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JAPANESE HISTORY

In this newsletter You will see many historical articles. It is good to know the name of the era's, and when they were. This is a list of each era (time period).

Jidai = Era or time period

Stone Age	
Joumon Jidai	~ B.C.3
Yayoi Jidai	B.C.3~ late A.C.200
Kofun Jidai	late A.C.200 ~ late 600
Asuka Jidai	late 600 ~ 710
Nara Jidai	710 ~ 794
Heian Jidai	794 ~ 1192
Kamakura Jidai	1192 ~ 1333
Muromachi Jidai	1333 ~ 1467
Sengoku Jidai	1467 ~ 1603
Edo Jidai	1603 ~ 1867
Meiji Jidai	1867 ~ 1912
Taisyuu Jidai	1912 ~ 1926
Shouwa Jidai	1926 ~ 1989
Heisei Jidai	now

**Joumon* and *Yayoi* are names of earthenware which were found. Japanese started to grow rice during *Joumon Jidai*. Also some lacquerware were found from *Joumon Jidai*'s excavations.

**Kofun* means ancient graves. Some giant graves were found. Those were for people who had social power like Emperors or leaders of each provinces.

*From *Asuka* to *Edo* were names of the place of capital or the *samurai* government (*bakufu*).

**Asuka*, *Nara* and *Heian*(*Kyoto*) where Emperor lived at that time.

**Kamakura*, *Muromachi* and *Edo* (*Tokyo*) were places where *Bakufu* were. But capital was still *Kyoto* because the Emperors were there.

**Kyoto* was called *Kyoto* until *Meiji*.

**Sengoku Jidai* is War era that you see in this newsletter often.

**Meiji*, *Taisyuu*, *Shouwa* and *Heisei* are time periods decided on by the Emperor and government at that time. Until *Edo*, Emperor could change the start an new era anytime they wanted. Most of time they decided to change the name of year when something good (or bad) happened to the country or in their family to celebrate or sweep away bad luck. And of course when the Emperor died or retired those names were changed. After *Meiji* they were changed only when Emperor died.

Also there are some other ways to call each time period which is based on culture like building, arts, fashion, etc.

BEGINNING OF SENGOKU JIDAI

There were always some wars between each period from *Heian* to *Meiji*.

Sengoku Jidai started in *Muromachi Jidai*. *Muromachi Bakufu* was run by *Ashikaga Shogun*.

In 1467 the war called '*Ouin no ran*' started. It lasted 11 years. The cause of this war was about a successor of 8th *Shogun*. 8th *Ashikaga Shogun* and his wife couldn't have any child for 10 years after their marriage. *Shogun* chose his younger brother to be 9th *Shogun*. But after this formal decision, his wife delivered a son. She wanted her son to be *Shogun*.

The conflict started between her and *Shogun*'s brother with support of each faction and it became a big battle in *Kyoto*. (The place of *Muromachi* was a part of *Kyoto*.) 25,000 warriors fought in *Kyoto* for 11 years. Capital was completely destroyed. *Shogun* and his family lost their political, military and financial power.

On the other hand in many provinces warriors who became famous in history were growing up and gaining their power. Since they didn't have to be afraid of *Shogun* anymore, their social position in *Samurai* world didn't mean anything. They started attacking thier lords or masters and took thier positions. Some of them even kicked out their father who was the lord of the domain. The Forcible displacement of a superior by inferior started at many places. It is called '*Ge koku jou*' in Japanese.

Asakura Takakage in *Echizen*(*Fukui* Prefecture now) was one of them. He was a student of *Chuujou-ryu Dojo* and leaning with *Ohashi Kageyuzaemon* who is a founder of *Mukushin-ryu*.

---to be continued.

Personally, my favorite time periods to learn about are late *Heian* to *Kamakura*, *Sengoku Jidai*, and the end of *Edo Jidai*.

I chose *Sengoku Jidai* for this newsletter because it is the time *Mukushin-ryu* was started and there are so many people who left their names in history who you would see in movies or books about this period even if some stories are fiction.

If you know their names, the things they did and relationships of them, movies and books would be more enjoyable and understandable. I will introduce them one by one in this newsletter. I wish this article helps you to understand what kind of time it was.

