

**PRESS  
PACK**

# SAMOURAÏ

1,000 ANS YEARS OF JAPANESE HISTORY  
EXHIBITION | 28 June > 9 November 2014

CHÂTEAU  
DES DUCS DE  
BRETAGNE

MUSÉE  
D'HISTOIRE  
DE NANTES

Curator:  
**Bertrand Guillet**

Associate curator:  
**Xavier Durand**

Scientific director:  
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## CHÂTEAU DES DUCS DE BRETAGNE

A castle in the city

Built in the 15th century by François II, the last Duke of Brittany, and then by his daughter Anne de Bretagne, duchess and two-time queen of France, the Château des ducs de Bretagne is a fortified castle, and home to a residential palace made of tuffeau stone with sophisticated façades. It became a royal castle, and the destination of many governors from the 16th century, before turning into a prison, barracks, and arsenal. It was entirely restored and now is home to the musée d'histoire de Nantes.



## MUSÉE D'HISTOIRE DE NANTES

A museum dedicated to the city's history

With its contemporary scenography, the museum is spread out over 32 rooms inside the ducal palace. The 850 objects of its collection and many multimedia stations invite visitors to plunge into Nantes' exceptional history as the former capital of the Dukes of Brittany, the city where the Edict of Nantes was written under Henri IV, a large Atlantic port as of the 17th century, a thriving industrial city in the 19th and 20th centuries, and an economic and cultural hub today.

### TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

The musée d'histoire de Nantes has based its programme of temporary exhibitions on three keywords that shine a light on different themes developed within the museum's permanent collection.

- **Exhibitions dealing with civilization:** The history of Nantes is built on its relationship to elsewhere. The goal of these exhibitions is to discover other territories, grasp other civilizations, discover other cultures, other histories, and understand the meaning behind our representations.

In 2010: *La Soie & le Canon (The Silk & The Canon)*

- **The Citoyennes et Regards exhibitions** allow us to examine a subject linked to the museum or the history of Nantes.

In 2011: *Nantais venus d'ailleurs (Citizens of Nantes from Abroad)*

In 2012: *Nantaises au travail (Women of Nantes at Work)*

- **The Rencontres Histoire exhibitions** invite the public to regularly revisit a specific theme in different formats (presentation of an object, series of conferences...).

In 2013: *Le journal de traite (The diary of the slave-trading ship), La Bonne-Mère*

# EXPOSITION

# SAMOURAÏ

## 1000 ANS D'HISTOIRE DU JAPON

28 June > 9 November 2014

Ever since the last days of the Edo regime, when Japan opened up to the West 150 years ago, the samurai has been a source of fascination, and it is now more than ever a part of our imaginary.

The history of this figure, and especially its mythical status, have influenced our perspective to the point where any subject related to Japan is often reduced to this character's historical position. But, what do we actually know about these warriors? When did they first appear, and what role did they play in Japan's history – a history we have such difficulty grasping? How much truth is there in the clichéd images hawked to Westerners in need of a little exoticism (but also by the Japanese who did not want to disappoint us in our representations)? One of these images is that of a violent warrior, a disciple of voluntary death, obeying a strict moral code: i.e., Bushido, the Way of the Samurai. But, how then to understand that other posture: that of a refined aesthete, lover of Noh theatre and participant in traditional tea ceremonies, protector of the arts, faithful administrator and civil servant of the shogunate? We are partly victims of recent depictions written in the late 19th century, but historical reality is more complex. Ultimately, what happened to the samurai? Did he – despite himself – not survive the march of history? Was his "disappearance" at the outset of the Meiji Restoration inevitable? Or did he, in fact, play an active role?

And today, from art to the business world, what role do these Medieval warriors still play in Japan, while their code and attitudes still pervade Western film and imagination?

Beyond the simple presentation of the history of a warrior class, these questions will allow us to discover a bygone Japan and understand some of the reasons behind our fascination for this distant land.

This exhibition brings together almost 450 objects, some of which will be on display for the first time, ranging from traditional armour to Darth Vader's costume. The representation of the Samurai, seen in the traditional arts, martial arts, film, and manga, will also paint a portrait of Japan from past to present.

Curator: **Bertrand Guillet**

*Conservateur en chef du patrimoine, directeur du Château des ducs de Bretagne*

Associate curator: **Xavier Durand**

Scientific director: **Pierre-François Souyri**

*The former director of the Maison franco-japonaise de Tokyo, Pierre-François Souyri, is currently a professor at the University of Geneva, where he teaches Japanese history. He has often lived in Japan is the author of a number of books on the country, including Nouvelle Histoire du Japon ("A New History of Japan") published by Éditions Perrin in 2010.*

### PARTNERS

Castle-museum Ôsaka  
Musée national des arts asiatiques-Guimet



This exhibition is recognized as being of national importance by the Ministry of Culture and Communication/Direction générale des patrimoines/Service des musées de France. Consequently, it has received financial support from the French government.





