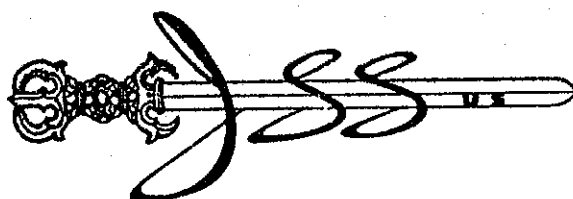


**Yasukuni-to**  
**Tradition and Ideal Beauty**

by Tom Kishida

*Translated for Japanese Sword Society of the United States*

by Kenji Mishina





(P1)

# **YASUKUNI-TO**

## **Tradition and Ideal Beauty**

**Tom Kishida**

In July 1933, the War Minister Araki founded a group of swordsmiths called Nihonto Tanren Kai (Japanese Sword Forging Centre) Foundation in the ground of the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo in order to replete the supply of gunto or military swords. Then they manufactured 8,100 swords and produced 50 tons of tamahagane, which is the raw material of the Japanese sword, in the twelve years up to the end of World War II. The swords made by these smiths are called 'Yasukuni-to' and the smiths engaged in the production are called 'Yasukuni Tosho (smith)'.

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## CHORONOLOGICAL TABLE

(Part I)

(S : Showa Era)

1932(S.7)	33(S.8)	34(S.9)	35(S.10)	36(S.11)	37(S.12)	38(S.13)	39(S.14)	40
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

[Nihonto Tanren Kai]

\* 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the board of directors  
was called on 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1932.

\*13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the board of directors decided to  
employ sword polishers on 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1937.

\*Yasukuni Tatara was completed on 13<sup>th</sup> of December 1933.

\*Sword Forging Centre was completed on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933.

\*The Foundation had a contract of tatara restoration with  
the Yasuki Steel Production Company on 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1933.

\*A military sword of Emperor Hirohito made of shin-tamahagane  
of Yasukuni Tatara was delivered to the War Ministry.

1932(S.7)	33(S.8)	34(S.9)	35(S.10)	36(S.11)	37(S.12)	38(S.13)	39(S.14)	40
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

[Swordsmiths]

Ajiki Haruyoshi

Kotani Yasunori (Named on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1935, 5<sup>th</sup> workshop)

Shinomura Yasutaro

Kotani Kenzo

Shimazaki Nao-oki

Kajiyama Yasunori (Entered the Foundation and named on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933, 4<sup>th</sup> workshop)

Kajiyama Toshimichi

Miyaguchi Yasuhiro, Sakai Hiroshi and

Takeda Sadayoshi left the Foundation and

and were transferred to Okura Tanren Dojo on  
26<sup>th</sup> of December 1936.

Sakai Hiroshi

Miyaguchi Yasuhiro (Entered the Foundation and named on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933, 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop)

Umezawa Chikara

Takeda Sadayoshi

\*Umezawa left the Foundation in autumn 1935.

Nakajima Takashi

Murakami Ensaku

Ikeda Yasumitsu (Entered the Foundation and named on 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1933, 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop)

**Abe Shigeo**

[illegible]

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**[Sword polishers]**

\*The board of directors decided to employ sword  
polishers on 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1937

Ozeki Seiko (Entered the Foundation early  
1937 and drafted on 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1938)

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**[Saya maker]**

1932(S.7)

33(S.8)

34(S.9)

35(S.10)

36(S.11)

37(S.12)

38(S.13)

39



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(Part II)

1939(S.14)	40(S.15)	41(S.16)	42(S.17)	43(S.18)	44(S.19)	45(S.20)	46(S.21)	47
----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- -----								

[Nihonto Tanren Kai]

\*The outbreak of the Pacific War (8<sup>th</sup> December 1941)

\*The end of the war

(15<sup>th</sup> August 1945)

\*Yasunori, Yasuoki, Yasuaki  
and Onuki Hisashi moved to  
Zentsuji Town of Kagawa  
Prefecture on 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1945.

[Swordsmiths] (Named on 12<sup>th</sup> (Moved to 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop as \*Sato Takayoshi left \*Nakamori Kanehisa was of July 1940) Kajiyama Toshimichi's successor) the Foundation in 1944. drafted in autumn 1944.

