

諸国廻歴日録

Shokoku Kaireki Nichiroku
(Diary of Wandering Several Provinces)
1853-1855
Muta Bunnosuke



Translation and comments by Sandro Furzi

First and foremost, I would like to deeply thank Lance Gatling Sensei for his thorough editing. Thanks to him I am able to present this work to those interested in traditional Japanese swordsmanship.

Introduction

This is a brief study of *Shokoku Kaireki Nichiroku* (Diary of Wandering Several Provinces) by Muta Bunnosuke, a *samurai* (Japanese feudal warrior class) *kenjutsuka* (swordsmanship practitioner) of Saga *han*¹ in western Kyūshū island circa 1850 feudal Japan, with a simple description of the world of Japanese feudal *kenjutsu* as background to provide a translation of Muta's subject diary.

Although this paper is perhaps of most interest to Japanese martial artists, common martial arts and cultural terms used today are explained in English only when first introduced. Names are given Japanese style, family name first. Some notes explain Japanese swordsmanship and bits of Edo era culture, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to explain in detail the complex cultural background of the *bakumatsu* (the tumultuous waning days of the *bakufu*, literally “tent government”, meaning the military government of the Tokugawa family *shōgun*, roughly 1853 to 1867) and the period's most famous swordsmen.

Shugyō is an ascetic, severe physical or spiritual practice undertaken by a *shugyōsha* (ascetic); *musha shugyō* is the challenging physical and spiritual journey of challenge and development undertaken by a warrior (typically but not always a member of the *samurai* warrior class; commoners also practiced many martial arts in feudal Japan). Hence, a *musha shugyōsha* is literally a 'warrior ascetic'.

But over time *musha shugyō* was primarily used to describe a physical journey of exploration and development, usually over an extended time and across the borders of various *han*, only undertaken by a limited number of the most determined and hardy warriors granted special permission to travel outside their *han* to pursue their perfection of their martial art. The goal of this warrior journey was to prove and improve one's combative skills, experience, and knowledge through repeated competitions against the instructors and students of the best *dōjō* (martial arts training halls, but also a Buddhist

¹ The *han* were domains ruled by feudal lords called *daimyō* (literally: big names) under grant from the *bakufu*, the central military dictatorship based in Edo, today's Tōkyō.

place for ascetic practice or meditation) throughout Japan. While women did practice martial arts in the era, there are no known instances of them traveling outside their *han* to do so competitively. While the subject diary is that of a *kenjutsuka*, and the majority of recorded *musha shugyō* are that of *kenjutsuka*, other martial arts (e.g., *jūjutsu*, spear, and halberd) practitioners also undertook *musha shugyō*.

In the Edo era, any travel outside of one's own *han* was strictly controlled and monitored by suspicious *bakufu* and local *han* authorities on guard against sedition, espionage and assassination. *Musha shugyō* was both a time-honored exception but sometimes a ruse to hide those activities. The purpose was to visit the best *dōjō* of the official *kenjutsu shihan* (instructor), of which each *han* had one or more, and present a challenge to multiple matches, sometimes over days or weeks before moving on to another *dōjō*. For a solitary man, even an armed, trained warrior, travel in those days was physically difficult because of primitive or limited travel facilities and occasional highwaymen. Some traveled in short segments, others were away continuously for months or years while traveling and studying in far *dōjō*.

Typically the small number of warriors who did undertake their *musha shugyō* did so after receiving *menkyo kaiden* (license / everyone), the final license issued by a school upon full initiation and mastery in the technical and spiritual teachings of the *ryūha* (a specific school).

Muta Bunnosuke

Muta Bunnosuke was born on the 24th November of the 1st year of the Tenpō era (1830). He was the second son of *samurai* Yoshimura Ichirōemon, a Saga *han* instructor of Tetsujin Ryū *kenjutsu*. Nitō Tetsujin Ryū is the official name of the school codified by Aoki Ienaō (also known as Tetsujinsai), a disciple of the famous Miyamoto Musashi². Inheriting the traditions and techniques of Musashi's Niten Ichi Ryū two swords style, Tetsujin Ryū focuses on two swords techniques as well.

Bunnosuke studied of Tetsujin Ryū under his father until he was adopted by a Saga *han* retainer named Muta, then continued his training under another Tetsujin Ryū instructor, Uchida Shōemon. In the 5th year of Kaei era (1852) when twenty-three years old he received the *menkyo kaiden* of Tetsujin Ryū from both his real father and his teacher Uchida.

To a modern reader, especially to traditional martial arts practitioners, while it may seem strange that someone could be awarded the *menkyo kaiden* at such young age, this was very common among the schools of Edo period. Typically five to ten years study was enough for someone to get that final license and permission to open his own branch *dōjō* of the school.

This is implied immediately by reading between the lines of this very diary: from Kyūshū to the northern part of Honshū, many domains had *dōjō* where one or more famous schools like Jikishinkage Ryū³ or Hokushin Ittō Ryū⁴ were taught. In the event of the latter, the instructors were likely practitioners who studied for some years at the Genbukan⁵ or one of its branch *dōjō* and eventually got his “license of total transmission” and permission to open their own branch *dōjō*.

