

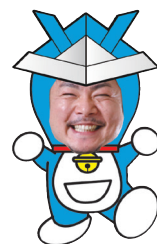
Customer Comment

Comment from Mr.Nomen-shi

I teach Noh mask carving in Nara and Kyoto. I first came into contact with your company after purchasing a Japanese sword, which led to receiving your emails. I have also been reading your newsletter articles with great interest. Recently, I delivered lectures at our Kyoto study group on 'Noh Theatre and Noh Masks' and 'Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Noh Masks'. Noh has a history spanning more than 600 years, and I believe it has deep connections with the arms and armour featured by your company. I look forward to continuing to receive your fascinating articles in the future.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful message. Noh is one of Japan's most distinguished traditional performing arts, with a history of more than six centuries. It has long been closely associated with Samurai culture, as well as with Japanese swords and armour. We are truly honoured to have the opportunity to connect with someone as deeply involved in this remarkable cultural tradition. We also feel that the quiet, refined beauty embodied in Noh masks timelessly resonates with the spirit and craftsmanship found in Japanese swords and traditional arms and armour. Reading your comments inspired me, as a Japanese person, to make time to experience a Noh performance first-hand and gain a deeper appreciation of this cultural heritage. In fact, while researching the recent article we shared about ghosts, I learned that during the Muromachi period, ghosts began to appear frequently as central characters in 'Noh' plays. I found this particularly fascinating.

Unlike many Western depictions of ghosts, Japanese ghosts are not simply frightening beings. They often appear because of unfulfilled wishes, lingering attachments, or feelings they were unable to express during life—such as a longing to see someone once more, an inability to let go of the past, or an earnest desire to convey one final message. As a result, they evoke not only fear but also a profound sense of sadness, longing, and compassion, which has become an enduring part of the Japanese cultural imagination. Your comments have reminded us once again of the remarkable depth and richness of Japanese culture, viewed through the lens of Noh. We sincerely hope to continue creating articles that will capture your interest and deepen your appreciation of Japan's cultural heritage. Thank you again for your continued support, and we look forward to sharing more stories with you in the future.



A True Ghost Story from the Daimyo Collection

Finally, let us share a story that may—or may not—be true.



This happened about ten years ago. Our company president acquired an old hanging scroll depicting a ghost and handed it to me, saying, 'Look at this! It's a rare old ghost scroll. Please take some photos of it.' The moment I (Nakabori) looked at the scroll, I was unable to overcome with an inexplicable feeling of unease. Goosebumps ran all over my body.

'There's something unsettling about this...' I thought. But it was part of my job, so I photographed it anyway as a professional. The very next day, something strange happened.

I came down with an extremely high fever—40° C (104° F), the highest fever I had ever experienced in my life. Even more strangely, our company president developed a high fever at exactly the same time. Medical examinations showed that neither of us had a viral infection, and the cause of our illnesses remained a mystery. The only people who had seen the scroll were the president and me.

Could it have been.....the scroll? We will never know for certain.

As for that mysterious hanging scroll...Perhaps it is still wandering somewhere to this day.

So, if you ever come across an old hanging scroll.....you might want to treat it with a little extra respect.

How about this Yamatodamashii? We need your opinions and feedbacks more. We are waiting for them!

Please write as 'Sub: reply to the newsletter' and send it to us



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We deliver

大和魂

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The Philosophy of Daimyou Ltd.

The Philosophy of Daimyo Company Limited.

Under our slogan of 'We deliver the YAMATODAMASHII', the Daimyo Ltd offers information about the Japanese history and antique goods and aims at guiding our customers to the old Japanese world by fulfilling our customers demands to antique gears.

Hello everyone! This is Akemi-Rokurokubi-nakahori!



Every year I find myself saying the same thing—but it's incredibly hot again this summer! I hope all of you are doing well and staying cool. When I was younger, TV used to air ghost and supernatural specials every summer. These days, however, they seem to have become much less common. I still remember watching them because I couldn't resist the thrill of being scared... only to regret it later that night! (Laughs) With the hot summer upon us, I thought it would be the perfect time to explore the fascinating history of 'Japanese ghosts (Yūrei)'.

When you hear the word 'Yūrei' (ghost), many of you probably imagine a figure dressed in a white burial kimono, with long black hair and no feet. However, Japanese ghosts did not always appear in the form we recognise today.



It Began Not with 'Scary People', but with 'Fear Itself'

Heian to Kamakura Period

Ghosts Became the Main Characters of Stories

Muromachi Period

The Great Ghost Story Boom

Edo Period

Ghost Trivia Why Don't Japanese Ghosts Have Feet?