The figure of the samurai ("warrior") often imposes itself as the most representative symbol of Japanese history. These warriors first appeared in the 10th century and dominated the country's history for a millennium before their status was officially abolished during the Meiji reforms of the 1870s.

They were thus born at the end of Japan's ancient period and then dominated the Middle Ages (12th-16th centuries) as well as the Edo period (1603-1867), which is also known as the pre-modern period.

Despite having disappeared roughly 150 years ago, their presence in literature, film, and illustration continues to nourish our imagination.

This exhibition is spread over 1000 m<sup>2</sup> (10,763 sq. ft), on two floors of the Bâtiment du harnachement building. This itinerary is an initiation into the history of the samurai, from their first appearance to their different "interpretations" today. Six "sequences" weave a thread that will help us discover the history of the samurai and the arts and cultures it has spawned.

This exhibition, recognized as being of national interest, is the result of three years of preparation.

The 450 objects presented here were loaned out from private European and Japanese collections, as well as important museums, like: Musée Guimet, Osaka Castle, The National Museum of Japanese History - Rekihaku, Museo Stittbert in Florence, Musée de l'armée in Paris, Museum of Fine Arts in Nancy...

# WHEN WESTERNERS DISCOVERED THE SAMURAI

ENCOUNTER AND DISCOVERY OF  
THE SAMURAI DURING THEIR FIRST CONTACT  
WITH WESTERNERS

## Sequence 1

### THE ENCOUNTER

The first contact between Europeans and the Japanese took place in 1543, when a Portuguese ship accidentally landed on the southern tip of the archipelago. From that moment on, merchants and adventurers multiplied their expeditions. Compiling first-hand accounts in 1548, Jorge Álvares wrote, *Informação do Japão*. This is where the West first discovered the samurai. "These are very proud and very sensitive people. They all tend to carry swords or knives, big and small, and start doing so at the age of 8. They have a great many lances, halberds and other guisarmes. They tend to be good archers, with big bows, like the English. They carry hand-to-hand combat weapons made of brightly painted chain mail and iron. They are generous and very affable. If you come to their domain, the most noble among them will invite you into their home to sleep and eat, as if they wanted you in their heart."

### SAMURAI IN THE WEST

The first Japanese to visit the West were four young Christians sent to Europe by the Jesuit missionary, Valignano. In Rome, they met Popes Gregory XIII, followed by Sixtus V.

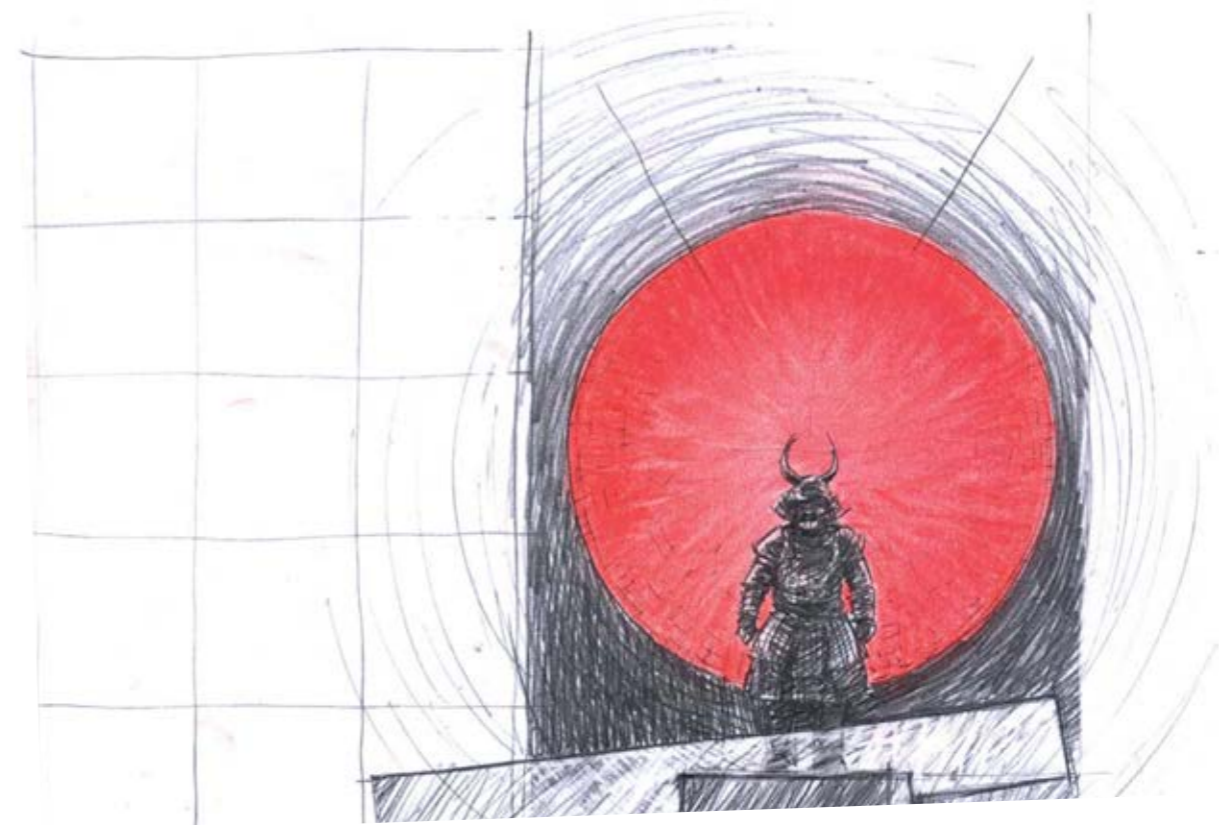
In 1613, the samurai Hasekura Tsunenaga headed an embassy of 180 people, 22 of whom were samurai sent to New-Spain, and then to Europe. In Madrid in 1615, after being baptized and renamed Felipe Francisco Hasekura, he met Philip III and offered him a suit of armour that is conserved to this day at the Royal Palace. In the early 17th century, the Tokugawa shogunate established diplomatic relations with the great European powers. This can be attested to by the many suits of armour shipped to Europe during this period. When Japan closed itself off in 1636, all this stopped: not a single Japanese man or woman would come to the West until the 19th century!