During the August of the 6th year of Kaei era (1853), one year after receiving his *menkyo kaiden*, Bunnosuke received permission from Saga *han* authorities to leave

² 1584-1645. Considered as one of the strongest swordsman of Japanese history. He is the founder of the Niten Ichi Ryū *kenjutsu*, the school is famous for its two sword techniques (the long *katana* and short *wakizashi*). He is also the author of “*The Book of Five Rings*” (*Gorin no Sho*), one of the most important martial arts texts, a famous strategy text still studied today.

³ *Kenjutsu* school codified by Yamada Heizaemon Mitsunori (1639-1716) during the 17th century, and one of the first traditions to practice *shinai geiko*. Its official name is Kashima Shinden Jikishinkage Ryū.

⁴ *Kenjutsu* school codified by Chiba Shūsaku Narimasa (1793-1856) towards the end of Edo period.

⁵ Main *dōjō* of the Hokushin Ittō Ryū located at Otamagaike in Kanda. Together with the Renpeikan (Shindō Munen Ryū), directed by Saitō Yakurō (1798-1871) and the Shigakukan (Kyōshinmeichi Ryū), directed by Momoi Shunzō (1825-1885), it was considered the first of the three greatest *dōjō* of Edo (*Edo Sandai Dōjō*).

the domain to travel on his *musha shugyō*. His diary begins:

“In the August of the 6th year of Kaei Era (the Year of the Ox⁶) I received the order of my lord: that I should travel around Edo and the Kantō⁷ area for swordsmanship practice. Therefore, I will record the details of my everyday training in a diary”.

Bunnosuke wrote as if he was directly ordered by Saga *daimyō* Nabeshima Naomasa⁸. *Samurai* often justified their *musha shugyō* in this fashion but in reality, they had to request permission, often many times, before granted temporary leave from their normal duties and permission to depart the *han*. Some *samurai* did leave without permission; those who did were called *dappan rōshi*⁹ (abandon *han* / masterless samurai). Abandoning one’s duties and crossing borders without permission for any reason was grounds for one’s lord to sever the relationship, an extreme step that was nevertheless taken by warriors seeking to prove and better their art. By doing so a *samurai* became *rōnin*, masterless *samurai*, often eventually seeking work as a hired swordsman, itinerant instructor or, if lucky, being again accepted into the service of another *daimyō*.

Completing his authorized *musha shugyō*, Bunnosuke returned to Saga in the 2nd year of Ansei era (1855); he would normally be appointed as a *kenjutsu shihan* by his domain after such training, but in this case it is not clear if he was.

During the Boshin War (1868-1869), Saga domain contributed forces to the Imperial army led by Chōshū and Satsuma domains against the shogunate¹⁰ forces. While Bunnosuke deployed with those forces, which participated in the battle of Aizu Wakamatsu in the 1st year of the Meiji era (1868), he was not directly in battle since he served as a supply officer (*konidagata*).

In the 4th year of the Meiji era (1871), the central government abolished the *han* system, replacing it with the prefectural system of today’s Japan. As the *samurai* class

⁶ The Year of the Ox is one of the symbols in the 12 year traditional Chinese calendar cycle used throughout Asia.

⁷ The Kantō region is the area around today’s Greater Tōkyō and seven surrounding prefectures: Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Saitama, Tōkyō, Chiba, and Kanagawa. Edo, today’s Tōkyō, was particularly noted as a center for the advanced practice of martial arts.

⁸ 1815-1871. He was the 10th *daimyō* of the Saga domain, roughly today’s Saga Prefecture on Kyūshū island. His son, Naohiro (1846-1921), was the last *daimyō* of the domain before the *han* system was abolished.

⁹ While the common term in Japanese is *rōshi*, for multiple reasons in the West these masterless *samurai* are better known as *rōnin*.

¹⁰ Shogunate is a Western term for *bakufu*.

was directly supported by the *daimyō* by taxes from their *han*, without their patronage, the *samurai* progressively lost income, power and privileges which had defined their role for centuries. The era's political turmoil and resentments fomented a number of rebellions with significant *samurai* involvement across Japan. Former Saga domain retainers rebelled against the new government in the 1874 Saga Rebellion (*Saga no Ran*); Bunnosuke himself participated as a small unit commander. After its failure he was condemned to three years in prison but was released in the 2nd year of Meiji era (1876) because of his poor physical condition. It is not known what he did after his release, but the Meiji government issued a full pardon for his crimes in 1889. Bunnosuke died 8th December of the 23rd year of Meiji (1890), age sixty-one years old. His *musha shugyō* diary is conserved today at the Saga prefectural library.

