *Minamoto-no Yoritomo*(1147-1199) who established the first *Bakufu* (government by *samurai*), went to his first battle with his father and elder brothers he was 12 years old. He was caught by the *Heike* and going to be killed. Because the *Heike* clan thought saving his life would bring their clan trouble in their future when that boy decided to revenge them. *Minamoto* clan wasn't a small clan. If he would ask, many people would follow them. But the mother of *Taira-no Kiyomori* who was the head of *Heike* clan took pity on him because of his age and his behavior (he was a well mannered boy). The *Heike* clan decided to exile him to far from the capital. Also, they decided to save the other little brother's who were still babies. As a result, they realized their first choice was right. But it was too late. *Yoritomo* raised the army, his young brother joined him and destroyed the *Heike* clan completely, took the political power away from the Emperor and became the first *samurai* ruler of Japan.

*Uesugi Kenshin* (1530-1578) was called a genius of the battle. He was 14 years old at his first battle against his elder brother who was the lord of his domain *Echigo*. He was a commander of the retainers who were supporting him since he was little. Even his army was very small, his brother's army was several times bigger and had more experience in battle. He won with the outstanding strategy. After several battles with his brother, *Kenshin* made him retire and became the lord of the domain.

*Takeda Shingen* (1521-1573) was the lord of *Kai* and was told he had the strongest army in Japan. Sometimes we

say he was *Uesugi Kenshin*'s lifelong rival. They fought several times and never came to a final victory.

His first battle was when he was 16 years old as a commander. He failed on the first attack and his father ordered retreat. But he had his own idea. Instead of going back all the way to the base camp as he was ordered, he hid his army on the way and waited until the enemy's army came out from their castle following them without care because of their victory. His father, the lord and many other high rank people didn't think it was going to happen. But it did. Then this time he won the battle. That made his father mad even though he brought the victory. He became mean to *Shingen*. From the beginning he wasn't a good ruler of domain. He was so cruel to the people. With this reason *Shingen* kicked his father out from the domain and became the lord. In his case he didn't fight against his father like *Uesugi Kenshin* did to his brother. He sent his father with a few retainers for a vacation trip and while he was gone he announced he became the new lord of domain and didn't let his father in the domain anymore. The residents of this area welcomed the new lord with joy.

*Chousokabe Motochika* (1539-1599) who was the lord of *Tosa* in *Shikoku* went to his first battle a little later than most famous warriors. He was 21 or 22 years old. He was a very delicate and shy boy since he was little and liked to read or play quietly more than training in martial arts. The retainers called him 'Princess boy' behind his back. His father who was the lord of the small local domain and his retainers worried he could be a lord who would be strong enough to survive this war time. Finally, when his father decided to put him on the battle field, *Motochika* was given one group of army and his position was a commander.

The day before the battle he asked his retainer how to use *Yari*(spear) and he if should run towards the enemy first, or should he stay behind his army and just command them. The retainer's answer was it was all up to his strategy. In his mind he was thinking there was no way this princess boy could run into the enemy at his first battle.

On that day at the battle field, *Motochika* was the first one to let his horse run into the enemy. With this unexpected action all the soldiers followed him with full respect and excitement, even those who called him 'Princess', fought for him and didn't hesitate to give their lives to protect him. Then he won his first battle. But still none of them could imagine he would keep winning several battles, and finally conquered the whole *Shikoku* area.

These are a few examples of famous people. There are many other stories about other lords and warriors, or the common soldiers. It is interesting to read about those stories and what they learned from their experience of each battle, and how they grew as a great warriors, commanders or lords to make the other people follow them with respect.

## TOYAMA-RYU SEMINAR

by Pete Campbell

I recently had the opportunity to attend the 2nd Annual US Federation of Batto-do seminar at the Shindai Dojo in Orlando. The USFBD is the same association that holds the *taikai* in Orlando every year. They were also conducting *Shodan* thru *Sandan* testing that day. The various seminars covered *Shodan* test *kata* and both *Shodan* and *Nidan tameshigiri*. Other seminars covered more advance level *kata* - *Chuden Seitei* 1-4 and 5-8.