In Japan, only Dutch merchants were allowed to trade, but they were not allowed to set foot on the archipelago. The only exception was the tiny island of Deshima in the port of Nagasaki.

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### MAIN OBJECTS ON DISPLAY:

- Namban armour
- armour offered to King Louis XIII
- Namban helmet



# THE BIRTH OF THE SAMURAI

FROM THE BIRTH OF THE WARRIOR CLASS TO  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL WORLD  
DIVORCED FROM THE IMPERIAL COURT

## Sequence 2

### THE FIRST SAMURAI

At the end of the 7th century, Japan underwent rapid evolution under the reign of Emperor Tenmu (673-686) followed by Empress Jito (686-697). The Imperial Court took up residence in the capital city of Nara, from 710 to 784, then in Heian in 794 (now Kyoto). It was comprised of an aristocracy of senior civil officials, dominated by the Fujiwara family.

These senior officials collected revenue in the provinces on State-owned land, as well as on *shôen*, land that they would themselves cultivate, which constituted private domains. In the 10th, and especially the 11th century, state control over these provincial territories weakened. In order to struggle against instability and crime, local notables organized private armed forces. Thus was born a new social class: one of warriors, *bushi* or samurai. Their groups were dubbed *bushidan*.

During the 19th century, the word "samurai" became the norm in the West to designate these Japanese warriors. It is derived from the verb *saburafu*, "to serve": the samurai were originally servants. But, as of the 12th century, they were armed servants and would often act as the escort for powerful figures. Alongside samurai, one finds the term *bushi*. Bu, has a "martial" connotation and can be found in *bushido*, the Way of the Warrior, or in *budô*, martial arts. A *bushi* is therefore a warrior. Little by little, *samurai* and *bushi* became synonymous.

The first *bushidan* appeared around 900 in remote provinces, far from the capital and the control of the Imperial Court. Their cavalcades were indicative of a clan's power. The new lords imposed ground rents and duties onto the heads of peasant households, whom they then integrated back into the bottom of the military hierarchy. These heads offered protection to their vassals, who then owed them service and loyalty in return.

These lords disposed of manors and lands, as well as workshops for textile, carpenters, blacksmiths, and smelters.

### THE WAY OF THE BOW AND THE HORSE

The battles that make up the wars of the 11th and 12th centuries were extremely violent. Storytellers from the Middle Ages report thousands of edifying anecdotes telling of the prowess of ferocious warriors, and the legend of the powerful Minamoto and Taira clans was established among the warriors of Kanto. These wars signed the end of traditional infantry inherited from Chinese-style armies, and bestowed superiority to warriors on horseback using bows and arrows. Thus was born the "Way of the bow and the horse" (*kyûba no michi*).

### MAIN OBJECTS ON DISPLAY:

- folding screen: Episode of the Battle of Yashima (1185)
- blades, Tanto, Katana, bow, quiver, arrowheads
- scroll of Mongol invasions
- scroll by the monk Ippen



1.  
2. 3.



1.  
Folding screen with 6 panels (Byōbu)  
Episode of the Battle of Yashima in 1184  
18th century  
Edo period (1615 - 1868)  
© Musée des beaux-arts, Nancy

