

## **MIYAMOTO Musashi (1584?-1645?)**

Miyamoto Musashi, inventor of the "Nito" (two-sword) fighting style, was a reasonably well-known figure in Japan during his life. However, it was only after the publication of Yoshikawa Eiji's newspaper serial "Miyamoto Musashi," starting in 1935, that he became a legend. The subsequent novel, *Musashi*, while based on historical fact, contains considerable amounts of fiction as well. However, the novel has enjoyed immense success over the years as one of the most famous books in the world, selling over 120 million copies worldwide (more than *The Lord of the Rings* and *Chronicles of Narnia* books series), and has been termed the "Gone with the Wind of Japan." Because the true accounts of Musashi have often been blurred with fictionalized works, it's impossible to paint an accurate portrait of Musashi's life. However, we've attempted to gather a general history of his life and accomplishments below.

Note: There are several documents written on him, including one by his disciple, Miyamoto Iori. However, there is conflicting content in them.

Miyamoto Musashi was born in what is now present-day Oaza Miyamoto, Sanumomura, Aida-gun, Okayama Prefecture. It was called Yoshino-gun, Mimasaka-no-kuni (Country of Mimasaka) in his time. His given name at birth was Bennosuke, a name which he himself later changed to Musashi. He also had the title of "Niten." His father, Munisai, died when he was seven, and when he was seventeen, he took part in the famous Battle of Sekigahara, on the losing side.

At the age of twenty-one, he fought a duel in Kyoto with the Yoshiokas: Seijuuro, Denshichiro (brothers), and Matashichiro (son of Seijuuro). Yoshioka Kempo, father of Seijuuro and Denshichiro, founded the Yoshiokaryuu (Yoshioka School of Kenjutsu [fencing]) toward the end of the Muromachi Period (1333-1572). Some people feel that Miyamoto was being excessively cruel, because he not only killed the two elder Yoshiokas, but also the young Matashichiro, who wanted to avenge his father and uncle. But the Yoshioka clan themselves did not see any particular unfairness, and not only supported Matashichiro's attempt at revenge, but also provided him with a musket for the purpose.

During that same year, he also took part in a competition with the famous Nara Hozoin school of spear-fighting.

Between his twenty-second and twenty-eighth years, Miyamoto had a battle with Shishido Baiken, wielder of the kusari-gama (chain-and-sickle) at Iga, took part in a competition at Edo against Muso Gonnosuke, who invented the Muso style of staff fighting, and visited many Zen temples, including Daitokuji (whose master was Takuan Soho), to improve himself mentally.

In April, 1612, when Miyamoto was 29, he fought another duel, this time at Funajima, against Ganryu Sasaki Kojiro, killing him. The name of the island was later changed to Ganryu Island to honor the name of the fallen swordsman.

In the later years of his life, he became more interested in cultural matters, developing his skills as an artist and writer. In the latter field, he wrote a book on his "Niten-ichi-ryuu" (two-swords fighting style, also known as "Enmei-ryuu" and "Nitoo-ryuu"), as well as the legendary *Gorin no Sho* (The Book of Five Rings), which he finished in 1645, at the age of 62, not long before he died. His most famous work of art is the black-and-white brush painting, "Kosui Kigezu."

In popular culture, Musashi has been the subject of countless films, TV series, anime, manga, novels, art, and video games. His character has appeared (often fictionalized) in at least 36 films, including six with Miyamoto Musashi as the title (1929, 1944, 1954, 1961, 1973). His character has appeared in Fukasaku's *Samurai Reincarnation*, Kitamura's *Aragami*, and has loosely inspired the characters of Kyuzo in Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* and Takezo Kinsei in NBC's "Heroes" TV series.

The most famous Musashi films have all been based on Yoshikawa's novel, *Musashi*, as has Takehiko Inoue's famous manga series "Vagabond." There are countless Musashi references in anime, from "Urusei Yatsura" to "Pokémon." (The Pokémon villains known as Jessie and James in the US, are Musashi and Kojiro in Japan.) His character has appeared in several video games, including *Samurai Shodown* (Neo-Geo, SNES, Genesis), *Ganryu* (Neo-Geo), *Time Killers* (Genesis), *Brave Fencer Musashi*, (PS1), *Musashi: Samurai Legend* (PS2), *Onimusha Blade Warriors* (PS2), *Samurai Warriors 2* (PS2, Xbox360), *Warriors Orochi* (PS2, Xbox360, PSP),

Warcraft III (PC), Ninja Gaiden II (Xbox360), Yakuza Kenzan (PS3), and many more.

