



OGASAWARA-RYŪ

The Samurai Who Link 850 Years
of Tradition and Skills

Yabusame practice on a wooden horse: Ogasawara Kiyomoto, Heir Apparent to the 31st Grand Master of the Ogasawara-ryū



31st Grand Master of the Ogasawara-ryū
Ogasawara Kiyotada

Ogasawara-ryū

The Ogasawara family lineage can be traced back to Emperor Seiwa (r.858-876), the 56th emperor of Japan. Ogasawara Nagakiyo, the founder of the Ogasawara-ryū School, had served the first shogun of the Kamakura shogunate, Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199), as his instructor in the arts of *Reihō* (courtesy, etiquette and protocol), archery and mounted archery.

After that, the Ogasawara family served as instructors to the generations of Shogun such as the Ashikaga family and Tokugawa family.

The arts of Ogasawara-ryū have been passed down from father to a single male heir within the Ogasawara family, which has safeguarded the School's teachings for 850 years.

After the Meiji Restoration at the end of the 19th century, the Ogasawara-ryū opened its doors to the public. Ogasawara Kiyotada now serves as the 31st Grand Master of the School, and its teachings are now taught globally. While preserving the code of conduct of the samurai class, the School has evolved in line with the needs of the times.



Reihō, Archery, Mounted Archery

The Ogasawara family taught reihō, archery, and mounted archery to high-ranking samurai for generations. The reasons these arts were so important to the samurai, and the reasons the Ogasawara family were responsible for instruction in these arts, are related to each other.

Ogasawara family

- Like the Minamoto and the Ashikaga families, the Ogasawara are descended from the lineage of Emperor Seiwa.
- They had studied court culture.
- They were especially skilled in archery and horsemanship.

Samurai

- When high-ranking samurai drew their bows and rode their horses, they were required to display dignity and grace.
- The physical body that drew the bows and rode the horses was created through everyday reihō (Through these, the samurai mastered the ability to center their movements on their lower-back, and move in smooth, flowing ways that matched their breathing.)
- There are no differences in drawing one's bow on horseback or on foot.
- They were skilled at archery and horsemanship.



Mounted Archery

- Only the high-ranking samurai would shoot bows from horses.
- In religious rites, beauty was as important as majesty.
- They needed the physical strength to be stable on a horse while fully armored.

Ogasawara family Samurai

Archery

- As the superior class, they were required to shoot with dignity and grace.
- Archery that presupposes drawing the bow from horseback.
- The might to vanquish an enemy in battle was required.

Reihō

- They were born into the highest class in the hierarchy of the caste system.
- People did not comply with force alone. Respect was also necessary.
- The body required for battle was created through daily life.

* To the samurai, reihō was not "manners" but a way to refine the body through daily conduct at the same time as they mastered courtesy.

Tranquility within the dynamic art

Mounted Archery



The archer: Ogasawara Kiyomoto,
The Yabusame performed at the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū Shrine.



The archer accepts a cup of sacred sake, purifies himself, and then prepares for the archery ceremony.



Costumed for yabusame: Edo style
(simpler costume)



Costumed for yabusame: Kamakura style

Shooting arrows from a horse is called *Kyūbajyutsu* (bow-horsemanship) or *Kisha* (mounted archery) and famous variations include *Yabusame*, *Kasagake* and *Inuoumono*. Today, the Ogasawara-ryū practices yabusame and kasagake.

Yabusame originated from court nobles, incorporating ritual elements, in the Heian period. An order from Minamoto no Yoritomo in 1187 required Nagakiyo to establish the rules for the Minamoto clan's yabusame, and present it at the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū shrine. Even today, yabusame is performed at this shrine annually on September 16.

After the ceremony is held in the shrine, mounted archers gallop down a track about

250 meters long and fire arrows at three targets. The archer's cry of "In'yōi!" referencing yin and yang when he fires each arrow and is a prayer for peace throughout the realm and for good harvests. The movements for swapping targets and collecting arrows are also governed by reihō concepts passed down for centuries.

The Ogasawara family utilizes three yabusame styles: the style established in the Kamakura period, coupled with the two styles prescribed by the eighth Tokugawa shogun, Yoshimune, in the Edo period.

Ogasawara-ryū yabusame is performed at shrines around Japan, and, in recent years, in overseas countries such as Britain and France.