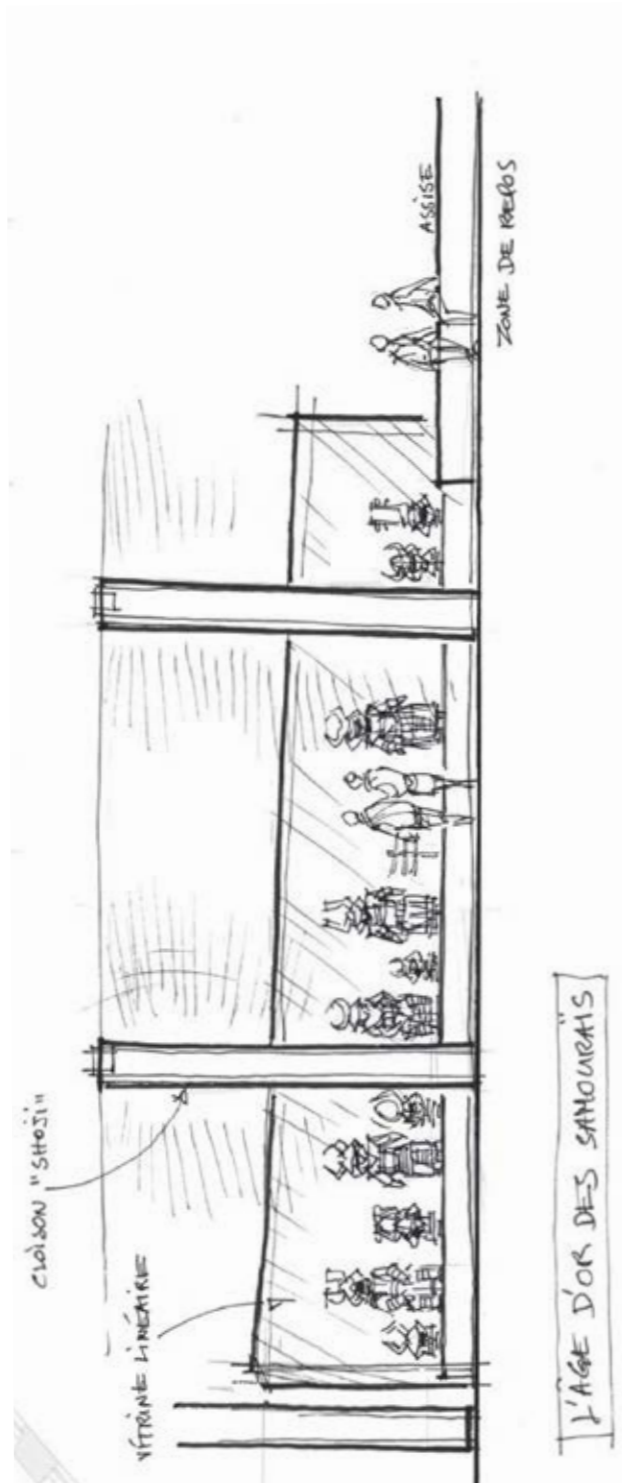
2.  
Scroll by the monk Ippen - Ippen jonin eden  
Original conserved at the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno  
Completed in 1300  
Kamakura period (1185-1333)  
Modern copy  
© National Museum of Japanese History-Rekihaku,  
Sakura

3.  
Haramaki armour (Do)  
Lacquered iron and silk  
16th century  
Muromachi period (1333-1573)  
© Osaka Castle

# THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE SAMURAI

FROM "AN UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD" TO THE  
UNIFICATION OF JAPAN

## Sequence 3



## AN "UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD"

The assassination of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori in 1441 opened an era of great political instability. The regime lost its influence on the peripheral regions, followed by the collapse of central power. The real government slipped out of the shogun's grasp and fell into the hands of the now-powerful lords. In 1467, their rivalries led to a civil war – i.e., the Ōnin War. The lords came out of this war severely weakened because their vassals exercised provincial authority in their absence. These vassals, in turn, saw their own authority compromised by local barons (*kokujin*) and warriors (*ji-samurai*), who formed defense leagues (*ikki*) to guarantee local power. Moreover, the lower classes had developed their own collective forms of organization. The most powerful figures deplored this "upside-down world"!

In the years between 1520 and 1550, a new type of feudal class emerged: the *sengoku daimyō* – a type of warlord. Each attempted to create their own state, and recognized neither the authority of the Imperial Court nor of the shogunate. Each imposed himself as the supreme authority of the region he controlled. A new feudal hierarchy took shape: the samurai of the late 16th century were now bound hand and foot to their lord. This is the period from which the word *bushidō* originates: the Way of the Warrior.

## JAPAN'S UNIFICATION

Oda Nobunaga entered Kyōto in 1568 and chased out the last shogun, Ashikaga, in 1573. In the hopes of reuniting the country, he built an authoritarian regime founded on military power. But Nobunaga was forced to commit suicide by a disloyal vassal in 1582. Hideyoshi, one of his most talented generals, succeeded him and established decisive reforms. He systematized a process that had already begun: the separation of warrior and peasant classes. In 1588, Hideyoshi decreed a "sword hunt," or the disarming of the peasantry. In exchange, the peasants acquired a status, and their right to cultivate land was registered in survey records.

## MAIN OBJECTS ON DISPLAY:

- 7 suits of armour
- helmets, mempo
- katana blades
- folding screen and scroll with battle scene
- portraits of samurai
- religious objects

1./2./3./4.