### **Takuan Soho (1573-1645)**

Takuan was born in Mimasaka and a major figure in the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism. Although he lived at the same time as Musashi, there are no written records that he had any contact with Musashi during his life. Also, Yoshikawa Eiji clearly mentioned the Takuan/Musashi relationship in his book was his creation and not based upon fact.

### **Sasaki Kojiro (1585?-1612)**

Credited with developing his own fighting style, the Tsubame Gaeshi "Swallow Flip Cut", Kojiro was a notable swordsman who was equally feared and respected during the early Edo period. His weapon of choice was a nodachi, a long katana, approximately three-feet in length.

Although not much is known about his younger life, Kojiro is considered to be the most challenging swordsman Musashi ever dueled, and in 1612, the two met in the southern port-town of Kokura at what would become known as the Duel of Ganryu Island. (It is thought that the match was set in the remote location to keep Kojiro's students from attacking Musashi.)

Although there are several differing accounts from the famous duel, the most famous "legend" is Yoshikawa's version:

On the day of the duel, Musashi used a number of strategies, the first of which was to arrive three hours late. It was set for eight o'clock, and he didn't arrive until eleven. He used this strategy routinely, because it would offend and upset his opponents. Next, instead of using regular swords, he carved a long, flat wooden sword (over three feet long) out of one of the oars of his boat. Then he fought in shallow water, with the sun deliberately behind him. He chose this time of day because the sun would be high, and would also reflect well off the water, thus adding to the strain on Kojiro's eyes. Finally, waiting for the moment when Kojiro dropped his scabbard, Musashi said, "Kojiro, you lose!" Kojiro, startled, was caught completely unprepared when Musashi brought the boat oar squarely down on his head, killing him.

### **Cast/Crew Bios**

#### **UCHIDA Tomu - Director (April 26, 1898 - August 7, 1970)**

Uchida Tomu, whose name means "spit out dreams," is one of the masters of Japanese cinema who is just beginning to make waves in the West as more of his films are released on DVD. Born in Okayama, Japan, his long career began at the Taikatsu Studio (aka Taishou Katsuei Film Studio, later acquired by Shochiku) in the early 1920s, and while his earlier films of the 20s and 30s were injected with his own leftist social commentary, he transitioned into post-war genre movies without the same overt themes. He seamlessly directed a variety of genres, including chamber dramas, comedies, and samurai epics.

Some of Tomu's standout films include A Hole of My Own Making (1955), a post-war family drama, Bloody Spear at Mount Fuji (1955), a light-hearted samurai adventure, The Outsiders (1958), a socially-conscious film about the indigenous people of Hokkaido, The Mad Fox (1962), an avant-garde tribute to Japanese folk tales, and A Fugitive From the Past (1962), considered the director's masterpiece and often compared to Kurosawa's High and Low; in 1999, Kinema Junpo voted it the 3rd greatest Japanese film ever made. Kinema Junpo previously awarded Tomu two Kinema Junpo Awards, in 1938 for Kagirinaki Zenshin, and in 1940 for Tsuchi. He also won the Mainichi Film Concours Award for Best Director in 1966, for A Fugitive From the Past.

Sadly, Tomu lost his life in 1970 due to cancer, but has left behind a legacy of great films, many of which have yet to be discovered by Western audiences.

#### **NAKAMURA Kinnosuke - Takezo, Musashi (November 20, 1932 - March 10, 1997)**

Born in Tokyo to the son of a famous kabuki actor, Kinnosuke became one of the biggest stars in post-war Japanese cinema. Beginning with his first film in the early 1950s, Kinnosuke worked almost exclusively for Toei Studios during the decade, completing over 80 films, an average of over 13 a year.

By the start of the 1960s, Kinnosuke was a certified movie star and one of the top contract actors at Toei. Apart from this monumental Musashi Miyamoto series, some of his highlights of the decade include Gosha Hideo's cult classics, *Secret of the Urn* and *Gyokin*; Inagaki Hiroshi's final film, the star-studded *Incident at Blood Pass*; and the Golden Bear winning *Bushido zankoku monogatari* (*Bushido: The Cruel Code of the Samurai*). Over the course of the decade, he appeared in almost 50 films.

During the 1970s, Kinnosuke split his time between television and film. His most notable small screen work was the hit Japanese television series "Lone Wolf and Cub," playing Ogami Itto from 1973-1976. At the end of the decade he appeared in two Fukasaku Kinji films, *Ako-Jo danzetsu* (*Swords of Vengeance*) and *Yagyu ichizoku no inbo* (*The Shogun's Samurai*).