Ajiki Yasuyoshi Sato Takayoshi

Nakamori Kanehisa Sakakibara Susumu

\*Kotani moved to the branch  
factory on 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1945.

Sugiyama Shogo

Takahashi Saburo

\*Shinomura Yasutaro was Kariya Naoharu \*Takahashi Saburo was drafted  
drafted in April 1941. \*Sugita Shogo was drafted in

January 1943 and killed in battle.

\*Kariya left the Foundation in autumn 1944

\*Kajiyama Yasunori left the Foundation in January 1948.  
in June 1940.

Uchiyama Kenzo

\*Uchiyama Kenzo was drafted in October 1944.

Shimazaki Yasuoki (Named on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1940, 4<sup>th</sup> workshop)

\*Shimazaki moved to the branch  
factory on 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1945.

Osaki Shigeharu

Osaki Shiharu

Ishibashi Shigeru \*Ishibashi was drafted

\*Osaki was drafted on 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1945.  
on 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1943.

\*Kajiyama Yasutoshi went back home in April 1941 and died on 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1942.

\*Nakajima Takashi left the Foundation and returned home in spring 1941.

\*Ajiki Yasuyoshi moved from 5<sup>th</sup> workshop in April 1941.

Nakajima Takashi

Yamakawa Hisashi

\*Yamakawa was drafted on 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1944.

Kajiyama Yasutoshi (Entered the Foundation Ajiki Yasuyoshi (1<sup>st</sup> workshop)  
and named on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939, 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop)

Onuki Hisashi

\*Onuki moved to the branch  
factory on 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1945.

\*Takeda returned from Okura \*Takeda was drafted in April 1941. \*Kanazaki left the Foundation  
Tanren Dojo on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939. at the end of 1942.

Takeda Sadayoshi

Kanazaki Yoshikazu

Ogawa Mitsuyoshi

\*Ogawa was drafted in  
autumn 1944.

Murakami Yasunobu (Named on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939, 1<sup>st</sup> workshop)

Kikuzawa Kei

Masuda Kaname

Masuda Yasuaki

\*Kikuzawa was drafted on  
20<sup>th</sup> of February 1942.

\*Masuda became the chair-  
man of Kotohira Daily Necessities

\*Masuda moved from 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop.

Research Laboratory after the  
war.

\*Yakuwa and Masuda were named  
on 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1944.

Yakuwa Takeshi

Yakuwa Yasutake

Abe Yasushige (Named on 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1939, 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop)

Masuda Kaname

Tokuda Masahiro Sudo Iwao

\*Ikeda retired on 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1939. \*Masuda moved to 1<sup>st</sup> workshop.

\*Tokuda was drafted in April 1943.

1939(S.14)	40(S.15)	41(S.16)	42(S.17)	43(S.18)	44(S.19)	45(S.20)	46(S.21)	47
----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- -----								

**[Sword polishers]**

Takayama Tatsumi (Entered the Foundation on 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1939)

Matsubara Tshio

\*Matsubara was drafted in 1943 and killed in battle.

Tabata Kenzo

\*Tabata was drafted on 15<sup>th</sup> of November 1944.

Ida Masakatsu

\*Ida was drafted early 1945.

\*Ida entered the Foundation as a trainee on 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1939.

Kitazawa Tomisaburo

Kobayashi ? \*Kobayashi died of illness in 1942.

\*Kitazawa and Kobayashi entered the Foundation as trainees.

Komatani Hidefumi

\*Komatani entered the Foundation shortly after Kitazawa and Kobayashi.

Oshita ?

Kanemura ?

\*Two trainees entered the Foundation.

\*Two trainees entered the  
Foundation.