Swordsmanship training in the Edo period

During the Muromachi period (1392-1573), three *kenjutsu ryūha*, Shintō Ryū¹¹, Kage no Ryū¹² and Nen Ryū¹³, collectively known as *Hyōhō Sandai Genryū* (the great three original strategy schools), were considered the most important. (Some historians include the Chūjō Ryū¹⁴ as one of the original schools, too, even though this tradition derives from Nen Ryū.) The era's main training method was *katageiko* (form practice) performed with either *bokutō* (wooden sword) or with dull-edged swords called *habiki*.

With the peace and stability brought by Tokugawa¹⁵ rulers in the Edo period, more than seven hundred swordsmanship schools flourished. The art of the sword changed from what it used to be on battlefields; therefore, even the training methods changed inevitably. The lack of war made the *katageiko* tedious for many practitioners since its effectiveness could not be tested without someone becoming seriously injured or worse. For this reason, a number of schools started to develop new tools which in turn drastically influenced the *kenjutsu* world.

It is very difficult to say who was the first one to create the *bōgu* (armor) and the *shinai* (bamboo sword) used today in *kendō* as many swordsmen sought new ways to practice safely. One was the *fukuro shinai* (literally: bag bamboo sword, a split bamboo sword covered in a loose leather sleeve) invented by Shinkage Ryū founder, Kamiizumi Ise no Kami Nobutsuna (1508-1577), with which strikes to the head, the body, and the arms do not inflict severe injury (but repeated strikes can swelling and internal bleeding).

At the beginning of 17th century, in the Shōtoku era (1711-1716), Jikishinkage Ryū instructor Naganuma Shirōzaemon (1688-1767) improved the *men* and the *kote*¹⁶ to better resist strong strikes. He also created a free sparring practice called *uchikomi*. Several years later, during the Hōreki era (1751-1764), Ittō Ryū¹⁷ instructor Nakanishi

¹¹ *Kenjutsu* school codified by Iizasa Chōisai Ienao (1387-1488) in 1447. Considered today as the oldest traditional martial arts school still alive. The official name changed into Tenshin Shōden Katori Shintō Ryū.

¹² Codified by Aisu Tarōzaemon Hisatada (1452-1538) in 1487.

¹³ Codified by Sōma Shirō Yoshimoto (1350-date of death unknown) in 1368.

¹⁴ Codified by Chūjō Hyōgonosuke Nagahide (died in 1384) at the beginning of Muromachi period.

¹⁵ Clan name of the military rulers who administered Japan for the Edo period (1603-1868).

¹⁶ *Men* mask, *kote* gauntlet.

¹⁷ *Kenjutsu* school codified by Itō Ittōsai Kagehisa towards the end of the Sengoku (Warring States, 1467-1568) period.

Chūzō improved the *bōgu* (general protective armor, including the *dō*¹⁸) further and made free sparring practice with the *shinai* a main point of his school.

From that moment, to prevent injury and loss of students, almost every school started to adopt the *bōgu* and the *shinai*. The schools born during this transition period were often categorized as *shin ryūha* (new schools) to contrast them from *koryū* (old schools) in which the only method permitted was *kata* training with *bokutō*. (Today, the term *koryū* is generally used for any school codified before the Meiji Period, 1868-1912, but this definition is not exact. For example, Hokushin Ittō Ryū and Kashima Shintō Ryū¹⁹ are both considered *koryū*, but technically the former is definitely closer to modern *kendō* than the latter.)

¹⁸ *Dō* is the torso protector.

¹⁹ Codified by Tsukahara Bokuden Takamoto (1489-1571) during the Sengoku period.

Bunnosuke and *taryūjiai*

Taryūjiai (literally multiple school competition, in which someone visits another school to compete) are commonly thought to be what we have read in Japanese literature books or see in Japanese movies: a duel where the two opponents are fighting not only with the purpose of testing their skills, but also for the honor of the school they represent. The loser of a match was shamed because his loss meant a blow to the reputation of his school, but the winner was often forced to leave the area immediately in order to avoid the vengeance of his opponent's comrades. Shiba Ryōtarō's²⁰ historical novel "*Hokuto no Hito*" (*The Man of the Big Dipper*) describes the burning rivalry between the protagonist, Chiba Shūsaku, founder of Hokushin Ittō Ryū and members of the rival Maniwa Nen Ryū²¹ which degenerates into open conflict.

However, Bunnosuke's treatment in his diary is different from what we envision. He was not only welcomed in almost every *dōjō* he visited, but usually everyone was eager to practice with him (even if certain instructors refused his challenge). After practice some number of swordsmen might pay their respects at the inn he was staying; sometimes they begged him to stay and train for a few days, but he always replied: "*I am sorry, but my practice cannot wait. I should move on.*"

Another good example of friendship born thorough *taryūjiai* could be seen at the Shieikan, the Edo *dōjō* of the Tennen Rishin Ryū²² (Bunnosuke did not visit what at the time was a relatively unknown *dōjō*) under headmaster Kondō Isamu and the instructors Okita Sōji, Inoue Genzaburō and Hijikata Toshizō, *menkyo kaiden* holders from other traditions such as Yamanami Keisuke and Tōdō Heisuke (Hokushin Ittō Ryū), Nagakura Shinpachi (Shindō Munen Ryū²³) and Harada Sanosuke (Hōzōin Ryū²⁴) who lived and practiced there as well. They may have originally practiced at the Shieikan for their *musha shugyō*, but eventually stayed, inspired by Kondō's personality. In the 3rd year of Bunkiyū Era (1863), these eight men became the core members of the

²⁰ 1923-1996. One of the most important writers of the 20th century. Mostly known for his historical novels (*jidai shōsetsu*), his masterpieces include "*Ryōma ga Yuku*" (1963-1966), "*Saka no Ue no Kumo*" (1968-1972) and "*Moeyo Ken*" (1962-1964).