His last film was 1989's *Sen no Rikyu* (*Death of a Tea Master*). During the 90s, he appeared in a handful of television dramas, culminating in an appearance on the Japanese television series "Kanpani" ("Company") in 1996. A year later, he died from pneumonia at age 64.

By the end of his career, Kinnosuke had acted in over 140 films.

He was twice nominated by the Japanese Academy, for the 1978 film *The Shogun's Samurai* and for the 1989 film *Death of a Tea Master*. A year before his death, the Academy presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award and one year after his death he was bestowed a Special Award for his career.

Kinnosuke is regarded as one of the all-time best Jidaijeki actors in the history of Japanese Film and stands as one of the most popular actors of his generation.

### **TAKAKURA Ken - Kojiro (February 16, 1931 - Present)**

Known as the "Japanese Clint Eastwood," Takakura Ken is well-known for his stoic, honorable presence throughout numerous Japanese and American film roles. He gained his tough guy persona from the streets of postwar Fukuoka, where he would watch yakuza turf battles, and got his big break at a 1955 Toei audition. The gangster film boom of the 1960s skyrocketed Ken into success, and he appeared in over 180 films during his 20 year stay at Toei Film Company. His international success can be attributed to Sydney Pollack's 1975 sleeper hit, *The Yakuza*, as well as Ridley Scott's *Black Rain* (1989) and the bankable comedy *Mr. Baseball* (1992). His best role is arguably that of Kuranosuke Oishi in *Kon Ichikawa's 47 Ronin*, but his most recent success was in 2005 with *Qian li zou dan qi* (*Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*), from Chinese director Zhang Yimou. Ken has received the Japanese Academy Award for Best Actor on four separate occasions, and has also received a score of other awards around the world.

### **MIKUNI Rentaro - Takuan (January 20, 1923 - Present)**

Known as the "Japanese Jack Nicholson," Mikuni Rentaro was born Masao Sato in Gunma, Japan, and has had an impressive career of over 150 films since making his debut in 1951. Father of Sato Koichi, another famous Japanese actor, Rentaro has won three Japanese Academy Awards for Best Actor, and was nominated for seven others. He's also received at least 16 more awards from the Mainichi Film Concours, Kinema Junpo Awards, Hochi Film Awards, Blue Ribbon Awards, and the Cannes Film Festival.

Some of Rentaro's most famous films include *A Fugitive From the Past*, *Seppuku*, *The Burmese Harp*, *Kaidan*, and *Vengeance is Mine*.

### **IRIE Wakaba - Otsu (May 12, 1943 - Present)**

Irie Wakaba was born in Shiba, Tokyo to the famous Japanese actress Irie Takako (*Chushingura*, *Sanjuro*). Wakaba began her film career with the first Miyamoto Musashi film in 1961. She then went on to work in a variety of roles from master directors, from Gosha's *The Secret of the Urn* to Fukasaku's *Jakoman* to Tetsu. Wakaba starred in several of Nobuhiko Obayashi's films, including *Exchange Students* and *The Reason*. Her latest film was Obayashi's *Sono hi no mae ni* (2008).

### **KIMURA Isao - Hon'iden Matahachi (June 22, 1923 - July 4, 1981)**

Kimura Isao, a.k.a. Kimura Ko, was a Japanese actor from Hiroshima who appeared in several of Kurosawa's films. His first role was as Yusa the criminal in *Stray Dog* (1949). His most notable role is probably that of Katsushiro, the youngest of the samurai in *Seven Samurai* (1954). The 5'6" actor played a wide variety of characters throughout his life, including roles in such films as *Ikiru* (1952), *Throne of Blood* (1957), *High and Low* (1963), *Bushido: The Cruel Code of the Samurai* (1963), and *Lone Wolf and Cub: White Heaven in Hell* (1974).

Following his long film career, Isao founded and directed an acting company, which eventually went bankrupt. He worked for years to pay off its debts, and soon after doing so, became ill with esophageal cancer, dying at the age of 58.

## **Musashi I Program Notes**

### **The Battle of Sekigahara**

The Battle of Sekigahara (in present-day Gifu Prefecture), also known as the Realm Divide, took place on October 21, 1600, and decisively cleared the path to the Shogunate for Tokugawa Ieyasu. The battle pitted Tokugawa Ieyasu and the Clans of Eastern Japan (80,000 troops) against Ishida Mitsunari and the Clans of Western Japan (80,000 troops). It was a clear victory for Ieyasu, and the Western bloc was quickly crushed.

Immediately after the victory at Sekigahara, Ieyasu divided up the spoils -- in particular, the land and the income it generated -- to the vassals who had served him, and though he had many western nobles captured and killed, he left some of the Daimyo relatively untouched. Toyotomi Hideyori (son of Hideyoshi) lost much of his territory and status, becoming just another Daimyo instead of one of the most powerful men in Japan.