Yamada Ei (Entered the Foundation in 1944)

**[Saya maker]**

Sato Kiyoshi (entered the Foundation in June 1939)

1939(S.14)	40(S.15)	41(S.16)	42(S.17)	43(S.18)	44(S.19)	45(S.20)	46(S.21)	47
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## YASUKUNI-TO AND YASUKUNI TOSHO

### HONO-TO (Dedication sword)

(Signature and description)

Omote : "HOKEN YASUKUNI JINJA OMAE"

(Front) "KINEN NIHONTO TANREN KAI KAJI HAJIME MAN 50 NEN"

"SORITSUSHA (founders) ARAKI SADA O YAMAOKA JUKO  
KURATA SHICHIRO KOMATSU KENTARO"

"SHODAI (1<sup>st</sup> generation) MIYAGUCHI YASUHIRO KAJIYAMA  
YASUNORI IKEDA YASUMITSU"

Ura : "SHOWA 58 NEN MIZUNOTO I 7 GATSU 8 KA"

(Back) "YASUNORI YASUTAKE YASUNOBU YASUSHIGE  
YASUYOSHI YASUMUNE YASUNORI YASUHISA  
TATSUMI KIYOSHI SADA KICHI NAOHIDE KENZO  
MASAHIRO HISASHI SHIGERU KO (the late) YASUTOSHI  
TOGI (polish) OKISATO SEWANIN (mediator) FUJISHIRO MATSUO  
MEI (signing) TSUNETOSHI KINKOKU (elaborately chiselled)"

Ha-watari : 88.5 cm.

Sori : 3.8 cm.

(P.6)

### YASUHIRO

Omote : "YASUHIRO" (with koshirae)

Ura : "SHOWA 8 NEN 9 GATSU KICHI JITSU"

Ha-watari : 66.7 cm.

Sori : 1.5 cm.

- General Araki Sadao presented the tachi with midare-ba, which is unusual as Yasukuni-to, to

Furitsu Dai 6 Junior High School (present Toritsu Shinjuku High School) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1939. Silver-inlaid characters 'Hiro Maru' on the habaki remind of Emperor Show 'Hirohito'. Leather-bound tsuka was done by a master tsuka binder, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tsukahei and the mounting in military style is profoundly finished as well as the menuki and the lacquered saya.

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**YASUNORI**

Omote : "YASUNORI"

Ura : "SHOWA 15 NEN 1 GATSU KICHI JITSU"

Ha-watari : 22.6 cm.      Sori : Uchi-zori

(P.8)

**YASUNORI**

Omote : "MASAMUNE" (by Kajiyama Yasunori)

Ura : "SHOWA 18 NEN 11 GATSU KICHI JITSU"

Ha-watari : 68.5 cm.      Sori : 2.3 cm.

- This tachi was made after he left Nihonto Tanren Kai.

(P.9)

**YASUNORI**

Omote : "YASUNORI KINSAKU"

Ura : "SHOWA 12 NEN 9 GATSU KICHI JITSU"

Ha-watari : 67.1 cm.      Sori : 1.6 cm.

(P.10)

**YASUTOSHI**

Omote : "HOKEN YASUKUNI JINJA OMAE YASUTOSH"

Ura : "SHOWA 14 NEN 2 GATSU KICHI JITSU NIHONTO TANREN KAI"

Ha-watari : 66.7 cm.

Sori : 2.0 cm.

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**YASUNOBU**

Omote : "YASUNOBU"

Ura : "SHOWA 16 NEN 1 GATSU KICHI JITSU"

Ha-watari : 63.6 cm.

Sori : 2.0 cm.

(P.12)

**YASUSHIGE**

(Custody Sword)

Omote : "YASUSHIGE"

Ura : "SHOWA 19 NEN 11 GATSU KICHI JITSU"  
"HOKEN OMONOKI JINJA OMAE"

Ha-watari : 66.1 cm.

Sori : 1.8 cm.

- The description of 'Hoken Omonoki Jinja Omae' was added after the war.

(P.13)

**YASUYOSHI**

Omote : "HOKEN YASUKUNI JINJA OMAE YASUYOSHI"

Ura : "SHOWA 15 NEN 8 GATSU KICHI JITSU NIHONTO TANREN KAI"

Ha-watari : 69.4 cm.

Sori : 2.1 cm.

- This is his first work with the smith name of 'Yasuyoshi'.

(P.14)

**YASUOKI**

Omote : "YASUOKI"

Ura : "SHOWA 15 NEN 8 GATSU KICHI JITSU"

Ha-watari : 64.7 cm.

Sori : 1.8 cm.

(P.15)

**YASUTAKE**

Omote : "MITSUYO SAKU YAKUWA YASUTAKE TSUKURU KORE"

Ura : "SHOWA 53 NEN HARU"

Ha-watari : 66.0 cm.