1./2./3./4.  
The Battle of Shizugatake  
Folding screen  
17th century  
Edo period (1603-1867)  
© Ōsaka Castle

5.



6.  
7.

5.  
Armour (yoroi)  
Lacquered iron, brocade silk and leather  
Late 16th century  
Azuchi-Momoyama period (1573 – 1603)  
© Ōsaka Castle

6.  
Peach-shaped helmet (momonari)  
Iron, lacquer, wood, gold-leaf and silk  
17th century  
Edo period (1603-1867)  
France, private collection  
© Sylvain Durand

7.  
Spectacular helmet (Kawari kabuto)  
16th century  
Muromachi period (1333 – 1573) Azuchi –  
Momoyama period (1573 – 1603)  
© Ōsaka Castle

# SAMURAI IN PEACE TIME

## STATUS OF THE SAMURAI DURING PEACE TIME: EDO PERIOD

### Sequence 4

#### THE “PAX TOKUGAWA”

In 1600, at the Battle of Sekigahara, Tokugawa Ieyasu was victorious over his coalition of adversaries. Named Shogun by the Emperor in 1603, he made Edo (future Tōkyō) his capital.

Having become absolute masters of the country, the Tokugawas used their military superiority to implement pacification, sometimes brutally. From that point on, only samurai were authorized to bear arms.

This period of stable peace, both interior and exterior, was known as the *Pax Tokugawa*. As a result, the country underwent an unprecedented economic boom in the 17th century. Japan had now entered the “Edo period”. The Tokugawa Shogunate would last until 1867.

#### AN ELITE UNDER SUPERVISION

The reign of Shoguns Ietsuna (1651-1680) and Tsunayoshi (1680-1709) marked the zenith of the Tokugawa regime. The desire to police the ethics of this warrior class, to have them adopt a more moralistic conduct, became a priority. A true mutation then took place: personal loyalty to one’s lord was erased and replaced by devotion to a household, or a clan. As a result, in 1663, the shogunate outlawed *junshi*, the act of following one’s lord into death by *seppuku*. Many samurai felt hindered, refused to obey and, despite the ban, committed suicide out of fidelity to “their” lord. The government then took brutally repressive measures against their heirs, and the practice of *junshi* disappeared a few years later.

#### THE NEO-CONFUCIAN MODEL

Part of the Tokugawa political structure was founded on neo-Confucianism. The population was split into four statuses: warriors, farmers, artisans and merchants.

Warriors formed the ruling class as well as a large part of the middle class. Together, with even the poorest among them, they formed a new type of warrior nobility. Their status came with privileges, symbolized by the two swords they would wear at the waist, one long and one short (i.e., the *daisho*). They were forbidden from participating in professions related to production or trade, and had the right (in principle) to kill any commoner on the spot that disrespected them!

Little by little the Way of the Warrior, *Bushidō*, gave way to the Shidō: the Way of the Lettered. The new model was founded on the rule of Law, and the warrior class became bureaucratic. More than just a good soldier, the samurai now had to be a good administrator of his lord’s interests.



Half-mask (mempo) ressei (or, “angry”) style  
Iron, red and silver lacquer, silk  
17th century  
Edo period (1603-1867)  
France, private collection  
© Sylvain Durand



## THE SAMURAI, PROTECTOR OF THE ARTS

In just one century, the face of Japan had changed, going from chronic disorder due to incessant warring, to a durable peace heralding unprecedented prosperity.

Far from renouncing their military heritage, the samurai worked hard to conserve the objects of war. Each of them owned a suit of armour made by renowned artisans, like the Myôchin family, and had blacksmiths and goldsmiths make their *daisho*. This sword acted as a reminder of a distant past, and the most powerful of symbols.

From then on, samurai devoted themselves to leisure and sports (hunting and falconry) and sedentary pastimes, like calligraphy, poetry, theatre and tea ceremonies. By inviting artists to stay in their fiefs, they became the main patrons of artistic expression.

New circles of aesthetes began to form in the 18th century: art lovers, lettered merchants, *geisha* (the “women artists” of the red-light districts). Breaking with the values of the samurai, they had a sense of *iki* – a notion covering everything from a sense of detachment, to a form of elegance, a sense of urbanity, a love of simple colours, the charm of discretion, a taste for more bitter flavours, for more shadow than light... These new values initiated a critique of warrior culture:

*“In the past, during parties, samurais, be they of a high or low rank, would only ever talk about war... Now, they talk about succulent dishes, gambling, ways to make money or to lose it, the most intelligent discuss strategies for their career, the game of go or Chinese checkers, tea ceremonies or the composition of short haiku poems. The younger samurai discuss puppet theatre, jôruri, shamisen (a type of lute) and the reputation of Sakai actors.”*

Samurai Niime Masamoto

### MAIN OBJECTS ON DISPLAY:

- Noh theatre costumes and masks
- wall of masks and helmets
- objects for tea ceremony
- artisanal art objects

1. 2.



3.