Sekigahara is considered as the unofficial beginning of the Tokugawa shogunate, and even though it took three more years for Ieyasu to consolidate his power over the Toyotomi Clan and the Daimyo, he was now the de-facto ruler of Japan. He was 60 years old when he received the title of Shogun in 1603, and though he abdicated his official position only 2 years later, henceforth acting as the retired Shogun, he remained the effective ruler of Japan until his death. The Tokugawa Shogunate would rule Japan for the next 265 years.

### **Tokugawa Era**

The Miyamoto Musashi films take place during the beginning of the Tokugawa Era (approximately 1600-1868, also called Edo Period), the period named for the 15 generations of Tokugawa Shogun (Military Overlords) who ruled the nation, maintaining a relatively static society, for over 250 years. This period of military-rule was characterized by its relatively peaceful order overall, clear division of the social hierarchy, extravagance by the privileged classes, isolation from the West, and a lot of convoluted treachery, as well as many important cultural and intellectual developments.

For many centuries, Japan had a form of feudal system, in which the servants, vassals and palace guards of the Daimyo (the military Lords of independent regional domains, who maintained a castle, a home base, and several strategically-located satellite fortresses) were granted a piece of land (a fief), or in most cases, a stipend that came with a specific official post. In return, the vassals were expected to dedicate their lives to the service of their masters. The relationships between masters & vassals were based on this reciprocity of services and rewards, and were emotionally very strong.

Almost two-hundred Daimyo-ruled domains and their associated castle-towns existed in the early Tokugawa period, whose sizes varied according to the Daimyo's holdings and the agricultural production of the fiefs under their control. However, the number of Daimyo decreased quickly during this era, as the Tokugawa Shogunate practiced strict enforcement over Daimyo domains to reduce their power.

### **“Mata-yan”**

The suffix -yan is a colloquial address that is more informal than 'san' (and sounds more “country”).

### **I'm washing him with shochu.**

Shochu is distilled alcohol native to Japan. Commonly distilled from barley, sweet potatoes, or rice, shochu

typically contains 25% alcohol by volume, but multiply-distilled shochu can be as high as 35% alcohol by volume. The taste is usually far less fruity than sake, and often described as nutty or earthy. Shochu is more common than sake in Kyushu, the center of production, but it is found all over Japan and Asia. A versatile and low-calorie beverage, shochu has enjoyed recent popularity in Japan, and where it was once an old-man's drink, it has now become trendy amongst young men and women.

During the Edo period, shochu lees (dead yeast) were used as fertilizer when planting rice. Since many farms had distillation equipment to produce these shochu lees, the distilled alcohol left over was either drunk or offered to the gods at the sanaburi festival, which was held at the end of the rice season to pray for a bountiful harvest.

### **When Mount Ibuki starts getting white, we all become like bagworms.**

Mount Ibuki is located on the border of Shiga Prefecture (old Omi Province) and the Gifu Prefecture. The highest mountain in Shiga Prefecture, it's one of the 100 Famous Japanese Mountains. Located at the southern end of the Ibuki Mountain chain, it's the highest peak in the chain, and a small plain at the foot of the mountain has been one of the most important strategic points throughout Japanese history.

Mount Ibuki is famous for its wide variety of animal and plant life, and also for its beautiful shape, though it's real claim to fame may be it's world record snowfall. On February 14, 1927, the snow at the peak reached a depth of 38.8 ft. These days, the mountain is one of the easiest to climb, either by the Ibuki Driveway, a ski lift, or to simply climb by foot from the base.

Bagworms, a.k.a. Psychidae, are a type of moth which construct cylindrical cases in the larval stage from silk and environmental materials. During the pupa stage, the cases are attached to rocks, but then become mobile. The cases range in size from 1-15 cm, and each of over 600 species makes a case unique to that species. Once the case is built, only the adult males ever leave the case, but only survive long enough to find a mate and immediately die. Since bagworms use nearby materials to construct their cases, they're naturally camouflaged in the trees, but are often considered a pest due to the damage done to host trees.

### **Oh, Otsu-san. Getting ready for tomorrow's Flower Festival?**

The Flower Festival, a.k.a. Hana-matsuri, is the day celebrating Shakyamuni Buddha's birthday, April 8th. Born 2500 years ago to King Suddhodana and Queen Maya, he was called Siddhartha and later, Shakyamuni Buddha. The legend goes that at the time of his birth, he said "Heaven, earth, and I are all one person." Thus, during Golden Week, at each Japanese temple, a small pavilion covers a statue of Baby Buddha pointing one finger towards heaven and one towards earth. The statue is bathed with sweet tea and the pavilion decorated with flowers.