A well-known theory traces the image of the footless ghost back to the Edo-period painter, Maruyama Ōkyo. According to legend, Ōkyo painted a ghost appearing in the smoke of 'Hangonkō' ('the Incense of Returning Souls'), a mystical incense believed to summon the spirits of the dead. This story was later immortalised in the classic Rakugo performances, 'Ōkyo's Ghost' and 'Hangonkō'. Another popular legend tells that after Ōkyo's wife passed away, she appeared to him in a dream. When he painted the vision exactly as he had seen it, she had no feet—creating what is said to have become the prototype of the modern Japanese ghost.

Why Are Ghosts So Often Found Beneath Willow Trees?

Since ancient times, willow trees have been believed to be places where spirits dwell.

What Is the 'Hyuu...Dorodoro...' Sound?

It originated as a sound effect in Kabuki theatre, where Japanese flutes and drums were used to heighten suspense and create a supernatural mood.



There's another fascinating story about Japanese ghosts on Page 4 as well.

Hello, this is Takako Shimatani.
In this issue, I would like to tell you about the Jinbaori, a type of sleeveless coat worn by Samurai over their armour.

How Did the Jinbaori Originate?

'Dōfuku' or 'Jin-Dōfuku' over their armour. These garments were considered the forerunners of the Jinbaori. Originally, their primary purpose was practical: to keep warriors warm and protect them from the elements. By the latter half of the 16th century, trade with Portugal and Spain brought new elements of European culture to Japan. The clothing worn by Europeans, along with exotic luxury textiles imported through the Nanban trade, such as velvet and woollen cloth, began to influence Japanese arms, armour, and clothing. As these new materials and styles were adopted, the once purely practical Dōfuku gradually became more refined, eventually evolving into the Jinbaori.

On the Battlefield?

From the Azuchi-Momoyama period through the final years of the Sengoku period, the Jinbaori served not only to protect warriors from rain and cold winds on the battlefield, but also to make commanders easily recognisable to their troops. For this reason, practical features were gradually incorporated into its design. The sleeves were removed to allow greater freedom of movement when worn over armour, while a deep slit was added to the back so that it would not interfere with riding on horseback. By the late Sengoku period, however, increasingly elaborate Jinbaori came into fashion. Made from luxurious imported fabrics brought to Japan through the Nanban trade, they featured bold colours and striking designs. Large family crests were displayed on the back, while innovative motifs depicting Mount Fuji, animals, and other subjects also began to appear. For warlords commanding large armies in particular, a magnificent Jinbaori became a powerful symbol of status. It made the wearer stand out on the battlefield while displaying his wealth and authority. In this way, the Jinbaori evolved into a kind of 'formal battlefield attire' that embodied the dignity and prestige of the Samurai commander.

As the Age of War Came to an End...

With the beginning of the Edo period and the end of widespread warfare, the Jinbaori gradually lost its practical importance as protection against the cold and as battlefield attire. Nevertheless, it continued to be worn on ceremonial occasions, including Daimyo processions and Sankin-Kōtai, the system of alternate attendance under which Daimyo regularly travelled between their domains and Edo. By this time, imported fabrics were used less frequently, while domestically produced textiles such as silk and cotton became increasingly common. The designs also changed. Rather than the flamboyant styles of the Sengoku period, Jinbaori became more restrained and refined, reflecting the wearer's family status, rank, and social standing.

Periods	Muromachi Period	Azuchi-Momoyama Period	Edo Period
Name	Dōfuku / Haori	Gusoku-baori / Jinbaori	Jinbaori
Purpose	Protection from cold and rain	Protection from cold and rain; Display of status	Display of status
Style	With sleeves	With or without sleeves	Sleeveless
Materials	Silk, Cotton, Hemp	Velvet, Woolen Cloth (Rasha)	Silk, Cotton, Domestically Produced Textiles
Pictures			

The Jinbaori began in the Muromachi period as practical outerwear designed to protect warriors from the cold. During the Sengoku period, it evolved into a colourful and elaborate garment that expressed a warlord's authority and individuality. By the Edo period, it had become established as formal attire symbolising status and prestige within Samurai society. Of all these styles, I would especially love to try wearing a Rasha Jinbaori from the Momoyama period, made from the fine woollen cloth introduced to Japan through overseas trade. I feel that woven into each Jinbaori were the changing times, the aesthetic sensibilities of the Samurai, and the thoughts and aspirations of the people who lived through them. I hope you will look forward to our next issue!

