

I received the feedback from Kuwajii

I read what you wrote about items and seasonal events and feel very informative. You described many unknown things for me like historical persons etc. That is very interesting. I have studied a lot about the Japanese history in Sengoku Period by myself and am attracted to Japanese military commanders. Now, I save my little pocket money, collect battle-gear and make my collection. That becomes my hobby. Do you know what the strongest armour was in Japan? I dear to know about it.


Thank you for your comment. According to the changes of ways to battle, armour was changed. Though it is a simple explanation, I am going to introduce the trend of armour.

Ohyoroi (big armour) Heian Period **Armour covered a full body for cavalry battles.**

Features YONKEN KUSAZURI tassets

When Samurai rides a horse and takes its saddle, these tassets make the shape like a square box to surround his thighs. They have very ideal and rational forms to protect.


Sendan-board/Kyuubi-board This armour has some spaces under both arms. So, they are weak points that the enemy can easily shoot arrows to them. In order protect that, Sendan-board and Kyubi-board were added to the armour and hung from shoulder as protectors.



Dō-maru Kamakura Period **The style of battle had been changed, which was the battle between cavalry and infantry.**

Senior Samurai wanted armour which was easier to move than the Ohyoroi(big armour). And junior Samurai infantrymen increased and wanted to move agilely. So, the shapes of their armour had been improved and the weight of armour was shouldered on their loins, not their shoulders.

Features The whole body is one piece.



Haraate/Haramaki Nanboku-cho - Muromachi Periods **The main stream of battle was infantry.**

Mainly, junior Samurai infantrymen and solders used them.

Features Haraate

The armour consisted of the front, left and right pieces. Its tassets were short and only three pieces.


Haramaki Solders wore the armour from its backs and connected and drew the both sides together on their backs. But it had a fatal defect, which failed to protect solder's back. In Muromachi Period, a board to protect the back was invented. High-classed Haramaki had the board. But since the board was planned for the case to take his back on the enemy, it was called 'the board for the coward', too. However, it was easier to move and good looking than Do-maru. So, senior Samurai came to dress it as well. Senior Samurai added a helmet and so on with the armour and created duplicated protection. It became suitable for Senior Samurai.




Toseigusoku armour Sengoku Period~ **Changed to the battle with spears, arrows and guns.**

In order to make it strong and easy to move, the armour was improved from Ohyoroi, Do-maru and Haraate with various devices. It has some characteristics about the shape of body. The name of it is changed by the number of hinges to connect the body like the Maru-do(body), the Nimai(two)-do, the Gomai(five)-do and Rokumai(six)-do. The parts of Kozane (small scales made of iron and leather) and Odoshi(leather strap binding the plates of armour) had changed to Iyozane and Itazane, in order to be strong against the attack by guns and spears and to be easy to produce. The trade with Chinawas common at that time as well and some decorated armour withluxurious vermillion-lacquer and gold foil appeared.

Features Vizors and shin protectors are added. Munatori Koshitori Siromoeagi Danodoshi Yokohagi Nimai-do Gusoku



I find that various kinds of improvement have been made in response to changing times. In any period, armourers created the best armour in order to secure Samurai's life-I think. Military commanders changed their strong determination and spirit to the shapes of their armour, boosted their morale and went to their battlefields. They thought their own armour must have been the strongest. Don't you think so?

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

有限会社 大名 Daimyo Company Co., Ltd.

Homepage : <https://daimyou-armor.com/>

The 3rd floor, 2-1, Kurihara-cho, Onomichi-shi, Hiroshima, Japan

Mail Address : daimyou51@go6.enjoy.ne.jp

TEL : +81 (0)848 29 3936 FAX : +81 (0)848 29 3937



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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.

I am going to make it!



Hello! This is Nakabori Akemi. Since it was getting a little bit cool, I headed to Konpira-san(Kotohira-gu)in Kagawa Prefecture. In order to visit the shrine, I had to climb 136 stairs. Well, I was going to make it!