The sweet tea is an essential element of the festival, because according to legend, two Dragon Kings rained down a bath of warm and cool sweet water from heaven to Baby Buddha. The sweet tea is not only drunk, but also ground into a sumi ink, with which the phrase is written onto a slip of paper "April 8th is a day of good fortune and insects are driven away." This piece of paper is hung upside down to keep away disagreeable insects. The Flower Festival is not only held at temples, but also observed as a public event and often celebrated in schools. The first known event was held at Asuka-dera in 606.

### **-- 5th year of the Keicho period. By order of Ikeda Terumasa.**

Born on January 31, 1565, Ikeda Terumasa was a daimyo of the early Edo period, whose court title was Musashi no Kami. Before becoming daimyo, he was a warrior who fought in many of the battles of the late Azuchi-Momoyama Period. He became a daimyo due to his service at the Battle of Sekigahara, after which he received a fief at Himeji, including Himeji Castle, which Ikeda Terumasa upgraded over nine years. One of his primary duties was "cleaning up" after the war, by rounding up stragglers. He died on March 16, 1613.

At the end of the film, Takezo is brought before Terumasa and given a second chance. At the beginning of the second film, it is Terumasa who gives Takezo the name "Musashi."

**I hear the evildoer has returned. Call him here.**

Here, Obaba makes a play on the name “Takezo” and calls him “Akuzo,” in which case “Aku” refers to “evil.”

**...and thus that you would live a beautiful life, like the flower of the Saraca tree.**

The Saraca is a genus of about 70 species of tree indigenous to Asia. Grown in warm humid climates and in moist soil, the trees have beautiful upturned flowers that have yellow, orange, or red clusters. The flowers have no petals, but instead have bright sepals with stamens projecting up to 8" long. Typically, the trees do well in the shade of other trees.

It's believed that the species Saraca asoca (a rainforest tree native to India) is the tree under which Buddha was born. According to the legend, Queen Maya of Sakya came upon the tree in a garden in Lumbini, and upon sitting under the tree, it magically bent down for her and she grasped a branch. At that very moment Buddha emerged from her right side.

**If you're going to get captured, why don't you get tied by my rope of dharma?**

For many Buddhists, the term Dharma (capitalized) usually refers to the body of teachings expound by Buddha. The word as used here (lower-case) is a term roughly equivalent to “phenomenon,” a basic unit of existence and/or experience.

There is a double entendre here that is a little difficult to capture, so to speak, and it's in the term of ‘dharma’ which is also synonymous with ‘law.’ There is a paradigm shift in the underlying equivocations, i.e., in Takuan's sense he is referring to ‘dharma’ and in the mundane sense, he is using the same term to refer to jurisprudence proper.

**It's all the same law, but the law with which I will bind you is a lot more humane.**

Here, “law” is still the same term as “dharma.”

**Hannya Shingyo (“Gya-tei gra-tei ha-ra-gya-tei haraso-gyatei boji sowaka, han-nya shingyo.”)**

The Hannya Shingyo is a Sanskrit Buddhist chant that is one of the main doctrines of Buddhism, and one of the most popular sutras. Literally “the Great Heart of Wisdom Sutra,” the original text was written in Tibetan Sanskrit, then translated into Chinese, and then into Japanese. The sutra itself is rather long and leads up to the central mantra at the end: “Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha. Prajnaparamita-hridaya-sutra” This particular mantra is recited by the monk Takuan a couple times throughout the film, and reads (including both Sinojapanese transliteration of Sanskrit and Sinojapanese name of the sutra tagged on the end): “Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone completely beyond, even unto enlightenment, let it be accomplished: Heart Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom”

**...that you received good guidance from this here Takuan.**

“Indo,” or “guidance,” is a clerical funeral term with regard to liturgy (in the form of guiding the deceased to a better rebirth) for the dead.

**...you can recite the nenbutsu, and relish the difference between life and death.** “Nenbutsu” is a specifically Jodo or Jodo Shin-shu sect incantation. Also known as the Nianfo, the short incantation of “Namu Amida Butsu” is repeated as an expression of gratitude to Amitabha Buddha. The phrase derives from “buddhanusmrti,” which means “mindfulness of the Buddha,” and has been derived into several forms to fit various native languages and specific beliefs.

**Musashi II Program Notes**

**Modify your name from ‘Takezo’ to ‘Musashi.’**

The name, Takézo, is the alternative, pre-Musashi reading of the logograms “武藏,” and has a more rural, lowly sound to it. When he converts his name to Musashi in the second film, the logograms remain the same (武藏), but the pronunciation takes on a much stronger resonance, more suited for a warrior. The name literally means

“martial repository” or “warrior repository.”