Archery



Momote-shiki.

A ritual for prayer that involves decorating an altar. The full ceremony takes an entire day.

Hikime-no-gi.

Hikime refers to the turnip-shaped arrowhead, which makes a sound when flying through the air. This sound is believed to scatter evil spirits. This ritual purification ceremony has three types of hikime: purification hikime, *yagoshi-no-hikime*, and *tanjō hikime*.

The archer: Ogasawara Kiyotada, the 31st Grand Master of the Ogasawara-ryū



Target of the Kusajishi-shiki (stag)



Kusajishi-shiki.

Seeing his vassals constantly miss deer, Minamoto no Yoritomo caused Nagakiyo to come up with this as a training method.

Shooting from the ground is called archery or *hosha*.

The *hosha* (walking archery) passed down within the Ogasawara clan was devised as a martial art in the Kamakura period, drawing from courtly culture but imbued also with the samurai spirit of simplicity and fortitude.

Its styles include purification rituals such as *Hikime-no-gi* and *Ōmato-shiki*, and a hunting practice ceremony called *Kusajishi-shiki*, which are still passed on today.

Minamoto no Yoritomo is mentioned in the “Azuma Kagami” chronicles as performing *ōmato-shiki*. It declined in the Edo period, but was revitalized during the rule of the eighth shogun, Yoshimune, and it was performed in the Fukiage Gardens in the Imperial Palace on January 17th each year. Today, *ōmato-shiki*, the most solemn of all Ogasawara-ryū rituals, is performed at the Meiji Jingu Shrine on the same day.

Simple, beautiful and meaningful

Reihō



The reihō passed down in the Ogasawara family originated from the samurai etiquette of the Kamakura period. In the late Heian period, Nagakiyo created rituals for the samurai at the request of Minamoto no Yoritomo, and in the Muromachi period. These became formalized as the reihō for samurai manners (*buke sahō*).

In the Meiji period, reihō styles that ignored the core truths of *buke sahō* became widespread. This may be why many are under the impression that the “etiquette is rigid and stuffy,” but the Ogasawara-ryū reihō is not a set of rules that focus on trivial details. It is to find beauty in being considerate of the other person, responding flexibly, and eliminating the irrelevant.



Hakamagi-no-Iwai

The ritual where a five year old boy is dressed in his first *hakama* on top of a *go* board.

History of the Ogasawara Family

The Ogasawara family is descended from Emperor Seiwa via its first head, Nagakiyo. At age 26, Nagakiyo became the instructor in archery, mounted archery, and reihō to Minamoto no Yoritomo. After that, the Ogasawara family served as the instructors to the shoguns until the collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate.

When the Edo period gave way to the Meiji, the 28th head of the family, Kiyokane, forbade making a living from teaching Ogasawara-ryū styles. He did this because he felt that teaching these styles to make a living would end up with them making unacceptable compromises in order to increase the number of pupils. So Kiyokane taught etiquette at schools such as Tokyo



Three generations of Ogasawara family

Women's Normal School (currently Ochanomizu University) and the Peers' Women's School (currently Gakushuin Girls' Junior & Senior High School), adapting traditional etiquette to modern lifestyles, and working to incorporate them in the new school education system.

The 30th head, Kiyonobu, worked at Meiji University while demonstrating that the movements of the Ogasawara-ryū styles had a scientific basis, popularizing reihō underpinned by science.

The 31st head, Kiyotada, is currently responsible for passing on these arts, and is working to run events and spread traditional culture.



Drawing of the mounted archery



Ogasawara Kiyooki, the 29th Grand Master of the Ogasawara-ryū

Current Activities

The Ogasawara-ryū's activities both respect tradition and are adapted for the times.

1. Operating events

Rituals passed down since the Kamakura period are performed at shrines around the country.

2. International popularization

Starting with a demonstration of yabusame in France in 1986, we hold events in a range of different countries. We also have many foreign-born students, and are actively spreading out overseas.

3. Teaching the general public

Following the Meiji Restoration, we have started teaching the general public. We provide instruction at Cultural Centers and other locations around Japan.

4. Initiatives for school education

Getting our start in 1882 with reihō education at schools nationwide, we still teach reihō at a large number of schools.