²¹ *Kenjutsu* school codified by Higuchi Sadatsugu (1554-1600) in 1598.

²² Codified by Kondō Kuranosuke Nagahiro in the Kansei era (1789-1801).

²³ Codified by Fukui Heiemon Yoshihira (1700-1782) in the Hōreki era (1751-1764).

²⁴ *Sōjutsu* (art of the spear) school codified by the Buddhist monk Hōzōin In'ei (1521-1607) in the Muromachi period.

*Shinsengumi*²⁵.

Bunnosuke's diary

Bunnosuke's diary includes clues that provide more information than specifically written.

Emboldened in black is the name of the *dōjō* where Bunnosuke stopped and practiced. Sometimes this list includes the words “-han school *dōjō*” or “-han Edo residence school *dōjō*”. The first indicates a *dōjō* situated inside a *hankō* (literally *han* school) established by a domain to educate young *samurai*. Besides martial arts, their main lessons included Chinese classic text reading, calligraphy and sometimes *rangaku*²⁶. By the end of the *Bakumatsu* period almost every *han* had its own *hankō*.

At the same time, for the entire Edo period each domain was obliged by the central government to establish a representative residence in Edo called a *hantei*. There were often *dōjō* inside these residences where domain retainers could train their various martial arts.

Following the name of the *dōjō* is the name of the main teacher, and, in parenthesis, the *kenjutsu* style he taught and the domain he was appointed by as instructor (A-han *Shihan*). It is interesting that for certain *dōjō* their school of *kenjutsu* was not noted. This may mean that those schools practiced *gekiken* (free fencing) without following any particular style. This could be said is basically the same as today's modern *kendō dōjō*, but in context may be considered proof of how drastically the *kenjutsu* world was changing from more traditional, clear style delineations.

After this information, Bunnosuke provides the dates; sometimes, a single day, other times, he spent several days. Last, written herein in cursive, he provides opinions about every *dōjō* and certain members. Some entries are only limited to the number of the people present, the *dōjō* structure or to the fact that other swordsmen were surprised to see someone fighting with two swords, which for many was a novelty. However, the entries were brutally frank when he writes that no one was particularly skilled in a

²⁵ A storied *bakufu* special police force in Kyōtō 1864-1869, noted for its bloody suppression of anti *bakufu* activity.

²⁶ This word was used to indicate the western knowledge (especially technology and medicine) imported by Japan through its contact with the Dutch. The term *rangaku* literally means “Dutch studies”.

certain *dōjō*, when he accuses an opponent of cowardice because he refused to fight or pled poor health, or when he points out that he won almost every time.

While this information of his victories could be true, the fact that he did not indicate the results of every engagement could be his way of avoiding reporting defeats. In any case, what emerges from the diary is the portrait of a young *samurai* extremely proud of his proven skills, probably common among confident young swordsmen. Practiced humility in martial arts developed more with *gendai budō*²⁷; in earlier days, competition between different schools was so strong that no instructor would ever admit to be inexperienced or mediocre; to do so would be to risk losing his students.

On a final note, hopefully no one will take offense at comments regarding specific schools. The document presented here gives some insight into the importance of *shinaigeiko* (bamboo sword practice) around the end of Edo period, even in schools thought to focus only on *katageiko* for their entire history. Also, even if inflated in favor of the young diarist Bunnosuke, we must assume his impressions were at best based on who he fought that single day in any particular *dōjō*. For that reason, his diary can in no way be considered as an objective historical valuation of the *dōjō*, but rather only a snapshot of a single day in the history of *dōjō* sometimes hundreds of years old.

²⁷ *Gendai budō* (modern martial arts) are the post-1867 nine modern martial arts of Japan: *kendō*, *jūdō*, *aikidō*, *karatedō*, *jūkendō* (rifle bayonet fighting), *kyūdō* (archery), *naginatadō* (halberd), *sumō* and *Shōrinji kenpō*.

“Diary of Wandering Several Provinces”

6th year of Kaei era (1853)

Katōda Dōjō: Katōda Heiachirō (Shinkage Ryū, Kurume-han Shihan); 29th of September. “Noticed no particularly skilled students”.

Imai Dōjō: Imai Seizaemon (Jikishinkage Ryū, Kurume-han Shihan); 1st of October. “Fighting some students randomly; laughably low level”.