### **“Muromachi Government Martial Arts Instructor, Heian: Yoshioka Kenpo”**

“Kenpō” here has been translated in the above as “grapplings-technique.” The logogram for “ken” here is not the usual one of “sword” (劍) but that of “fist” (拳), which indicates that the technique is a bare-hands fighting method like karate, for example (the technique here historically is that which was brought from China).

#### **My master.**

It should be noted that the term “master” has occurred twice while there is an underlying equivocation in its usage. In the previous instance, “shujin” (主人) referred to the boy’s surrogate parent/guardian/owner/caretaker. In this instance, the term is with regard to the master-pupil (or disciple) context, “shisho” (師匠). “Teacher” could just as easily be used.

#### **‘Mu’ is ‘bu’ (武) of ‘bushi’ (武士 warrior (samurai))**

Though “mu” is phonetically not the same as “bu,” each Sinojapanese logogram has alternate, variant phonation (hence the problem with reading proper names accurately), of which in the instance of “武,” it can be read as “mu,” “bu,” and “také.”

“Sashi” (藏) literally means repository, storehouse, or treasury, and was previously read as “zo” when he was called “Takezo” (variant readings exist for this logogram as well, but they are irrelevant for our intent and purpose).

### **Musashi III Program Notes**

#### **What do you say? The flowers I arrange are alive, aren’t they?**

What the old man means here is that the flowers don’t look superficially arranged, but that they exude being in their natural state.

#### **Truly... Patriarch... you have mastered both the art of tea, and flower arrangement too.**

The traditional Japanese tea ceremony is called “sado” (a very formal, ceremonial art of many schools and levels); flower arrangement likewise is a traditional and formal art founded on esoteric paradigms concerning nature, the elements, the cosmos, and so on.

#### **I do arrange the flowers, but I do so using the way of the sword.**

Here, the word used for “way of the sword” is “kendo.” Kendo developed during the Kamakura period (1185-1333) under the strong influence of Zen Buddhism, when fencing, horse riding, and archery were the main martial pursuits of military clans. The Buddhist concept of the illusory distinction between life and death could easily be equated to a samurai’s disregard for his own life during battle, which was considered necessary for individual victory. The military swordsmen of this time established schools which form the basis of kendo practice today. Modern kendo, appearing during the late 18th century, incorporated bamboo practice swords (“shinai”) and armor (“bogu”), as well as the development of set practice formats.

#### **Flowers are arranged by Ki.**

From the traditional Chinese “Qi,” “Ki” is an active principle which forms part of any living thing. Often translated as “energy flow,” the literal translation is more like “air,” “breath,” or “gas.” The concept is similar to Western notions of “élan vital” (vital force) or the yogic notion of “prana” (lit. “breath”).

**“On occasion of your visit, I express my regret that I, in my old age, have recently had a cold, but I would presume that even a single stem of the pristine peony is better, for consoling you, the noble, weary traveler, than the runny nose of an old man.”**

The words for “flower” and “nose” are pronounced the same in Japanese: “hana.” Thus, the old man is using a pun here which is lost in translation.

**I won't fall. I'm a mountain-boy, a wind-boy, a samurai-boy.**

“Wind-boy” (or “wind-child”; as the saying goes, “children are children of the wind”) is a Japanese idiom for being tough, healthy, impervious to sickness, resilient, and so on.

**No.**

Japanese negations are expressed in the affirmative in some contexts, such as this one. To his question, she actually answers ‘yes,’ but she means ‘no.’ She is saying ‘yes’ to the veracity of her having observed that Denshichiro did not notice the slice on the stem.

**Whereby I invented the Gan-ryu “Swallow Flip Cut.”**

Kojiro's technique, pronounced “Tsubame Gaeshi” (“Tsubame” refers to “swallow,” the bird. “Gaeshi” is not easy to translate; contextually (and strictly contextually) it refers to turning over, flipping, a boomerang effect, and so on), was one of the most respected sword techniques in feudal Japan. Although no exact descriptions of the technique exist, it has been compared to the Ganryu Kosetsu To and Itto-ryu's Kinshi Cho Ohken, two techniques that involve a swift downward cut followed by a prompt upward stoke.