Sori : 2.6 cm.

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**YASUAKI**

Omote : "SAGAMI (NO) KUNI JU YASUAKI SAKU"

Ura : "OZU SHIMIZU KE JUDAI YOSHIO SHI  
MOTOME KORE TSUKURU"  
"HEISEI 3 NEN 3 GATSU KICHI JITSU"

Ha-watari : 65.6 cm. Sori : 2.0 cm.

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### YASUKUNI

Omote : "YASUKUNI ISSHINSHI KARIYA SHIRO MINAMOTO (NO)  
NAOHIDE TSUKURU KORE KAO (monogram)"

Ura : "SHOWA 62 NEN 11 GATSU 10 KA"

Ha-watari : 760 cm. Sori : 2.5 cm.

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### YASUMUNE

Omote : "OSAKI YASUMUNE TSUKURU KORE"

Ura : "SHOWA KANOTO TORI DOSHI SHINSHUN"

Ha-watari : 77.3 cm. Sori : 2.5 cm.

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Shimazaki Yasuoki (March 1982)

(P.20)

Shimazaki Yasuoki (December 1981)



(P.21)

Yakuwa Yasutake (January 1983)

(P.22)

Yakuwa Yasutake (January 1983)

(P.23)

Masuda Yasuaki (July 1990)

(P.24)

Masuda Yasuaki (July 1990)

(P.25)

Kariya Naoharu (Yasukuni) (May 1983)

(P.26)

Kariya Naoharu (Yasukuni) (March 1983)

(P.27)

Osaki Shigeharu (Yasumune) (June 1990)

(P.28)

Osaki Shigeharu (Yasumune) (June 1990)

## THE DEDICATION SWORD, AFTER 50 YEARS FROM THE FOUNDING OF NIHONTO TANREN KAI

Shimazaki Yasuoki, Yakuwa Yasutake, Osaki Yasumune and Masuda Yasuaki resumed sword making at the end of 1983 and the four smiths who had been on friendly terms with each other after the end of the war, came to decide to make a sword and dedicate it the Yasukuni Shrine on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1985 commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening ceremony of the Forging Centre of the Nihonto Tanren Kai. Then they discussed that the dedication had to be joined by other Yasukuni smiths. Thus they started looking for other swordsmiths who worked for the Nihonto Tanren Kai and who had become dispersed to various places after the Nihonto Tanren Kai was disbanded in the wake of Japan's defeat against Allied Forces.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 1982, Kotani Yasunori and another eighteen Yasukuni smiths gathered at the Forging Centre (presently 'Gyoun-tei') in the grounds of the Yasukuni Shrine, celebrated their reunion and made arrangements about details of sugata, hamon and mei of the dedication sword. On that occasion, the materials (tamahagane) of the dedication sword from the Yasukuni Tataka, which used to be used in the Nihonto Tanren Kai and the Nittoho Tataka of the N.B.T.H.K., were dedicated to the shrine together with a sprig of the sacred tree.

Kawagane (Jacket steel) of the dedication sword was made from the mixture of the tamahagane from the Yasukuni Tataka and the Nittoho Tataka. Tama-tsubushi (hardening of thin pieces of tamahagane) was done by Osaki Yasumune, Kariya Naoji, Uchimura Kenzo, Yamakawa Hisashi, Tokuda Masahiro and Ishibashi Shigeru, then Shimazaki Yasuoki and Osaki Yasumune performed shita-gitae (foundation forging). Shingane (Core steel) which consisted of tamahagane of the Yasukuni Tataka and old iron was forged by Osaki Yasumune. Sugata of the dedication sword followed the example of a great tachi, meibutsu 'Oh Kanehira' by Ko-bizen Kanehira. Hamon was left entirely to Yakuwa Yasutake who was in the charge of the stages between age-gitae (finish forging) and yaki-ire (quenching).

Yakuwa Yasutake became to assume an important duty in forging the dedication sword, as he was expected that he would take advantage of his experience in forging, as he had made an o-dachi (long tachi) with 124.4 cm. in length and won the most honourable award, 'Masamune-sho' at the Shinsaku Meito-ten (Sword Making Competition by the N.B.T.H.K.).