The principal kami of the shrine is Ō-mono-nushi-no-kami. From old times, this God has been attracted many people from all over Japan because they will receive the blessings of safety of a voyage, an abundant harvest, a thriving business, recovery from illness and so on. And this shrine enshrines Emperor Sutoku who was banished to Sanuki Province and passed away here. Not only the past imperial family and Daimyo in various provinces but also ordinary people have wide faith to the shrine. Mt. Zouzusan where Kotohira-gu was settled has been a signpost of sea-route in Seto Inland Sea since ancient times. So many people still have had a lot of familiarities to the god as 'the God of Sea'.

In the middle of the way, I found a lot of stores and restaurants. They had fancy souvenirs and tasty Udon-noodles. There was an embarrassing choice! I was so excited at various shops. But I still had enough power. I thought, 'I am not tired at all', at that time. I had good strength in reserve at that moment. However, I had my first experience to be called 'having your knees about to give out' later....



'Have just arrived?'



Konpira-Dog

A dog visited the shrine instead of the owner appeared as well and it was called as 'Konpira-Dog'. The dog had a wood board on which the owner's name was written and a bag contained ceremony fee, the money for meal and so on and hung them from his neck. The dog was attended by various travellers with getting some treatments from the people along the street and allegedly had his duty excellently. I wished I would have got help from this dog seriously.




The dedicatory screw propeller

It was dedicated by Imabari Shipbuilding CO., LTD. in September, 1994. Six meters in length and 19.2 tons in weight. The company had the wish, 'Kotohira-gu and our company-may both "could do their business successfully!" ('Mawasu' in Japanese) ('Mawasu' in Japanese have another meaning of 'spin'). So, they were said to dedicate the screw propeller for a big ship to the shrine.




- I thought. But the real struggle had not started yet. The stairs went on forever. My calves were screaming:-(. With this thing and that, I had just arrived the last stair somehow. At last, I almost reached the top. It took about 90 minutes to climb up the stairs. Though it was really hard. I thought it was very happy for me to come to this place. My sense of accomplishment to have climbed up and the scenery from the top blew my fatigue off and the clear air made me be almost cry. I climbed each step one by one. When I felt tired in the middle, I stopped climbing, took a rest again and again and then resumed that. The way to the top was just like making me feel the life. 'Your dream does not come true by others. It will come true someday by your every day's small efforts which finally got fruits.'- I got some important advices from this climb. On my way to home, I had my knees about to give out. My children mentioned me my walking was weird. But, if I had the second chance, I would like to climb up the stairs and pray again.If you travel Kagawa, please make it sure to visit Konpira-san.

I have just climbed up!




Only I hold the stick....

Hang in there! Mom!



Arrived and prayed.



Hello! This is Shimatani Takako.
I am going to talk about 'Unique helmet'

I am going to talk about
Yamatodamashii

大和魂

The origin of unique helmet

Since the late Muromachi Period, in order to be found, 'here, I am!', by the both sides in battle fields, wearing unique helmets and showing the own existence became fashion. At first, a creator embossed a steel plate itself, a material of bowl, processed and created the helmet. But, later, as the consciousness of self-assertion was rising, the creator was requested to make an eccentric shape as well. How to make it more easily increased.

- Processing leather ●Processing paper after putting it to a mold ●Processing layered paper ●Carving marquetry
 - Adding a bear fur and horse hair on the bowl of helmet and making ornaments-they became a main stream
- Even though the appearance of helmet looked big, it was produced to have appropriate weight suitable to wear.

Every shape was used

The military commanders made self-expression of their thought and beliefs with using every shape like 'Kanmuri-mono' (headgear), 'Yui-mono' (headgear with tie), 'Shinbutu-men' (the face mask of old man), 'Butsugu' (Buddhist altar fittings), 'Utsuwa-mono' (vessels), 'Kemono-ru'i' (animals), 'Gyokai' (fish and shellfish), 'Shokubutsu' (plants), 'Tensho' (astronomical phenomena), 'Kisho' (weather), 'Sangaku' (mountains), 'Nami' (waves) and so on.