**Now do you understand?**

When Kojiro chops off the samurai's topknot, it's considered a grave offense. Known as the chonmage, this traditional Japanese haircut is often associated with the Edo Period and samurai, and, these days, with sumo wrestlers (but without the shaved pate). Its original function was to hold a samurai helmet steady on one's head, and it eventually became a status symbol among Japanese society. The cutting of the chonmage was considered to be a great humiliation to the samurai, as in this scene. Such a mindset has been passed down to sumo wrestlers as well, and if a wrestler somehow loses his chonmage, he's expected to resign voluntarily.

**Maka hannya-haramita. Kanjizai bosa gyojin  
hannya-haramita jisho ken go-un kai ku do  
issai ku yaku Sharishi shiki fu I ku ku  
fu-i shiki shiki soku ze ku ku soku ze shiki  
ju so gyo shiki yaku bu nyo ze Sharishi ze  
sho ho ku so fu sho fu metsu fu ku fu jo fu  
zo fu gen ze ko ku chu ... shi yaku mu ro shi  
jin mu ku shu metsu do mu chi yaku mu toku i...**

The Hannyashinkyo is a Sanskrit Buddhist chant that is one of the main doctrines of Buddhism, and perhaps the best known and most popular of all Buddhist scriptures. Literally “the Great Heart of Wisdom Sutra,” a.k.a. the “Heart Sutra,” the original text was written in Tibetan Sanskrit, then translated into Chinese, and then into Japanese. Popular among Mahayana Buddhists for its brevity and depth of meaning, this particular sutra can be heard a few times throughout the film series.

**“Solemnity”**

The word is “tsutsushimu,” which can also be interpreted as “quietude,” “softness,” “gentleness,” etc. The larger logogram is the main calligraphic piece; the two smaller logograms on the left side say “Buho,” which is the proper name of the calligrapher.

**Not a chance. He is a Great Councillor.**

Often translated as “Major Counselor” or “Great Councillor,” “Dainagon” was a governmental post in place for much of the classical and feudal periods of Japan. Created in 702 by the Taiho Code, the position evolved as a backup in case one of the two senior counselors could not fulfill his duties. Abolished in 1871, this position was roughly equivalent to vice-minister in a modern cabinet system.



**Then let's not do that. The morning of the ninth, then, in the latter hour of the Hare.**

This is approximately 7:00 AM. In the Chinese zodiac, the Hare is the fourth animal in the 12-year cycle, and is associated with the earthly branch symbol 卯. Roughly equivalent to the western Pisces sign, the Hare's direction is East, and motto is "I am Ambitious." The ruling hours are between 5:00-7:00 AM, so the latter hour of the Hare would be closer to 7:00 AM.

**Liar! "Kanzeon Bosatsu. Kanzeon Bo..."**

This chanting comes from Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra, called "Kanzeon Bosatsu Fumon," or "The Universal Gate of Bodhisattva Kanzeon." The Lotus Sutra is a popular Buddhist text revered for centuries as the highest teaching of Buddha, seeking to express ultimate truth at its heart. Kanzeon is the formal name of a Bodhisattva (a.k.a. Kannon, Kwannon, Guan Yin) who has figured in several important Buddhist traditions, most often associated as a woman with great compassion. Said to protect women in childbirth and to confer other blessings, Kanzeon was originally regarded as male, but a feminine concept emerged in China during the 7th Century, and Buddhist art depicts the character in many ways, sometimes with multiple faces or arms to symbolize his power to free all beings from distress.

**Musashi IV Program Notes**

**Takuan made it possible for Takézo to cloister himself at Himeji castle, wherein he rediscovered his humanity.**

Himeji Castle is also known as Shirasagi Castle.

Note: In film and television, it is frequently used in place of Edo Castle because of its size and pristine condition. Today, it is the most visited castle in Japan and can be seen in such films as Ran, The Last Samurai, and Shogun Assassin.

**This is an odd question... but is that komuso known around here of old?**

A komuso is a sect of peripatetic monks without tonsure, known for their shakuhachi playing.

**There is no shelter...  
There is no shelter...  
...when I stop my horse...  
...to brush the snow  
from my sleeves.  
Here in Sano...  
Here in Sano...  
...in the blizzard...  
...in the blizzard.  
"Koma Tomete"**

This is a poem composed by Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241), a hugely influential poet and writer who is considered to be the master of the Japanese form of poetry called the "waka." It is part of the imperial anthology of waka poetry called "Shin Kokin Wakashu," regarded to be one of the most significant anthologies in Japanese history.

**That's it, that's it. If it's Yoshino Tayu, Musashi-dono won't be dissatisfied.**

Yoshino Tayu was one of the top courtesans of her time.

**Musashi-sama. Were you listening to the sounds of my biwa which I, Yoshino played a little while ago for everyone's comfort?**

A biwa is a Japanese lute that reached its peak of popularity during the Edo Period. There are seven types of biwa, categorized by number of frets, number of strings and body size. In the film, Yoshino plays a biwa that is

most likely a Heike (four strings, five frets).