Q. Is Ohashi Kenshin sensei a descendant of Ohashi kageyuzaemon (the founder of Mukushin-ryu)?

A. No. According to Ohashi sensei, it was a coincidence that their family name was same.

Ohashi sensei's ancestor was a retained doctor of the domain's lord. His words" I am not intelligent enough to become a doctor but I do many things to need to see doctors."

By the way his friend Mr. Yoshioka (he came to see the training with Ohashi sensei in Obama once when we were there) is a descendant of Yoshioka family which you see in Musashi's movie.

3 ORIGINAL KENJUTSU STYLES

There are three *kenjutsu* style (not *Iai*) established as *ryu*. All started in *Muromachi Jidai*.

They are *Nen-ryu*, *Katori Shintou-ryu* and *Kage-ryu*. *Chuujou-ryu* was started by *Chuujou Nagahide* who took lesson from the founder of *Nen-ryu*.

Most *kenjutsu* style were started from these three styles and *Chuujou-ryu*.

RECOMMENDED MOVIES

Samurai Fiction ---Director ; Nakano Hiroyuki

As you see in the title, this is not based on any historical facts. It is a new type of *samurai* movie and very fun to watch. Many comical scenes and simple story. Whole entire family can enjoy this.

The instructor for swords fighting is a real martial artist. You can see *Katori Shintou-ryu kata*, and the instructor himself is performing in the opening scene. Also a real *Ninja* is performing *Kama* in this movie.

I recommend to watch the making of the movie part(DVD-2), too.. There are some interesting things about *Samurai* movies and great comments to martial artists from *Katori Shintou-ryu's* instructor.

INTERESTING FACTS

During Edo era when Shogun dried their body after bath they use a towel or cloth. Many clean white Yukata were prepared and Shogun put them on and off one by one until his body was dry.

EVERYDAY JAPANESE

Body parts -2

back - se/senaka	toe - tsumsaki/ashi no yubi
chest - mune	Knee - hiza
side of body - waki	elbow - hiji
stomach/belly - hara/onaka	wrist - tekubi
hip - koshi	ankle - ashikubi
waist - koshi	heel - kakato

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*.

ROUNIN

Rounin means Samurai who didn't have a job.

How did they become Rounin?

There were many reasons they lost their job.

If your lord lost a battle or was striped of his domain, you would lose your job too.

If you caused some trouble, you would be fired or run away from the domain.

Or, you can just quit your job to concentrate your training as martial artist or studying some specialities.

During and after Sengoku Jidai, there were many Rounin by losing their lords.

How did they make money to live?

If you were a famous warrior, you would be offered to work from other lords or you would get some recommendations from somebody who has a good position in society.

If you are not so famous but had great skill in martial arts, you could open your own Dojo. Of course you need some funds to start your business. Probably you could find some sponsors. Also you could be hired as an instructor for retainers and servant of some lord. This does not mean you could be one of the retainers of that lord. Sometimes you would be, sometimes not. In the capital or big cities, many lords have their political or business place (like branch offices) and many people are working. You visit those place and give them lessons. If you are lucky and a real good instructor, you could get a job more than one place. Or you could be hired as a security guards or body guards of rich marchant or Yakuza(Japanese mafia)

Also, you could quit being a Samurai and study hard to be a doctor or a scholar. You could open your own doctor office or be an assistant doctor to help common people in neighborhood, or be hired by some lord. A scholar is same way. You can open a private school or get hired as a teacher and advisor of some lord or even Shogun.

You could open small school in your house too. This school is for children of common people like farmers, small business owners who are not so wealthy but need basic education. Mainly, you teach them writing, reading and math for their family business. Writing is of course with brush and ink. This school doesn't bring you much money. Sometimes they pay lesson fee by farm produce or something from their business. But some Rounin who really like children and think the importance of basic education chose this life and are still Samurai.

Also you could be a subcontractor of some products maker and make them at home. This doesn't make much money either.

You could choose to be a gambler or criminal.

Which is your choice? I don't recommend the last one so much.

Have a questions or request? Contact me at:

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