<p>◉ Kanmuri-mono ◉</p> <p>(headgear)</p> <p>Zukin (hood)</p>	<p>◉ Yui-mono ◉</p> <p>(headgear with tie)</p> <p>Juou-gashira</p>	<p>◉ Sangaku ◉</p> <p>(mountains)</p> <p>Ichinotani</p>	<p>◉ Utsuwa-mono ◉</p> <p>(vessels)</p> <p>Gousu (Small containers with lids)</p>	<p>◉ Nami ◉</p> <p>(waves)</p> <p>Naruto</p>
<p>◉ Shinbutu-men ◉</p> <p>(the face mask of old man)</p> <p>Sanpoukoujin (guardian deity of the three jewels Buddha, Dharma and Sangha)</p>	<p>◉ Butsugu ◉</p> <p>(Buddhist altar fittings)</p> <p>Mokugyo (a wood block)</p>	<p>◉ Kemono-ru'i ◉</p> <p>(animals)</p> <p>Saru-men (the mask of monkey)</p>	<p>◉ Gyokai ◉</p> <p>(fish and shellfish)</p> <p>Namazu (a catfish)</p>	<p>◉ Shokubutsu ◉</p> <p>(plants)</p> <p>Barin (Iris lactea)</p>

The book of 'Buhenhanashi kigigaki (anecdotes about the life of samurai), -Buin Sowa in another title written by Kunieda Seiken in the first half of Edo Period 'said;

Takekane Hanbei Shigeharu, the lord of Bodai Castle in Mino province, has the helmet of **Ichinotani**. Akechi Samanosuke has the helmet of **Ninotani**. Shibata Iganokami Katsutoyo has the helmet of **Tetsugai-Mine**. Urano Wakasakami has the helmet of **Kosuigyuu** (small buffalo). Hara Okinokami has the helmet of **Juou-gashira**. Hineno Oribe has the helmet of **Toukanmuri**. Kuroda Nagamasa has the helmet of **Daisuigyuu** (big buffalo). Fukushima Masanori has the helmet of **Shiko-shika-no-tsuno**. Hideyoshi has the helmet of **Yokka-no-tuski**. Gamou Ujihusa has the helmet of **Namazuo**. Fushiki Kunai has the helmet of **original Hamaguri** (clams). Hosokawa Tadaoki (Sansai) has the helmet of **Yamadori** (copper pheasant). Takeda Shingen has the helmet of **Suwahousho**. Taitokuin-dono has the helmet of **Sumi-zukin** (hood). Yada Sakujuro has the helmet of **Koi** (carp). They were incomparable helmets all over Japan.

As above, we can understand many well-known military commanders wore their unique helmets.

Is it OK to be outstanding?

For the most of military commanders, distinguishing themselves in battles connects to the fame and fortune. In battle fields, where the power-centred philosophy was dominant, thousands of, tens of thousands of soldiers got together and battled simultaneously. Even though a military commander killed the enemy, he could not be evaluated so much if he had slipped through the crowd. When he got a helmet different from others and succeeded in battles, it could be quite obvious for everyone even though he was in a crowd. 'Mr.●● wearing the ~ helmet, has taken the head of enemy commander off.' -if such an eyewitness testimony had been spread, his master would have heard it and he could be on the escalator to success in position. In order to gain fame, to stand out more than anyone else might be important. But that makes him easier to find by the enemy. The military commander had the very big confidence in his ability of sword. However, he might wear his unique helmet, risking his life.

There were a lot of unique helmets to show own thoughts and superstition, needless to say the practicality to protect the attack from the enemy. That stunned me. The unique helmet I choose is 'Cho-nari helmet' (butterfly), which showed a hairy caterpillar turned into pupa and finally butterfly and its change was thought as the symbol of resurrection and immortality. The appearance of helmet is like a butterfly-so cool, too. The most fascinating point for me is the symbolic immortality after all. What kind of unique helmets do you select? I am looking forward to your opinions and feedbacks. I am going to talk about 'Zouga helmet' in the next column.



Hanaemon's

I am going to make you
back in times!



I feature 'an expert at ~' this year.

I am likely to make you back in the times with this expert at cavalry.