These were the 2 seminars I decided to take. Each seminar was only 90 minutes long which is a very short time to learn 4 *kata*, about half of the participants in these 2 seminars were testing that day, so they were brushing up their technique, while the other half was at least familiar with them.

Interestingly most of the 8 *Chuden Seitei kata* were very similar to *kata* from the old *Toyama-ryu Hon Iai* or *Seitei Iai kata*'s that we learned some time ago. The *Hon Iai kata* has been pretty much dropped completely while the *Seitei* has been modified from 5 to 9 *kata* and is now called *Sui mei Ken*.

The biggest difference between the way we perform these *kata* and the way they were being taught was not the technique itself, after all, *kesa giri* is *kesa giri*, but in the interpretation and performance. I found the way the *kata* were being taught to be somewhat ceremonial and formal compared to our "interpretations". That is not to say it was wrong, or less, just different. One must also keep in mind that often many *ryuha*'s were developed during the "relative" peaceful time of the *Edo* period. Often the *bunkai* associated with *kata* were simply made up and "what if's". *Mukushin ryu* was created during the feudal times. It was based on what was real and practiced on the battlefield. As a student, you either got really good, or you got really dead. Of course, even the best swordsmen died in battles as well. If one goes back to Vol. 7 June 2006, you can see from the early history of *Mukushin ryu* founder *Ohashi Kogaiyozaimon*, several of his fellow students of *Chu-jo ryu* were killed in battle. *Ohashi Kogaiyozaimon* himself was killed in battle.

All in all, I enjoyed the seminar very much. I met some nice people and had an opportunity to broaden my view of what else is out there.

## EVERYDAY JAPANESE

Like 'I' there are many different way to say 'You' too.

*Anata*--most common,

*Anta*--very casual and almost disrespect. but if it used by people from west side of Japan it is not showing disrespect.

*Omae*-- very casual, Usually men use.

*Kimi* -- little politer than *Omae*

*Sokomoto, Kiden, Omoto, Okoto*-- samurai era words

*Kisama* -- originally very polite word, now it is disrespectful

*Jibun* -- real meaning is myself. but somehow it's used as 'you' in *Osaka* area. Many people confuse when they visit *Osaka*.

There are much much more! But I don't have enough space.

## INTERESTING FACTS

*Takeda Shingen* had a special room to concentrate to make a plan or some important decision in his palace. We can call it his office but it was a toilet. It wasn't a bathroom because the bath and toilet were separated in different rooms in Japan. In his toilet, 6 tatami mats were laid and always incense were burned. Sometime he even did his paperwork in this room. The reason he used the toilet for deskwork was probably for mental concentration (no one distracted him when he was in the toilet) and avoid the assassins.

## RECOMMENDED BOOK

*The Samurai Banner of Furin Kazan*

---by Yasushi Inoue

During the Japanese Warring era (1467-1573) warlords battled for power and territory across the country. This novel, about one such warlord - *Takeda Shingen* and his war strategist - *Yamamoto Kansuke*, a samurai with a somewhat mysterious and questionable background is an accurate portrait of this time in Japanese history. Although there is some question as to whether *Kansuke* really existed, the depiction's of daily life are an interesting look at the end of the feudal era in Japan.

## MUKUSHIN-RYU NEWS

### Japan Festival

December 16(1pm-4pm), at the Japanese restaurant 'Rangetsu'

Senpai Campbell and John Campbell are going to perform *Mukushin-ryu Kata*.

This festival is a yearly event. The purpose of this festival is to introduce the Japanese culture and fund raising for a Japanese language supplementary school in town. There are food stands, booths, some traditional festival activities, raffles (you may win the air ticket of round trip to Japan!) and performances like *Taiko*(Japanese drum), other music, dance etc.

November 18th, 2pm

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

For all students of *Mukushin-ryu*

If you are going to attend the class, please let us know.

Anybody who has interest in the Sword class are welcome to observe. *Kyu* testing will also be done at this time.

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:

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