

Super Samurai #1: Miyamoto Musashi

Born in 1584, Musashi is still considered one of the most skilled swordsmen ever, famous for his two-sword fighting technique. He won his first duel at 13. For another duel, he had to travel by boat and carved his weapon from the oar as he travelled. He won of course.

According to legend, he never bathed and rarely changed his clothes. There probably wasn't anyone who could make him do it! He is known to have won 60 duels, not counting his achievements in battles.

He later gave up fighting to paint and study Zen. He was also a skilled calligrapher, sculptor, garden landscaper and architect.

Almost 60, he retired to a cave and wrote *The Book of Five Rings*, still considered by many military experts to be one of the best books about battle strategy.

Twenty six films have been made about Musashi and he features in many video games, anime comics and books today.



Samurai Kids Book 1: White Crane

(Walker Books Australia, March 2008, Historical fiction)

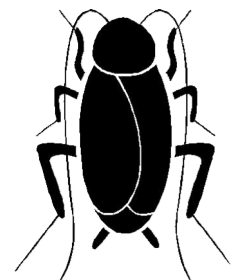
This book is the first in an exciting new series by Australian author Sandy Fussell featuring the Samurai Kids from the Cockroach Ryu and their Sensei, Ki-Yaga. The Kids are judged harshly by the world because of their apparent weaknesses, but being different can be a great strength. With its exciting martial arts focus, the series is sure to appeal to both boys and girls. Beautifully illustrated throughout by Rhian Nest-James, *Samurai Kids Book 1: White Crane* is not only a lively celebration of differences but a reminder to never underestimate those around us.



Cool Cockroaches

Some people think cockroaches are really gross bugs but there's a reason Sensei Ki-Yaga named his school the Cockroach Ryu. Being called a cockroach can be a compliment! Did you know cockroaches can...

- survive radiation from an atomic bomb. It's true.
- run 3km an hour
- do 25 body turns a second – the animal kingdom dodging world record!
- go without food for a month
- live for a week without their heads
- hold their breath for 40 mins





Meet Australia's Dr Riley Lee

...the first person outside of Japan to attain the rank of Grand Master of the Shakuhachi flute...

Dr Lee once played his shakuhachi in the snow until icicles formed on the end. He has played under a waterfall and on top of the Opera House sails.

Read our interview here: www.samuraikids.com.au/interview.html

2008: Year of the Rat

If you know someone who is 12 this year, they were born in the Year of the Rat. Rat kids are bright, happy and easy to get along with. They work hard but can get cranky. Rats make good writers.



Cool clip art from www.freecartpics.com

Gutsy Girls — Hangaku

Hangaku was the daughter of a prominent samurai family and renowned for her strength and accuracy with the bow and arrow.

When her castle home was under attack, she put on a suit of men's armour, and stood on the castle turrets as an archer. Wounded in both legs by arrows, she was eventually captured.



Library of Congress

Hangaku was very beautiful and one of her captors married her.

A warrior until her death, it is said she died fighting against an army of 10,000 with only 3,000 of her own soldiers to stand beside her.



Sadako and the Thousand cranes

Sadako Sasaki was only two years old when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. She lived approximately 1.5 kilometres from the explosion point (ground zero).

Aged 12, she developed leukaemia and was given one year to live. The people of Nagoya donated 1,000 cranes to the hospital as a Get Well gift. There is an old Japanese saying 'whoever folds 1,000 cranes will be given a wish'. Sadako began to fold.

Ten months later, she died. Sadako's friends and schoolmates raised money for a statue which now stands in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial. Sadako is a heroine to Japanese girls and a worldwide symbol of the impact of nuclear war.

You might know her story from Eleanor Coerr's book, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*.