(Photo)

Yakuwa Yasutake is doing finishing work on the dedication sword.

Photo was taken by Kishida Tom on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1983.

(P.30)

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1983, Abe Yasushige, Ajiki Yasuyoshi, Shimazaki Yasuoki, Yakuwa Yasutake, Masuda Yasuaki, Osaki Yasumune, Fujishiro Matsuo who was a mediator of the dedication sword, sword polisher Fujishiro Okisato and Miyaguchi Tsunetoshi, who is an engraver and in charge of chiselling the signature (a son of swordsmith Miyaguchi Yasuhiro) gathered at the former Forging Centre, then selected one of which sugata, ha-watari, nakago's length and hamon they favoured, from three swords finished by Yakuwa Yasutake. Polishing work on the sword, which was due to be dedicated to the Yasukuni Shrine, was started by Fujishiro Okisato at last.

On the omote of the blade, the purpose of the dedication was described like 'Hoken Yasukuni Jinja Omae Kinen Nihonto Tanren Kai Kaji Hajime Man 50 Nen' (Dedicating to the Yasukuni Shrine commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening ceremony of the Forging Centre of the Nihonto Tanren Kai) as well as the name of the founder of the Nihonto Tanren Kai and the names of the swordsmiths who engaged in sword making at the Forging Centre then. Also the date 'Showa 58 Nen Mizunoto I 7 Gatsu 8 Ka' (8<sup>th</sup> July 1983) and the names of swordsmiths who took part in the dedication and the persons concerned were described on the ura. Finally the former chairman of the N.B.T.H.K. Fujikawa Kinji gave hako-gaki on the box of the sword and saya-gaki on the wooden scabbard. Yakuwa Yasutake then handed the sword over to Matsudaira Yoshinaga, who was the chief priest of the shrine on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1983, in the presence of his 31 colleagues.

(Photo)

The former Yasukuni smiths are discussing which one they will chose as the dedication sword.

From left : Mediator Fujishiro Matsuo, Yasuoki, Yasuaki and Miyaguchi Tsunetoshi.

From front left : Yasuyoshi and Yasutake.

Photo was taken by Kishida Tom on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1983.

(Photo)

Osaki Yasumune is showing the dedicating sword to the chief priest of the shrine.

Photo was taken by Kishida Tom on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1983.

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## **THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF JAPANESE SWORD AFTER THE MEIJI RESTORATION & THE MEANING OF YASUKUNI-TO**

**Tsuchiko Tamio**  
(Sword Journalist)

The 8<sup>th</sup> year of the Showa Era (1933) was an epoch-making year worthy of mention in the history of the Japanese sword after the Meiji Restoration (1868).

A member of the House of Representatives, Kurihara Hikosaburo (smith name 'Akihide') opened Nihonto Tanren Denshujo (Japanese Sword Forging Institute) at the following address; 28 Hikawa-cho, Akasaka Ward, Tokyo, on the 5<sup>th</sup> July of that year, after he had repeatedly tried, by trial and error, for years. Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation, which was already founded at the end of the previous year, completed a sword forging factory or tanrenjo in the ground of the Yasukuni Shrine (address: 6-3 Kudan, Kojimachi Ward, Tokyo) on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1933. Then a ceremony to celebrate the completion of the factory, a naming ceremony awarding Yasukuni smith names and a inauguration ceremony of sword forging, were held three days after the Nihonto Tanren Denshujo was opened.

It is not true that there was no active swordsmith before the opening of the institute, though they were no matches for the swordsmiths recorded in the history of Japanese sword in quality and quantity. The legacy of the shinshinto times was just about to die out with the successive deaths of Gassan Sadakazu in 1918 at the age of 84, Hayama Enshin in 1920 at 75 and Miyamoto Kanenori in 1926 at 97. In 1929, only Gassan Sadakatsu made 58 tachi (straight swords) and 43 hoko (a kind of spear) for the Ise Shrine on the occasion of the 58<sup>th</sup> dedication of a new shrine. This reality testifies that there were no relevant smiths to the job, except Gassan Sadakazu.