1-2.  
Kabuki play  
“Shigure gumo murai no yaregasa”  
Toyohara Kunichika (1835 – 1900)  
Polychrome print  
1884  
Meiji period (1867 – 1912)  
© France, private collection

3.  
Armour (yoroi)  
Saotome school  
Iron, lacquer, brocade, silk and leather  
Circa 1700  
Edo period (1603 – 1867)  
France, private collection  
© Sylvain Durand

# THE END OF THE SAMURAI

FROM THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE SAMURAI AND  
THE TOKUGAWA FEUDAL REGIME TO THE MEIJI  
RESTORATION

## Sequence 5

### THE END OF THE SHOGUNATE AND MEIJI RESTORATION

Between the years 1860 and 1862, many samurai participated in radical dissent towards the shōgunal regime.

In these conditions, the Imperial Court (which had been out of commission for several centuries) appeared as the only resort. The idea of a country reunited under the emperor slowly rose among the ranks of the samurai, who opposed the *bakufu*. The Tokugawa regime had lost its legitimacy to continue governing, since the primary beneficiaries of its rigid system, the warriors themselves, were turning away from it. Swelling in numbers, more and more samurai abandoned their lords in order to serve the national cause.

In December 1867, the crisis was so great that the Shōgun abdicated and gave his power back to the Emperor. On 3 January 1868, the Imperial Restoration was declared. It was the beginning of the Meiji period.

### THE LAST OF THE SAMURAI

From that point on, a series of administrative and political reforms were rapidly instated to create a new order.

Fiefs and fiefdoms were replaced by departments led by prefects. Edo became the new imperial capital, going by the name of Tōkyō. Past privileges were suppressed, freedom of movement was re-established, members of the lower classes now had a surname, and carrying a sword was forbidden, except for officers of the army or the police.

A conscription army was instituted, thus bringing the omnipotence of the samurai to an end. The government reformed modes of retribution. The richest among them survived the transition by investing in land or industry, while others became high-ranking civil servants. But many became impoverished.

Saigō Takamori, one of the architects of the Imperial Restoration of 1868, was an important figure in the new regime. In 1873, he retreated to Kagoshima and established an academy teaching the art of war. His students revolted in 1877 against the government's "anti-samurai" measures and marched on the capital, with Saigo in the front lines. The rebellion, which mobilized 20,000 armed men, was crushed by the government forces. This "War of the South-West" nevertheless marked the end of the samurai, defeated by a modern army of drafted soldiers.

### MAIN OBJECTS ON DISPLAY:

- portraits of samurai
- engravings
- photographs



1.  
Photograph of samurai in the  
Chōshū clan during the Boshin  
War (1867 – 1869)  
Photograph by Felice Beato  
Circa 1867  
Edo period (1603 – 1867)  
France, private collection  
© adoc-photos



2.

2.  
Portrait of Ryoma Sakamoto  
(1836 – 1867)  
Photograph by Uneo Hikoma  
1866  
Edo period (1603 – 1867)  
© Kochi Prefectural Museum of  
History, Japan



3.

3.  
The last Shōgun, Yoshinobu  
Tokugawa (1837 – 1913)  
Anonymous photographer  
Circa 1867  
Edo period (1603 – 1867)  
© Het Scheepvaartmuseum,  
The National Maritime Museum,  
Amsterdam

# A NEW POSTERITY

## THE USE OF THE SAMURAI'S IMAGE IN JAPAN AND THE WEST

### Sequence 6

#### > In Japan

##### MODERN BUSHIDO

In an 1887 essay, Yamaoka Tesshû appeals to the spirit of *Bushido* to stop the decline in traditions resulting from Westernization. In 1899, Christian agronomist Nitobe Inazô published a book in the US that would become an international success, *Bushidô, Soul of Japan*. In *Bushidô* he saw the Japanese equivalent of the West's medieval codes of chivalry and hoped to transpose its ethics to contemporary Japan: "The beacon of Japanese chivalry, the orphaned daughter of a defunct feudalism, still lights the paths of our morality."

##### IMPERIALIST JAPAN AND THE SAMURAI

Today, we tend to believe that the behaviour of Japanese troops during the Second World War was conditioned by their adhesion to the ancient ethical codes of the samurai. In his total loyalty to the Emperor, a soldier would go so far as to sacrifice his life, even committing suicide if necessary. *Bushidô* is thus associated with kamikaze pilots and suicide attacks. But, this is a complete misinterpretation of history. Nothing in Japan's past allows one to link the conduct of troops during WWII with that of the defunct samurai. The very idea of fidelity to the imperial person is an aberration. The samurai would never have been loyal to anyone but his own lord. A soldier of the modern Japanese army, on the other hand, had been conditioned to unquestioningly obey the orders of his superiors.