Tsuda Den Dōjō: Tsuda Ichizaemon (Tsuda Ichiden Ryū, Kurume-han Shihan); 2nd of October. “Dōjō head, best disciples not present”.

Mizoguchi Dōjō: Mizoguchi Ichinojō (Hokushin Ittō Ryū, Mori-han Shihan); 5th of October. “All students inexperienced. even Mizoguchi Ichinojō nothing special”.

Chino Dōjō: Chino Naoemon (School unknown); 7th of October. “Few students here”.

Nakatsu-han school Dōjō: Kōda Jirōdayū (School unknown, Nakatsu-han Shihan), Tsubosaka Naniemon (School unknown, Nakatsu-han Shihan); 10th of October. “Noticed no particularly skilled students”.

Chōshū-han Meirinkan Dōjō: Naitō Sakubee (Yagyū Shinkage Ryū, Chōshū-han Shihan), Kitagawa Benzō (Katayama Ryū, Chōshū-han Shihan), Maki Shōhei (Yagyū Shinkage Ryū, Chōshū-han Shihan); the 17th and the 18th of October. “Students train enthusiastically, but many children. No one particularly skilled. Their shinai quite long.”

Oda Dōjō: Oda Kan’emon (Shindō Munen Ryū, Tokuyama-han Shihan); 21st of October. “Few students, no one particularly skilled”.

Iwakuni-han school Dōjō: Hasegawa Tōjirō (Jikishin Jitoku Ryū, Iwakuni-han Shihan), Ikada Jirōemon (School unknown, Iwakuni-han Shihan), Katsura Rokuzaemon (Shinkage Ryū, Iwakuni-han Shihan); 23rd of October. “Very hospitable”.

Araki Dōjō: Araki Yū (School Unknown); 28th of October. “Rice straw on a dirt floor; footwork really difficult”.

Miyake Dōjō: Miyake Senzaemon (School unknown); 1st of November. “Fought Miyake Senzaemon too”.

Abe Dōjō: Abe Ugenji (Jikishinkage Ryū); 3rd of November. “No particularly skilled

students noticed. Abe Ugenji not present”.

Kawada Dōjō: Kawada Gonjirō (Ittō Ryū, Tottori Hanshi); 10th of November. *“Ground not good at all, training very difficult”.*

Ōno Dōjō: Ōno Ōnosuke (Nishioka Zenshin Ryū, Kyōto Shoshidai Yoriki²⁸); from the 12th to the 15th of November. *“One studied studied under Otani Seiichirō, but he was not particularly skilled”.*

Sawa Dōjō: Sawa Bunjūrō (School unknown); 14th of November. *“Fought Sawa Bunjūrō and a disciple of Toda Einosuke (Jikishinkage Ryū)”.*

Tsu-han school Dōjō: head of the dōjō and school unknown; 20th of November. *“Despite reputation, no one was particularly skilled”.*

Nakazawa Dōjō: Nakazawa Yahee (School unknown, Yoshida-han Shihan); 27th of November. *“Many inexperienced students, but one stood out - Terao”.*

Hamamatsu-han school Dōjō: Asamura Taihee (School Unknown, Hamamatsu-han Shihan), Yamano Kōhei (Kyōshin Meichi Ryū, Hamamatsu-han Shihan); 29th of November. *“Fought both instructors’ students; all surprised seeing two sword style”.*

Takegawa-han school Dōjō: Suzuki Hanpei (School unknown, Hamamatsu-han Shihan), 2nd of December. *“Only children, nothing special”.*

The 1st year of Ansei era (1854)

Renpeikan: Saitō Yakurō (Shindō Munen Ryū); the 26th and the 27th of January. *“Fought Gonnosuke (Yakurō’s third son) and other students; very good. Shintarō (Yakurō eldest son) outstanding; some other students have excellent technique too”.*

Shigakukan: Momoi Shunzō (Kyōshin Meichi Ryū); 5th of February. *“Fought every student. Wanted to challenge Shunzō too but he refused because of poor health. Won against his student Ueda Umanosuke”.*

Tatebayashihan Edo residence Dōjō: Sugie Tetsusuke (Jikishinkage Ryū, Tatebayashihan Shihan); 20th of March. *“High reputation but disappointed”.*

Otani Dōjō: Otani Seiichirō (Jikishinkage Ryū); 25th of March. *“No one particularly outstanding, but fought Otani Seiichirō - very impressed”.*

²⁸ The *shoshidai* was the governor of Kyōto during the Edo period, representative of the *shōgun* in the imperial city. The *yoriki* was the *shoshidai* assistant.

Naganuma Dōjō: Naganuma Shōbee (Jikishinkage Ryū); 1st of April. *“During fight argued so everything interrupted”*.

Sakura-han school Dōjō: Natsumi Matabee (Muteitaishin Ryū, Sakura-han Shihan), Hattori Shirōzaemon (Nakachi Ryū, Sakura-han Shihan), Ishikawa Sanai (Asayama Ichiden Ryū, Sakura-han Shihan), Henmi Chūzō (Tatsumi Ryū, Sakura-han Shihan); 17th of April. *“Fought four different schools. Many children”*.