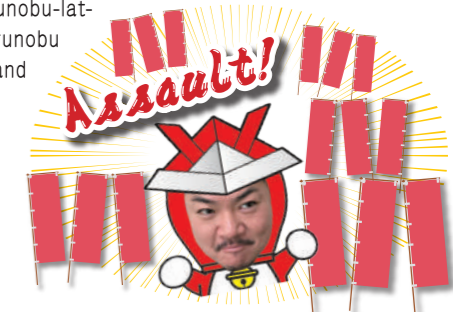
The founder of Akazone, a type of military unit used in feudal Japan, continued till the Edo Period

Toramasa
飯富虎昌 **Obu**
1504-1565年



The founder of Akazoe

Toramasa was well-known as a one of 'the Twenty-Four Generals of Takeda.' But, concerning with Toramasa's birth, there are various theories and allegedly it was not clear. The appearance of Toramasa in historical sources was found in 1537 in his 27 years old-since Toramasa took up arms against Takeda Nobutora, the father of Takeda Shingen, and served Nobutora as a vassal after Toramasa's defeat. When Toramasa was 37 years old in 1541, the conflict between Nobutora and Harunobu-later Takeda Shingen, Nobutora's son, was occurred. Toramasa supported Harunobu and Harunobu had driven Nobutora away. Afterward, Toramasa got huge amount of trust by Harunobu and had had a lot of military success in battles. Toramasa had climbed to the top of Takeda Clan's retainers. After he was appointed to that position, Toramasa organized a corps which mainly consisted of second and third sons, who were unable to take over as the head of the family. In addition, Toramasa made them wear red armour in order to let them be outstanding. That is said to be the origin of Akazoe. They were unable to succeed in life without performing great feats. Toramasa produced such a group. They made charges with no fear and had had plenty of success in war fields.



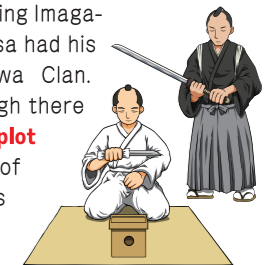
800 VS 8,000

In 1570-in his 49, Toramasa guarded a castle with 800 soldiers. But Toramasa and his men were surrounded by the Allied Forces of Nagao Kagetora-later Uesugi Kenshin- and Murakami Yoshikiyo, which had 8,000 Samurai and had a reputation as the strongest army in Sengoku Era. Nobutora got through the desperate situation in some way or other and was able to repel the attack of enemy which consisted of ten-time soldiers. **Toramasa was praised as 'the fierce tiger'.**



Yoshinobu Incident

Toramasa was also trusted by Shingen very much. Toramasa was appointed by Shingen as the Fuyaku (a warrior who educated the son of the Lord to become a great leader) of Yoshinobu, Shingen's son. In order to prove worthy of such trust, Toramasa devoted himself to educate Yoshinobu. As a result, Yoshinobu got a huge growth as succeeded in the fourth battle of Kawanakajima. However, Shingen had a strategic plan to use a chance of weakening Imagawa Clan allied with Shingen. But, Toramasa had his wife who was a daughter of Imagawa Clan. Shingen had confronted Toramasa. Though there were various opinions, **the assassination plot to kill Shingen** by the pro Imagawa-group of Yoshinobu, Toramasa and so on was revealed. Toramasa was forced to perform Harakiri.



Akazoe after Toramasa's death



After Toramasa's death, Akazoe, the strongest corps of Takeda Clan, was succeeded by Yamagata Masakage, Toramasa's younger brother. Akazoe had been successful because of being led by Masakage who was good at battles same as Toramasa. The name of Akazoe gained a reputation with the name of Masakage as frightened the enemy. After the fall of the Takeda Clan, Akazoe was turned over by Ii Naomasa, a vassal of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Its reputation came to be much higher. Ieyasu Tokugawa, the founder of Tokugawa shogunate, had been approached to his headquarters and faced to a couple of life-threatening crises twice in his life. These crises were caused by Yamagata Masakage at the battle of Mikatagahara in 1573 and by Sanada Nobushige at the summer campaign of the siege of Osaka (1615)-that is to say, by Akazoe in the both cases.