*THE SAMURAI IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN: CHILDREN'S DAY, THE SOMA NOMAOI FESTIVAL, IN THE ARTS (MANGA, LITERATURE, CINEMA)*

#### > In the West

##### THE FIRST EMBASSIES, JAPONISM AND THE SAMURAI

Objects flowed into the West through trading houses, and Japanese embassies encouraged this new passion for japonaiseries (Japanese curios), especially for illustrated books and prints. As of 1863, writers and artists (Jules de Goncourt, Millet, Rousseau, Whistler, Tissot and Manet) discovered these images from the Land of the Rising Sun with great interest.

In 1867, Japan presented two suits of armour at the International Exposition in Paris, which caused quite a stir.

With the Meiji restoration, the Japanese "disposed of" whatever they perceived to be relics of a bygone era. This marked the beginning of the great collections in Paris and the provinces (Cernuschi, Guimet).

Samurai Chanel (2007)  
Tetsuya Noguchi  
© Tetsuya Noguchi



## THE SAMURAI IN THE WEST TODAY

With the international cultural shock caused by Kurosawa's masterpiece, *The Seven Samurai*, many were influenced by this view, which was somewhere between aesthetic and performing art. Since then, Westerners have drawn inspiration from this subtle duality to create a revisited image of the samurai outside of Japan. In the late 1970s, Georges Lucas' *Star Wars* trilogy popularized *Jedis*, with their light sabres and master-disciple relationships.

In the bubbles of European comic books, the harsh nature of the samurai's moral code and iron-fisted discipline often belied a kinship with medieval knights. European authors in the 1980s, like Robert Gigi, offered the keys to understanding the civilization and vocabulary of samurai culture right from the very first pages. Today, many illustrators are often on the same page in terms of style and themes with their Japanese *mangaka* counterparts, often released by the same publishers (Delcourt, Kana).

One notable difference, however, is that we have become accustomed to a model of refined and stylized violence, where the body is assaulted, and sometimes thrown to the lions of sadism, like a counterpoint to the uprightness of the "good samurai". This bloody aesthetic of total combat and vengeance has also inspired many an artist. Quentin Tarantino, for instance, took *Kill Bill* straight out of a classic manga called *Lady Snowblood*, by Koike and Kaminura.

This surge of Japanese culture in the West has, for a long time now, multiplied and diversified its influences, particularly through video games. So much so that we have inherited a composite sketch as our reference for the contemporary samurai, which originated in Japan and has often returned there.

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### MAIN OBJECTS ON DISPLAY:

- manga
- film poster
- Kamen Rider helmets



Sleeve for the album, *L'école du micro d'argent*, by the group IAM  
© Didier D. Darwin and Stéphan Muntaner  
/ Agence Tous des K

# SCENOGRAPHY

Franck Fortecoëf – Scenographer

*Having the exhibition take place over two large, consecutive twin spaces offers a judicious scenographic asset to the visit, allowing us to best handle the contrast of the two great themes running through the history of the samurai: war time and peace time.*

## ITINERARY

Although it is only soberly evoked in the entrance and transition spaces, the content of the exhibition is only revealed upon arriving on the first floor.

On the threshold of this first hall, facing the public, the austere outline of a samurai in armour stands out against a large and luminous red disk.

This incandescent star alludes to the Japanese flag and captures the Western gaze, pulling it eastward towards the land of the rising sun.

The beginning of the exhibition thus announces the discovery of Japan by the Portuguese during the 16th century. In other words, the “encounter”...

### 1st Floor

The scenography of the first hall expresses the chaos of war reigning over Japan at the end of the Middle Ages, formalized by spatial chaos.

While tall and fragile, luminous shoji (made of Japanese paper), provide perfect rhythm and structure the space. The glass cases displaying the collections resemble long red blades, aggressively cutting up the space and creating disorder. The anarchic installation and sanguine colours of the display cases reflect the wars at the time when Westerners first encountered the samurai.