Tsuchiura-han school Dōjō: Sasa Hayata (Jikishinkage Ryū, Tsuchiura-han Shihan), Hayakawa Tatsuto (Jikishin Ryū, Tsuchiura-han Shihan); 24th of April. *“Tōyama Kunizō (who became Shihan of Tsuchiura-han in his later years) and another student quite skilled, but others were nothing special. Wanted to challenge the famous Sasa Hayata too, but he refused because of poor health. Many functionaries and Tsuchiura-han samurai watched”*.

Kasama-han school Dōjō: Murakami Zenzaemon (Jigen Ryū, Kasama-han Shihan); the 28th and the 29th of April. *“Despite high reputation in Kantō, none particularly skilled. Training very active”*.

Mito-han Kōdōkan Enbujō: Watanabe Kiyozemon (Hokushin Ittō Ryū, Mito-han Shihan), Saitō Ginshirō (Shindō Munen Ryū, Mito-han Shihan), Nagao Riheida (Mito-han Shihan), Hasumi Yasutarō (School unknown, Mito-han Shihan); from the 2nd to the 4th of May. *“Many students, but level does not match reputation. Third day very interesting since they started to understand how to face my two swords style. Many people came to watch the fighting, even some functionaries of Mito-han”*.

Yamada Dōjō: Yamada Junzaemon (School Unknown, Tanagura-han Shihan); 12th of May. *“Many Tanagura-han samurai and peasants watched”*.

Matsumoto Dōjō: Matsumoto Godayū (School Unknown, Taira-han); 16th of May. *“Everyone unskilled”*.

Kasama Jin'ya Dōjō: head of the dōjō and school unknown; 18th of May. *“Two district magistrates present”*.

Sakurada Dōjō: Sakurada Ryōsuke (Hokushin Ittō Ryū, Sendai-han Shihan); 27th of May. *“Even though Sakurada Ryōsuke's son studied at the Genbukan in Edo, he was nothing special. Other students even worse. Sakurada Ryōsuke an arrogant man”*.

Shibue Dōjō: Shibue Naizen (School unknown); 13th of June. *“As Akita-han does not*

permit taryūjiai with samurai from other domains, we fought secretly”.

Toda Dōjō: Toda Bunnai (School unknown, Honjō-han Shihan); 16th of June. *“Many Honjō-han samurai watched. Fought Toda Bunnai too”.*

Ōbuchi Dōjō: Ōbuchi Ryūnosuke (Jikishinkage Ryū, Shōnai-han Shihan); 24th of June. *“Fought Ōbuchi Ryūnosuke too, but he acted like an insect with his arrogance and bullying. His students are like him. Many Shōnai-han samurai and peasants watched”.*

Murakami-han school Dōjō: Miyagawa Tadaemon (Jichū Ryū, Murakami-han Shihan), Sugita Shin’emon (Jikishinkage Ryū, Murakami-han Shihan); from the 28th of June to the 18th of July. *“Fought members of both schools. I also received the menkyo kaiden of Jichū Ryū²⁹”.*

Shibata-han school Dōjō: Mizoguchi Shūta (Seigan-ha Jikishinkage Ryū, Shibata-han Shihan), Kubota Ryōzaburō (Seigan-ha Jikishinkage Ryū, Shibata-han Shihan), Shimamura Onari (Jikishinkage Ryū, Shibata-han Shihan); from the 24th to the 26th of July. *“Since they desired to see my school techniques, performed both Tetsujin Ryū and Jichū Ryū kata with bokutō (wooden sword). Wanted to challenge Shimamura Onari, but he refused”.*

Training room of Muramatsu-han daimyō: Horii Tanba no Kami Naohide (Shinden Ryū, Muramatsu-han Daimyō); 28th of July. *“Daimyō and other functionaries came to watch the fighting. Their shinai were long like spears, fencing style quite strange”.*

Morimoto Dōjō: Morimoto Yodaiyū (School unknown, Shirakawa-han Shihan); 9th of August. *“Since my two sword style very unusual to them, they asked to practice two times. Practiced all day”.*

Mita Dōjō: Mita Tairoku (School unknown, Shirakawa-han Shihan); the 10th and the 11th of July. *“Among the Sendai-han samurai that they made me fight, I trained twice with Sasaki Gungo from Ryūgō Ryū. Despite the fact he studied five or six years in Edo, his level was nothing special. Defeated him eight times in ten duels. Since it was interesting fighting, people watching enjoyed it very much. Many Shirakawa-han samurai”.*

Utsunomiya-han school Dōjō: Watanabe Ryōhei (School unknown, Utsunomiya-han

²⁹ Ryōken Jichū Ryū was codified by a student of the Tetsujin Ryū founder Aoki Ienao, Ōita Oribe Yoshitada. For this reason, the techniques of the two schools are very similar. Bunnosuke received the *menkyo kaiden* because he proved to have a deep knowledge of the tradition’s principles.