The Nihonto Tanren Denshujo and the Nihonto Tanren Kai were opened under such circumstances. The former understood that the abolition of Japanese sword could result in losing the 'Spirit of Japan' and the main purpose was to strengthen swordsmiths mentally and improve their skill. Meanwhile the latter aimed at supplying Imperial officers and people equivalent to them, with real Japanese swords for military use, which were made in traditional way. But several common points

were advocated by the two organisations. These are that they planned to restore traditional sword forging systems and follow the tradition of sword forging by responding to the demands of the times and to train many swordsmiths.

Therefore, the swordsmiths from the two organisations could properly cope with a new understanding of the Japanese sword, namely the 'Art sword', when they were allowed to resume sword forging eight years after the war. 1953 is to be remembered as the year that initiated a surge of enthusiasm for gendaito and also the starting point of shinsakuto.

## **Haito-rei**

**(Decree Abolishing the Wearing of Swords)**

**And**

**Revaluation of Japanese Sword**

'Katana-gari' (Sword Hunting) by the Toyotomi Government, the Haito-rei and the confiscation of swords by the General Headquarter of the Allied Forces, are called the 'Three crisis of the Japanese sword in the history of Japan'. Each case has a different meaning, but the two latter cases occurred during the past 80 years and it is easily speculated how difficult times modern Japanese sword has experienced after the Meiji Restoration.

So-called 'Haito-rei' decrees had been issued three times by the name of then Prime Minister Sanjo Sanetomi. The first decree banned commoners wearing swords and the second one allowed samurai not to wear a pair of swords. The third one finally banned the general public wearing swords altogether.

Mori Kinnojo (later Mori Arinori) submitted a petition of the Haito-rei to the government in 1869 and Yagami Katsuyuki did also in 1873. In the petitions Mori advocated the abolition of the custom of wearing swords in order to carry Japan's westernisation forward. Meanwhile Yagami insisted to discard all tools of bloodshed and to reuse them as the material for railways and ships. The ideal of Mori, who was familiar with the situation of Western countries, was to precede the reform of the military system. His policy, which was more appropriate than Yagami's though, was unacceptable for descendants of samurai at that time.

In the wake of the return of the land and people from the feudal lords to the Emperor (1870) the abolition of clans and the establishment of prefectures (1872), the lives and position of samurai, who

used to be representatives of the people, were deteriorating. Furthermore, the status of the samurai class, came to be denied officially with the introduction the Conscription Law by the Meiji government.

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There was strong resistance by the descendants of the samurai in various places, against the changes. Among them, the Haito-rei issued in March 1877 is regarded as the direct cause of the Jinpuren Revolt of Kumamoto Prefecture, the Akizuki Revolt of Fukuoka Prefecture and the Hagi Revolt of Yamaguchi Prefecture, in October of the same year.

The Battle of Seinan that ended in 1878, was the last resistance of the conservative descendants of the samurai and from then the Haito-rei came to be strictly enforced. The battle was fought between conscripts with guns and descendants of samurai with swords. It is generally understood that the old samurai power could not compete with the conscripts trained in Western style and armed with modern fire weapons.

On the other hand, some people say that superiority of the bands with drawn swords in close combat with Japanese sword in the final stage of the battle, was eventually a decisive factor of the victory for the government army. It is true that Japanese sword was re-evaluated after the battle and the demand for the craftsmen of Japanese sword increased temporarily.

Such successful experience and effectiveness of the Japanese sword in the battle, resulted in reconsidering the Japanese sword as 'Soul of Samurai' yet again and it brought about a situation that even army labours wore sword in the Shino-Japanese War that broke out in 1894.

The Imperial Army had a constant philosophy of attaching great importance to Japanese sword as well as great warship and canon philosophy. During World War II, the only army in the world to be equipped with swords, was the Japanese Army. It can be said that this philosophy was caused by overestimating the effectiveness of gunto in the battles and this kind of anachronism resulted that the Allied Forces deciding to carry out 'Sword Hunting of the Show Era' after the World War II.

The birth of Yasukuni-to, reflects the unfortunate past of Japan that intended to expand its territory with military force. That is to say, large quantities of gunto had been consumed and the demand for Japanese swords as gunto, was abruptly increasing while Japan had experience the Shino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War in the Meiji Era, World War I and the dispatch of troops to Siberia in the Taisho Era (1914), and the Manchurian Incident (1931). Then swordsmiths were not capable

of coping cope with the situation by themselves, and poorly made swords were beginning to appear on the market. Some people were seriously concerned about the situation. Under such circumstances, the foundation of Nihonto Tanren Kai that aimed at supplying high quality gunto, was planned by War Minister and Lieutenant General, Araki Sadao and the Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau of the War Ministry, Yamaoka Juko, together with the military authorities concerned, with full support from the Army.

