

Vocabulary of Feudal Japan

By Don Cunningham from Secret Weapons of Jujutsu

Aratame- A feudal Japanese inspector.

Atemi- A strike with the hand or a kick with the foot.

Bo- A wooden staff approximately six-foot long.

Bojutsu- The military art of using the staff as a weapon.

Budo- Military way.

Bushido- The samurai's code of ethics, meaning "way of the warrior."

Daimyo- The feudal lords of Japan.

Daisho- A pair of swords, consisting of one long sword (daito) and a shorter sword (shuto). Either sword was referred to as katana, although the short sword was sometimes called wakazashi.

Daito- See daisho

Do- A Japanese kanji character meaning "way" "path" or "road." Usually a reference to spiritual aspects.

Dojo- A specially designed building or room used for martial arts training. The term means "place to practice the way."

Doshin- Feudal-era police officer.

Eta- The term refers to outcasts, or the "non-human" caste, the lowest class in the rigid feudal Japanese hierarchy.

Fundo-kusari- A weighted chain used as a weapon.

Go-no-sen- Timing a counter attack after your assailant has made his attack and missed.

Go-yo- Official business.

Goyoukiki- A feudal Japanese officer's part time non samurai assistant.

Gunbei-uchiwa- A war fan used for signaling troops on the battlefield.

Gunsen- A folding war sometimes used as a weapon.

Hachiwara- Helmet splitter.

Hakama- A long, split-skirt. Part of traditional Japanese clothing

Hana-neji- Literally means "nose screw". Refers to an implement used for training horses.

Haori- An overcoat worn over the Kimono.

Hatamoto- Literally means "banner man." Refers to a direct samurai retainer.

Heijoshin- A mental state often called "everyday mind."

Hojo-jutsu-The art of using ropes to retrain criminals.

Hyoshigi- Hard wood clappers carried by yomawari, or night watchmen.

Jicchoh- A term for jutte meaning "10 even."

Jingasa-A special flat lacquered helmet wore by samurai.

Jittei- A term for jutte meaning "truth hand" or "ten lever."

Jo- a short wooden staff approximately four feet long.

Jomawari-doshin- Doshin police officers who patrolled the streets in uniform. See rijinmawari-doshin.

Juji-yari-jutsu- A fighting art using a spear with a cross-shaped blade.

Judo- A Japanese martial art similar to wrestling. The proper reference is Kodokan Judo.

Jujutsu- A generic term for Japanese unarmed fighting styles or self-defense system. Also referred to as "the gentle art". Other spellings include jujitsu, ju-jitsu, and jiu-jitsu.

Jujutsu-shoryuha- The various Japanese schools of unarmed fighting.

Jutsu- A Japanese kanji character meaning "method" or "art."

Jutte- An iron truncheon used by feudal-era police officers. Also carried by some Samurai.

Kagi- The single hook or fork on the side of a jutte used to capture a sword blade or entangle an opponent's fingers and clothes.

Kai-no-uchi-Literally meaning "shell mouth," this was a special knot used to tie a man's obi.

Kamae- Stance or posture.

Kaname- The pin used to hold a hand fan together. The term is also used to refer to the "main point" or to a "key individual."

Kanzashi- A hair pin worn by Japanese women.

Kappo- Resuscitation techniques.

Karasu-A tengu which combined human and crow like characteristics.

Kata- Prearranged training forms.

Katana- Either of the two swords carried by a samurai, but most often used for the longer sword. Also see daisho.

Kenjutsu-The military art of swordsmanship.

Kenjutsu-shoryuha- The various Japanese schools of swordsmanship.

Kodokan Judo- A Japanese martial art and sport form founded by Jigaro Kano.

Kita machi-bugyoh- Edo's north machi-bugyoh.

Kodzuka- A small auxiliary utility knife carried with the sword.

Kogai- A kind of skewer carried with the sword.

Kome aratame- Rice inspectors

Komono- A feudal Japanese police officer's full time non-samurai assistant.

Komuso- Priests of emptiness and nothingness. See shakuhaci

Kote- Wrist. Also forearm protector worn in kendo.

Kumiuchi- A form of wrestling wearing armour.

Kusari-jutsu- The military art of using the weighted chain as a weapon.

Kuzushi- Unbalancing an opponent.

Ma-ai- Proper distance.

Machi-bugyoh- Feudal Japanese combination of town magistrate, judge, and police chief. Their office was referred to as machi-bugyohsho.

Maiohgi-gata- Style of fan used in traditional folk dancing and kabuki.

Makimono- Scrolls used to illustrate martial art skills.

Manriki-kusari- A weighted chain used as a weapon. Literally means "ten-thousand power chain."

Men- Head. Also the face mask protector worn in kendo.

Menhari-gata- Tessen which actually folded.

Metsuke- Spies for the Tokugawa shogunate.

Mijikimono- Small everyday items which are readily available.

Minami-machi-bugyoh- Edo's south machi-bugyoh.

Mon- A clan or a family symbol.

Mushin- A mental state often called "empty mind."

Naginata- A halberd-style weapon often used by the samurai. The traditional weapon of samurai women.

Naginata-jutsu- The military art of using a halberd.

Nagashi waza- Parrying technique.

Nage waza- Throwing techniques.

Nawabari- Literally means "rope stretch", this referred to an oyabun's sphere of influence.

Ninja- Non samurai employed as spies and assassins.

Nitoh-ken- A style of swordsmanship using two swords.

Obi- Sash worn around the waist.

Ogoshi- Major hip throw.