Shihan); 14th of August. *“Fought Watanabe Ryōhei and his students. Level lower than Shirakawa-han”*.

Tatebayashihan school Dōjō: Igusa Kaiemon (Hokushin Ittō Ryū, Tatebayashihan Shihan), Iizuka Gōichirō (Jikishinkage Ryū, Tatebayashihan Shihan); 20th of August. *“Level quite lower than their Edo residence dōjō. First time they saw the two sword style. Many people watched”*.

Katayama Dōjō: Katayama Yūjirō (Tōgun Ryū, Koga-han Shihan); 22nd of August. *“Ground is dirt floor and no ceiling. Since it rained for several days it was very muddy, training extremely difficult”*.

Genbukan: Chiba Shūsaku (Hokushin Ittō Ryū, Mito-han Shihan); 2nd of November. *“Went as promised, but Chiba Eijirō (Shūsaku’s second son) refused to fight with me due to an ‘inconvenience’. Will come again tomorrow. Considering the great name of the dōjō, his running away is extremely ridiculous”*.

Genbukan: Chiba Shūsaku (Hokushin Ittō Ryū, Mito-han Shihan); 3rd of November. *“Today Chiba Eijirō refused because of poor health. It is now clear he is running away - he is a coward. Fought twelve of his students, but only two skilled. Won 70~80%; if this is the real level of the Genbukan, I laugh at it”*.

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Iba Dōjō: Iba Gunbee (Shingyōtō Ryū); 24th of February. *“Fought sixteen supposedly outstanding students - only two or three skilled (even if they cannot be defined experts). Level is lower than the Genbukan and the Shigakukan. My superiority incredibly clear”*.

Zezen-han Edo residence Dōjō: Ono Gentajirō (Jikishinkage Ryū, Zezen-han Shihan); 25th of February. *“Dōjō really beautiful, but many children among the students”*.

Ōgaki-han Edo residence Dōjō: Shimamura Isao (Tamiya Ryū, Ōgaki-han Shihan); 26th of February. *“Among the sixteen or seventeen students I fought, only one particularly skilled”*.

Okada Dōjō: Okada Jūnai (Ryūgō Ryū); 21st of March. *“Wanted to challenge Okada Jūnai, but he refused, saying that it was impossible those days. Think he did not want to accept my request”*.

Komoro-han school Dōjō: Kumabe Shibanosuke (School unknown, Komoro-han Shihan); 17th of April. “*Fought around twenty students. Functionaries also watched*”.

Ueda-han school Dōjō: Amago Kanzō (School unknown, Ueda-han Shihan), Hori Kandayū (Jikishinkage Ryū, Ueda-han Shihan); from the 22nd to the 29th of April. “*Fought Amago Kanzō and both schools’ students*”.

Yano Dōjō: Yano Shigeru (Tōgun Ryū, Matsushiro-han Shihan); 9th of May. “*Few students, all really inexperienced*”.

Hashimura Dōjō: Hashimura Zendayū (Toda Ryū, Matsumoto-han Shihan); from the 13th to the 17th of May. “*Okabe-han samurai Shimizu Kanato desired to fight. Accepted and defeated him decisively. Toda Ryū is an old school (koryū); their men is completely round and they have no dō. Many watched*”.

Endō Dōjō: Endō Goheita (Ono-ha Ittō Ryū); from the 21st to the 23rd of May. “*Many watched*”.

Hara Dōjō: Hara Hikojirō (Tenji Ryū); 28th of May. “*Students completely inexperienced, though there were some Genbukan disciples*”.

Tsu-han school Dōjō: Tsuda Magoshichi (Shindō Munen Ryū, Tsu-han Shihan); from the 5th to the 7th of June. “*Compared to first visit, skilled students today. Tsu-han functionaries watched*”.

Mizoguchi-han school Dōjō: Yoshida Heidayūzaemon (School unknown, Mizoguchi-han Shihan); 9th of June. “*Some students practiced at the Naganuma Dōjō in Edo, but also many inexperienced ones*”.

Ōno Dōjō: Ōno Ōnosuke (Nishioka Zenshin Ryū, Kyōto Shoshidai Yoriki); from the 11th to the 16th of June. “*Fought a Nishio-han samurai sojourning there. Defeated him almost every time. Practice extremely interesting. Fought many samurai from several han. Many watched*”.

Kawada Dōjō: Kawada Gonjirō (Ittō Ryū, Tottori Hanshi); the 18th and the 19th of June. “*Fought samurai from many han*”.

Ichien Dōjō: Ichien Shunnosuke (School unknow); 21st of June. “*Beside Ichien Shunnosuke, all students totally inexperienced*”.

Yamaoka Dōjō: Yamaoka Mizunosuke (Ōsaka Jōdai³⁰, retainer of Tsuchiya Uneme no

³⁰ This title indicated the *bakufu* official responsible for holding and defending the Ōsaka Castle.