### **Trend of the Sword Society in the Unfortunate Times**

Haito-rei gave a fatal blow to Japanese sword. There is an interesting expression for the Japanese sword often used by people then, 'useless long thing'. It is adept in guessing the motives right.

The Japanese sword used to be regarded as the soul of samurai and was handled with utmost respect at home, but they were then left without care and left to rust. At first worthy fittings were taken off from the koshirae and sold off. Though swords themselves had little value at that time and big piles of swords were kept in the warehouses of antique dealers, as they attracted few people. Even the few sword collectors, who maintained their interest in Japanese swords, did not try to purchase them unless they were top quality swords. It is said that then a Japanese yen could buy a good quality sword, therefore, five and ten Japanese yen could purchase a fine Ko-bizen sword, according to the market price of that time.

Many Japanese swords were broken into pieces and used as hatchets and what was even worse, they were melted down and reused as material for the wheels of wagon and nails.

Several hundred swordsmiths, who were working at the end of the Edo Period, were suddenly brought to ruin after the return of feudal clans to the Emperor and the Haito-rei. Almost all craftsmen of the Japanese sword, such as sword polishers, saya makers, tsuka binders, lacquerers and metalworkers, lost their jobs. Even the Hon-ami families, which had been retained by shogun and rulers since the Muromachi Period and played an important role in polishing, care and appraisal of Japanese swords, were no exception in this severe situation. The misery of the sword society rose to a climax when the Shino-Japanese War was about to break out.

It must be remembered that the tradition of Japanese swords could only manage to survive the difficult times and be carried on, with the tremendous efforts of the craftsmen concerned and support from various fields.

Also it can be said, that innovation of polishing techniques symbolises the change of the value of Japanese sword. Tsushima-togi or sashikomi-togi was the finishing style of the sword polish that was commonly practised by the Hon-ami families and other polishers until the end of the Edo Period. At the beginning of the Meiji Era, Hon-ami Narishige, who comes from the lineage of Hon-ami Koi, innovated kanahada-nugui (polishing powder mainly consisting of iron oxide, which had previously been recognised as a wrong way of finishing work) and developed ato-hadori (additional whitening work of hamon). Finally he established a modern sword polishing that is widely practised by today's polishers. This was a measure devised to deal with the problem Japanese sword had at that time. That is to say, he tried to change the sense of its value from one of weapons and the soul of the samurai, to a cherished object for appreciation in order to find a way to survive himself as sword polisher.

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It is also worthy of mentioning about a protective and encouraging policy toward Japanese swords that was supported by the Imperial Family. It is said that Emperor Meiji had a great interest in the Japanese sword himself and was good at appraisal. He often ordered and purchased fine swords and gave great consideration to the traditional craftsmen of the Japanese sword.

In 1886, there was an order of sixty-six tachi (straight swords) from the Ise Shrine for the 56<sup>th</sup> dedication of a new shrine. Miyamoto Kanenori and Heki Kanetsugu made the swords at the Yasukuni Shrine for this event. There was also an order of 28 copies of the Royal collection preserved in the Shosoin (treasure house of Emperor Shomu) completed by Miyamoto Kanenori and Ishido Korekazu in 1888. Apart from them, there were orders of guardian swords from the Imperial Family when celebrating the births of new princes and princesses. Meanwhile it was a great honour for Gassan Sadakazu and other smiths that their swords entered in to the Domestic Industrial Products Exhibition (1877-1882) were all purchased by the Imperial Family.

An incentive system so-called 'Teishitsu Gigei-in (presently National Living Treasure)', which was based on the policy of encouraging the traditional craftsmen by the Imperial Family, was started in 1890 and seven craftsmen were awarded the first designation. These included Kano Natsuo, who was a metal worker of sword fittings. Metal worker Unno Shomin was designated as Teishitsu Gigei-in in 1896 then Miyamoto Kanenori and Gassan Sadakazu followed him with the recommendation of the Token Kai (later Chuo Token Kai).