Yabusame experience

5. Exchanges with other schools

We have a system for cooperation that allows us to carry out exchanges with the successors of arts and crafts traditions, and pass them on to future generations while maintaining the highest levels of quality.

6. Lectures and training

At the request of corporations or groups, we offer training in reihō, as well as lectures that adapt the world the samurai sought to modern society, including "Inheriting Tradition," "What We Can Learn from Traditional Culture," "What a Leader Should Be," and so on. Through these, we can pass on the admirableness of tradition.

7. Publications

The essential nature of the Ogasawara-ryū is a vital part of any era. It will also help with today's lifestyle, so we publish books on our teachings to suit demand.



Reihō etiquette class



Yabusame ritual performance in Moscow, Russia, 2018

Ogasawara-ryū Around the World



Since the 1980s, the School has been receiving many inquiries and invitations to take part in lecturing and performing events internationally such as in France, Great Britain, Russia and the United States. The number of Japanese and international students learning the teaching of the Ogasawara-ryū has also increased.

1986	September	Tokyo-Paris sister city friendship yabusame ritual performance at Parc du Champ de Mars, Paris, France
1990	May	Tokyo Taitō-ward yabusame ritual performance at Parc de Bagatelle, Paris, France
1991	November	Kasama Inari Shrine yabusame ritual performance in Aubervillier, France
1993	March	Nikkō Tōshōgū Shrine yabusame ritual performance in Mexico
1996	March	Kasama Inari Shrine yabusame ritual performance at Honolulu Festival, in Hawaii, USA
2000	March	Kasama Inari Shrine yabusame ritual performance at Honolulu Festival, in Hawaii, USA
2001	June	Yabusame ritual performance attended by Prince Charles and Emperor Naruhito (then Crown Prince) of Japan at the "Japan 2001" Festival in Hyde Park, London, UK
2014	May	Ōmato-shik archery ceremony in Suomenlinna island, Finland
	June	Yabusame ritual performance in Helsinki, Finland
2016	May	Kyūdō (Japanese archery) seminar for people around Europe - in Austria
	May	Reihō and kyūdō seminar in Poland
	June	Kyūdō seminar in California, USA
2018	January	Yabusame ritual performance in Taiwan
	August	Yabusame ritual performance in Moscow, Russia
	August	Reihō and kyūdō seminar at HQ of Google, California, USA
2019	xxxxxx	xx
	xxxxxx	xx

- Reihō seminar Google HQ, California, USA August 2018
- Yabusame Champ-de-Mars park, Paris, France September 1996
- Yabusame Hyde Park, London, UK June 2001
- Yabusame Honolulu, Hawaii, USA March 1996/2000
- Yabusame Moscow racetrack, Moscow, Russia August 2018

* Please direct any inquiries regarding our overseas activities to the Inquiries contact address on the last page of this booklet.

Request for Support

The NPO, "The Society to Support the Ogasawara-ryū" (Ogasawara -ryū NPO) was recognized as a Group Contributing to the Public Benefit by Kanagawa Prefecture in 2017, and became a certified NPO.

To pass on Ogasawara-ryū to future generations, we need the help of many different people. We humbly request your assistance in helping us protect traditions passed down since the Kamakura period through donations, and your participation in activities to utilize these traditions in the modern world.

Your support will only be used to pass on Ogasawara-ryū. How every donation we receive is used is fully laid out in our financial settlement reports.



Director, Ogasawara-ryū NPO
Ogasawara Kiyomoto



Yabusame class for children

[Donation amount]

We welcome donations of 3,000 yen or more.

[How to donate]

We accept donations via credit card or bank transfer.

Please see the NPO's website for details.

<http://www.ogasawara-ryu.gr.jp/NPO/index.html>

Credit Card:

<https://kessai.canpan.info/org/ogasawararyu/>



Bank Transfer:

<http://www.ogasawara-ryu.gr.jp/NPO/aboutdonation.html>



* Please note that these websites are only available in Japanese. If you wish to contact us in English, please e-mail us at international@ogasawara-ryu.gr.jp.

Inquiries



Please contact us at one of the following e-mail addresses if you are interested in learning, experiencing, or interviewing on the Ogasawara-ryū.

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Information



[Japanese] <http://www.ogasawara-ryu.gr.jp/>

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