Kami); 22nd of June. *“Yamaoka Mizunosuke not present. Fought his students instead”*.

Saijō-han school Dōjō: Hata Katsusaburō (Sankage Ryū, Saijō-han Shihan), Yokoi Genshirō (Tamiya Ryū, Saijō-han Shihan); the 8th and the 9th of July. *“Since dōjō opened recently many beginners”*.

Imabari-han school Dōjō: Noro Kannosuke (Tokusō Ryū, Imabari-han Shihan), Tange Kiemon (School unknown, Imabari-han Shihan), Miyoshi Ioroi (Musan Jigen Ryū, Imabari-han Shihan), Tomita Yūji (Imaichi Ryū, Imabari-han Shihan); from the 11th to the 13th of July. *“Many people came to watch the fighting. Among Tokusō Ryū there was someone who used the two swords style. Musan Jigen Ryū has the same ashiuchi (leg strike) as Ryūgō Ryū. Tomita Yūji refused to fight. Fought Noro Kannosuke and Tange Kiemon as well; the latter was weaker”*.

Matsuyama-han school Dōjō: Hashimoto Yadenji (Shintō Hashimoto Ryū, Matsuyama-han Shihan); 18th of July. *“Domain officials came to watch the fighting. It is commonly said that Shintō Hashimoto Ryū is the top school in Matsuyama-han, but I do not think so”*.

Usuki-han school Dōjō: Kawasaki Fujinojō (Jikishinkage Ryū, Usuki-han Shihan); the 25th and the 26th of July. *“Fought two Nobeoka-han Samurai there for musha shugyō. Both quite skilled. Also fought students of Shinpen Ryū, but Jikishinkage Ryū students stronger”*.

Oka-han school Dōjō: head of the dōjō and school unknown; 6th of August. *“Expecting a good level since it is said that Chiba Eijirō taught here in the past, but failed to meet my expectations. I noticed only one skilled student”*.

Tajiri Dōjō: Tajiri Fujita (Kagawa Nen Ryū, Yanagawa-han Shihan); the 12th and the 13th of August. *“Fought students of Kagawa Nen Ryū, Shinkage Ryū and Nukiuchi Ryū. Many people came to watch. Were the best disciples absent because they were afraid of the two swords style?”*.

Katōda Dōjō: Katōda Heiachirō (Shinkage Ryū, Kurume-han Shihan); the 15th and the 16th of August. *“Best disciples here very skilled. Fought two, won 70%”*.

Imai Dōjō: Imai Seizaemon (Jikishinkage Ryū, Kurume-han Shihan); the 16th of August. *“As always, no one skilled here”*.

Tsuda Den Dōjō: Tsuda Ichizaemon (Tsuda Ichiden Ryū, Kurume-han Shihan); 17th of

August. *“Fought Tsuda Ichizaemon, his younger brother Tsuda Iwao and his best disciple Yamawaki Torajirō. Their movements really smooth, and even though I defeated the Tsuda brothers I felt I was being hard pressed the entire time. It was very interesting. I also defeated Yamawaki 70% of the time”.*

Saitō Dōjō: Saitō Kannosuke (Shindō Munen Ryū, Ōmura-han Shihan); the 1st and the 2nd of September. *“Fought Saitō Kannosuke, too, but he was an extremely dirty fighter. He used many laughable, sly techniques. Officials and others came to watch”.*

Matsue Dōjō: Matsue Seiichi (Hokushin Ittō Ryū); 6th of September. *“Matsue Seiichi refused to fight with me due to poor health, so fought his students instead”.*

Shimabara-han school Dōjō: Tsuzuki Yoheiji (School unknown, Shimabara-han Shihan), Yajima Yūma (School unknown, Shimabara-han Shihan), Sugino Jingobee (School unknown, Shimabara-han Shihan); the 14th and the 15th of September. *“Fought students of Tsuzuki Yoheiji and Sugino Jingobee, but none particularly skilled. Domain’s high rank samurai and other officials were present”.*

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Sandro Furzi was born in Rome, Italy, the 29th of July 1985. He started practicing *kenjutsu* and *jūjutsu* at fourteen years old. In 2007, he got a bachelor degree in Japanese studies from Rome University; his thesis was on the Japanese sword. He then enrolled in the master's program with a specialization on Japanese literature and philology.

After winning a 2008 scholarship to study at the University of Tōkyō, during his research he became a student of Hirai Taisuke, 9th generation headmaster of Tennen Rishin Ryū *kenjutsu*. In 2009, he was appointed as the Italian branch *dōjō* instructor of Tennen Rishin Ryū. In 2010 he completed his master's degree from Rome University in Japanese language and literature; his thesis was the history of Tennen Rishin Ryū.

Moving to Japan in 2011 with the purpose of completing his *kenjutsu* studies, in 2013 he was appointed as instructor at the Tennen Rishin Ryū *honbu dōjō*. Today, he continues practice under 10th generation headmaster Hirai Masato and is a member of the Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai (Japanese Ancient Martial Arts Association).