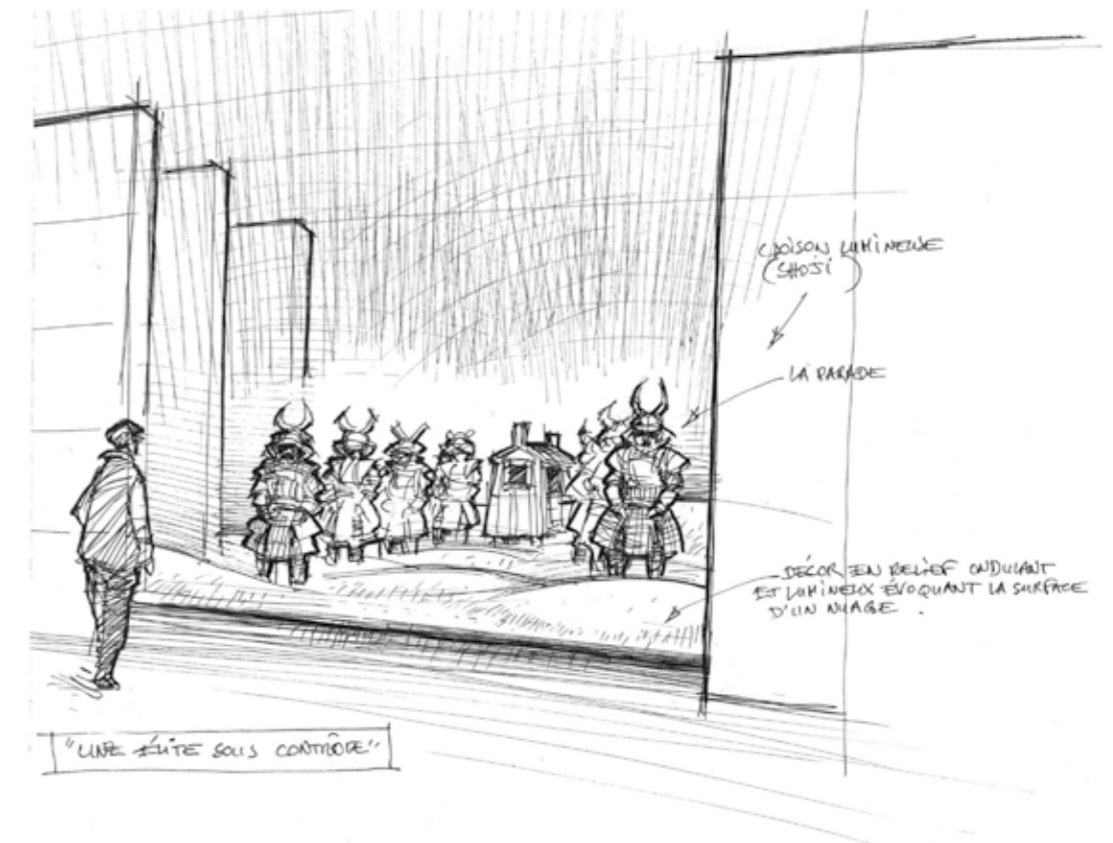
### 2nd Floor

With the return of peace, the second floor contrasts with the first by adopting an atmosphere of calm.

Under pale lighting, and between solid white picture rails, the light and swaying relief of a “sea of clouds” unfurls, where a procession of samurai float, dressed in armour for a military parade (Sankin-kokai). The celestial drape rolls out its luminous curves, modeled from thousands of paper scales.

Further along, other clouds of paper, suspended, light and luminous, guide the visitor’s steps throughout the centuries...

The last sector of the exhibition, which is devoted to the many contemporary appropriations of the samurai myth, closes with Darth Vader on display, leaning against a black star: a giant, sombre disk in full eclipse...



# PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

## OPENING TIMES

Courtyard and rampart walk: free admission  
7 days a week, 10 am to 7 pm  
27 June – 31 August: 9 am to 8 pm with late opening on Saturdays  
until 11 pm

## MUSEUM AND EXHIBITION

10 am to 6 pm, except Mondays  
27 June – 31 August: 7 days a week, 10 am to 7 pm  
Last admission 30 minutes before the information desk closes

Site closes every year on: 1 January, 1 May, 1 November, 25  
December

## ADMISSION

### Museum

Full rate: 5€  
Reduced rate: 3€

### Samurai exhibition

Full rate: 7€  
Reduced rate: 5€

### Museum + Samurai exhibition

Full rate: 9€  
Reduced rate: 6€  
A two-in-one ticket valid for two days

## PASS DU VOYAGE (UNTIL 31 AUGUST 2014)

Full rate: 9€  
Reduced rate: 6€ young people between 18 and 25 years old

## FREE ADMISSION

young people under 18; registered unemployed; minimum wage  
recipients; disabled persons; teachers preparing a group visit;  
holders of the [PASS] Nantes; holders of the Castle Museum  
Pass (Pass Musée du Château); holders of the Pass inter-  
musées; titulaires du pass inter-musées; on the 1st Sunday every  
month from September to June; Heritage days; Museums at  
night

## REDUCED RATE

Young people aged 18-26; one hour before closing every day  
including Sundays; teachers who do not prepare a group visit;  
holders of the cards Cezam, Tourisme & Loisirs, Club inter  
entreprise; holders of the Carte Blanche

## AUDIOGUIDES



Prix : 3€

-  French version
-  Magnetic loop

## VISIOGUIDES



Prix : 3 €

-  French sign language

## Groups visits

15 to 25 persons: 88€ + admission fee per person  
Museum: 4€ adult - 3€ youth (18-26 y.o.)  
Samurai exhibition: 6€ adult - 5€ youth (18-26 y.o.)  
Free for under 18 y.o. and disabled persons

## Young people groups

15 to 25 persons: 35€  
1 free admission per group

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*Couverture : Portrait de Kubota Sentarô, commandant en chef de la garnison du Shôgun à  
Yokohama | Photographie de Felice Beato - Vers 1866 | Époque Edo (1603 - 1867) | France, collection  
particulière | © coll Serge Kakou  
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Exposition réalisée avec la participation exceptionnelle du musée-château d'Osaka



Exposition réalisée avec la participation exceptionnelle du musée national des arts asiatiques - Guimet