Okappiki- Unofficial feudal Japanese police assistants and informers.

Ometuke- Investigators for the samurai class.

Ohmitsumawari doshin- Doshin who investigate criminal activities in disguises.

Osae waza- Restraining or holding technique.

Otokodake- Healthy young men who volunteer to help police their community.

Oyabun- the boss or head of a regional criminal enterprise.

Rinjinawari-doshin- Doshin police officers who patrolled the streets in uniform. See jomawari-doshin.

Ronin- Literally "wave man", this term refers to unemployed samurai.

Ryu- School or style.

Sakoku aratame- Cereal and other grain inspectors.

Samurai- Japan's hereditary warriors and military retainers during feudal times. The term comes from the Japanese verb, saburau, meaning "service to a noble."

Sabmawari- The three patrols for doshin.

Seiza- A Japanese style of formal sitting, kneeling with the buttocks on the heels of the feet.

Sakisho- Barrier checkpoint stations.

Sen- timing a counter attack within the moment after your attacker has initiated an assault.

Sense-no-sen- timing a counter attack between the moment your opponent has decided to attack, but before he can actually start to physically move.

Sensu-gata- Basic folding fan style.

Seoi-nage- shoulder throw.

Seppuku- Ritual suicide.

Shakuhachi- A bamboo flute.

Shakujo- the ring-tipped staff carried by the yamabushi

Shinto- The Japanese state religion.

Sode-kusari- a weighted chain used as a weapon. Literally means "sleeve chain".

Sui-zen- A form of meditation. Literally means "blowing zen."

Suntetsu- a short metal rod held in the hand and used as a weapon.

Tai sabaki- Body movement.

Taiho-jutsu- a modern form of arresting and restraining art used by the Japanese police.

Tatami- Straw floor mat.

Te- Fighting tricks

Tenarashi-geta- Tessen cast in solid iron and shaped like a closed fan.

Tengai- Woven basket-like hats worn by komuso.

Tengu- Mythical beings who were supposed to be expert martial artists.

Tenouchi- A short wooden or metal object used as a weapon. Literally means "inside the hands."

Tessen- Iron fan.

Tessen-jutsu- the military art of using the fan.

Tetsushaku- Something made of iron which is one shaku long, about 12-1/2 inches.

Tetsushaku-jutsu- the art of using tetsushaku for self-defense.

Tokin- The strange cap worn by yamabushi. It doubled as a drinking cup.

Torihimo- Literally, "arresting rope", this was another common term for the short cord used by police assistants to restrain criminals. See hojo-jutsu.

Tsuba-the hand guard, usually round, for a samurai sword.

Tsuki waza- thrusting technique.

Uchi waza- Blocking technique.

Wakazashi- The short sword carried by the samurai. See daisho.

Washi- Special Japanese paper.

Yudo aratame- Hotel and inn inspectors.

Yamabushi- Ascetic mountain warriors.

Yari- a spear or lance.

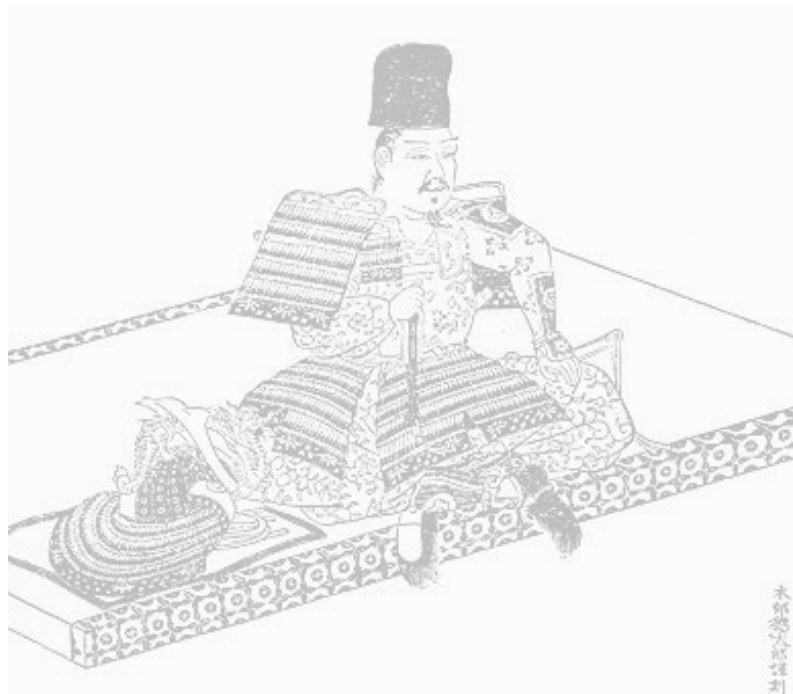
Yawara- a Japanese kanji character meaning "gentleness," "pliability," or "flexibility." This term is frequently used to refer to ujutsu fighting styles. It also refers to a short wooden stick used in jujutsu.

Yomawari- Seasonal night watchmen who guarded against fires during the winter.

Yoriki- A feudal Japanese officer.

Biography

Don Cunningham attended Texas A&M University-Commerce where he earned a BS degree in 1978 and a MS degree in 1984. A former judo competitor, he has advanced ranks in judo, jujutsu, and kendo, including a second dan license from the Kodokan Judo Institute in Tokyo. Mr. Cunningham has practiced judo and competed in many different countries, including Japan and Europe. His tournament records include many state and regional awards. In addition, he has studied various koryu bujutsu styles with several teachers during his frequent business trips to Japan.



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