Today, the modern biwa, called the Nishiki has five strings and five frets.

### **It smells nice. Like agarwood.**

When certain species of Aquilaria trees (native to southeast Asia) are infected by a parasitic mold, they produce a resin that suppresses the fungal growth. This resin creates agarwood, a dark wood that has a pleasing aromatic fragrance.

### **They say he's over 6-shaku tall, like the Tengu of Mount Kurama.**

Literally translated as "heavenly dogs," Tengu are a class of supernatural creatures popular in Japanese folklore, art, theater, and literature. Although the tengu take their name from a dog-like Chinese demon, they are typically depicted with both human and avian characteristics, often as a human with a beak or long nose. Buddhist teachings long held that the tengu were malevolent demons and harbingers of war, but their image has gradually softened into one of protective, albeit dangerous, spirits of the wild. Tengu are worshipped in some Japanese religious cults, and still appear in folk tales and Japanese popular culture.

The Tengu of Karma-yama (Mount Kurama) is one of the more famous of tengu legend.

### **Hachiman! May I live to fight another day.**

Hachiman is a major indigenous deity of Japan and known as the divine protector of the Japanese people.

### **Musashi V Program Notes**

#### **You're going on a trip after we pay the rice tribute, aren't you?**

In feudal times, the agrarian class paid tribute with a levied quantity of rice.

#### **Oh. Miyamoto-san, you too?**

Here, the elderly man is asking this since Musashi's social class is of the samurai and not the agrarian class, giving him exemption from paying rice tribute (let alone having to farm at all).

#### **Souls Honed: Hon-ami Style Zushino Kosuke**

The sign above Kosuke's shop uses the word "soul" because a samurai referred to their sword as their own soul.

#### **Bosatsu**

When the couple open the sliding doors, the full calligraphy is momentarily visible and it says "Marishi Bosatsu." Marichi is a speedy, solar divinity who was one of the patron deities of samurai and ninja. The closer frame only shows "Bosatsu" which means Bodhisattva.

#### **The "washing-rod" sword...**

The word play here is in reference to long rods (usually bamboo) that were used to hang laundry to dry.

#### **Want to eat some buckwheat noodles?**

Soba noodles are very thin buckwheat noodles which can be eaten hot or cold and prepared in dozens of different ways. The most popular noodles, kake soba, are eaten directly out of hot soup bowls, as is seen in the film. Mori soba, on the other hand, are chilled noodles served on a plate and dipped into sauce. A variety of items are added to the top of soba noodle dishes, such as deep-fried vegetables, wakame seaweed, and raw egg. The popularity of soba noodles outside of Japan has spawned new recipes, such as Soba Noodle Salad,

which are cold noodles mixed with vegetables and sesame dressing.

**Only strangers and the deaf don't know how high I rank here in Bakuro-cho!**

Bakuro-cho literally means horse-keeper's or groom's district.

**Yes sir. As a place to die... it seems to be quite excellent.**

This phrase from Kojiro basically means that he will dedicate his life to the clan, or serve the clan until death.

**What are you doing?**

Before the duel, Kojiro questions why Okaya is wrapping the blade of his spear with a cloth. During this time, the rules of swordplay dictated that a wrapped blade became non-lethal, thus Okaya thinks that it is only going to be an exhibition. However, Kojiro has other ideas.

**This here monk is carving Jizo-san.**

One of the most beloved of all Japanese divinities, Jizo Bodhisattva ("one who seeks enlightenment") is the patron protector of infants, mothers, travelers, and firemen. He is usually portrayed as a child-monk, often carrying a pilgrim's staff with six rings that jingle to warn animals of his approach. Jizo also carries the bright jewel of Dharma truth, whose light banishes fear.

As the patron saint of infants, Jizo takes particularly keen interest in children who die prematurely. When they are sent to the underworld to build stone towers (as punishment for the grief caused to their parents by their early death) and beaten by a demon, Jizo comes to rescue them. Even today, there are often heaps of stones around Jizo statues, as many believe that a stone presented to Jizo will shorten the time that their child suffers in the underworld.

Although originating in India, Jizo is more widely revered in Japan, China and Korea. He entered Japan around the sixth or seventh century. Jizo has achieved enlightenment but postpones Buddhahood, and therefore the rest of Nirvana, until all can be saved.

**It is 1-li by sea from Kokura. It seems to be the ideal place.**

1-li is equal to approximately 3.927 km (2.44 miles).

Kokura is located in southern Japan on Kyushu Island.