Hanaemon's

I am going to make you back in times!

In this issue, we continue our series introducing some of the most famous siblings in Japanese history. This time, let's travel back in time to meet these two brothers!

The Brothers Who Built the Muromachi Shogunate

Ashikaga Takauji (1305-1358)

足利尊氏・直義 **Tadayoshi** (1306-1352)

Takauji Tadayoshi

The Brothers Join Forces to Seize Power

Ashikaga Takauji and Tadayoshi were born into the Ashikaga Clan, one of the most powerful warrior families serving the Kamakura Shogunate. In 1333, Takauji joined Emperor Go-Daigo's campaign to overthrow the Shogunate. He attacked and defeated the Rokuhara Tandai, the Kamakura Shogunate's administrative headquarters in Kyoto, playing a major role in bringing the Shogunate to an end. Throughout these events, his younger brother Tadayoshi continued to support him. While Takauji distinguished himself on the battlefield, Tadayoshi took charge of such matters as organising military forces and settling disputes over land. In this way, the two brothers complemented each other, each fulfilling a different role. Emperor Go-Daigo then launched the Kenmu Restoration, an attempt to restore direct imperial rule. However, as dissatisfaction grew among the warrior class, Takauji came into conflict with the Imperial Court and set out to establish a new Samurai government. Once again, Tadayoshi stood by his brother. Working together, the two brothers gradually united warriors across the country behind their cause.

The Establishment of the Muromachi Shogunate

In 1338, Takauji was appointed Sei Taishogun (Shogun) and established the Muromachi Shogunate in Kyoto. After establishing the new government, the brothers developed an effective division of responsibilities. Takauji took charge of military affairs and served as a symbolic leader who commanded the loyalty of the warrior class, while Tadayoshi oversaw judicial and administrative affairs. To the warriors of the time, the Shogunate appeared to rest on two complementary strengths: Takauji's ability to inspire loyalty and Tadayoshi's skill as an administrator. Together, the two brothers were truly the twin pillars of the Muromachi Shogunate.

The Beginning of the Brothers' Conflict

However, the situation began to change when Kō no Moronao, one of Takauji's closest retainers, gained increasing influence within the Shogunate. Tadayoshi sought to govern by emphasising law and order, while Moronao placed greater value on military achievements and won the support of many warriors by generously rewarding them for their service. As tensions between the two men intensified, Takauji increasingly came to rely on Moronao. Tadayoshi was gradually pushed away from the administration of the Shogunate and began to feel that his own position was under threat. Takauji, meanwhile, could not afford to cast Moronao aside, as Moronao had secured the support of many warriors whose loyalty was essential to maintaining the Shogunate. And so, a rift gradually began to form between the two brothers.

A War Between Brothers That Shook the Muromachi Shogunate

In 1350, the conflict between the brothers finally erupted into a civil war known as the Kannō Disturbance. Tadayoshi gained the support of many warriors and, for a time, succeeded in forcing Moronao from power. However, his conflict with Takauji eventually became irreconcilable, and the two brothers found themselves commanding armies against each other on the battlefield. The brothers who had once joined forces to build the Muromachi Shogunate were now fighting each other as enemies.

The Victorious Brother and the Tragic Fate of the Younger

After the fighting, Tadayoshi surrendered to Takauji. However, in 1352, he died suddenly in Kamakura. His death was officially attributed to illness, but rumours that he had been poisoned circulated even at the time. The truth remains unknown to this day. Having lost his younger brother, Takauji continued to lead the Shogunate as Shogun. However, the Kannō Disturbance had severely damaged the authority of the Muromachi Shogunate. The Shogunate that the two brothers had once built together was ultimately shaken to its foundations by the conflict between them.

Takauji and Tadayoshi cannot be described simply as a 'victorious elder brother and tragic younger brother' in the way that Minamoto no Yoritomo and Yoshitsune often are. For many years, the two worked closely together and were outstanding partners in building the Muromachi Shogunate. Takauji possessed the charisma to attract and inspire people, while Tadayoshi had exceptional political judgment and administrative ability. However, as the Shogunate grew in size and complexity, differences between their ideals and political realities gradually drove the brothers apart. Takauji placed greater priority on winning broad support from the warrior class, while Tadayoshi sought stable government based on law and order. Perhaps it was precisely because both men were trying to protect the Shogunate in their own way that neither was able to compromise. Had the two brothers continued to work together until the end, the history of the Muromachi Shogunate might have unfolded very differently.