Horii Taneyoshi became a purveyor swordsmith to the Department of the Imperial Household in 1896 and his son Taneaki succeeded to the post after his father died. In addition, 11<sup>th</sup> Izumi no Kami



Kanesada of Aizu, Henmi Chikukansai Yoshitaka and Sakurai Masatsugu joined them later on.

The first law to protect cultural assets of Japan called 'Law to protect old shrines and temples' was issued by the government in 1897. Japanese swords became a subject of the designation every year since that time. Though the designation was limited to the ones owned by shrines and temples, and swords owned by individuals, public organisation and the state were not intended for the designation. We have to wait until a new law called 'National Treasure Protection Law' was issued in 1929 in order to see the amendment of the defect of this law.

The Token Kai was founded in 1900 for the purpose of researching the Japanese sword and the protection of the traditional craftsmanship and the head office was located at 4-1 Fujimi-cho, Kojimachi Ward in Tokyo. Afterwards, they came to adopt a system that trained craftsmen of the Japanese sword. Inukai Bokudo and Sakakibara Hiroitsu mentioned their serious concern in the prospectus of the foundation of the Token Kai, that traditional craftsmanship such as sword forging and polishing would be ruined in several years, if action was not taken immediately. Incidentally the organisation was given a donation from the Imperial Family in 1905 and 1917.

The foundation of the Token Kai was followed by the Token Hozon Kai of Takase Usui, the Nihonto Kenkyu Kai bo Hon-ami Koson and the Tsukiji Token Kai of Sugiyama Shigemaru.

Entering the Taisho Era, the Muroran Branch Factory of the Nihon Steel Production Company invited Horii Taneaki and his family and opened his workshop called 'Zuisen Tantojo'. But it was a rare case and there were few activities in the sword society, apart from important scientific researches of Japanese sword conducted by the Imperial universities.

The entry of Japanese sword for the 15<sup>th</sup> Imperial Art House Exhibition, was allowed a year after the foundation of the Nihonto Tanren Kai. Kurihara Hikosaburo, who submitted a petition of the entry for the exhibition to the Diet and realised it, investigated swordsmiths throughout Japan. Eventually there were 118 entries for the exhibition. Though only several full-time swordsmiths were among them, including Horii Toshihide of Hokkaido, Takahashi Sadatsugu of Ehime Prefecture, Takahashi Yoshimune, Takahashi Hidetsugu and Gassan Sadakatsu with his school of Osaka Prefecture, and Shibata Ka of Akita Prefecture who was studying Japanese swords, as well as swordsmiths belonging to the Nihonto Tanren Kai and the Nihonto Tanren Denshujo.

### **The Foundation of Nihonto Tanren and Well-meaning People**

The Shokon-sha (shrine to console the souls of people died for the county) was founded in June 1869 with the sponsorship of Emperor Meiji. The name of the shrine was changed to 'Yasukuni Shrine' in June 1879 and was promoted to the status of special shrine. 'Yasukuni' literally means 'Having the nation of the Emperor pacified' and the shrine was originally dedicated to patriotic martyrdom for the Emperor during the civil war before and after of the Meiji Restoration. Later it came to be dedicated to people who have fought and died for the country. In enshrining the war dead, Shokon-sai (Consoling souls of war dead) was one of the most important ceremonies and it became to be a special and exceptional ceremony of the shrine in Shinto style, after it was promoted to special shrine. The ceremony was within the jurisdiction of the War and the Naval Ministries and the Emperor appointed the chairman of the ceremony from active flag officers. The list of two million and four hundred thousand people who died for the country, from the foundation of the shrine to the defeat of the Pacific War, has been enshrined in the shrine as well as a sacred mirror sword by now. The jurisdiction of the shrine was transferred from the state to a religious corporation after the war, following the GHQ's policy of no intervention between politics and religion. It has been run independently with the approval of the Governor of Tokyo up to now.

The details how and why the Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation became to be leased the ground of the Yasukuni Shrine and built the Sword Forging Factory are not known.

Though it is not so difficult to speculate the reason, inferring from the relation between the Yasukuni Shrine and the War Ministry mentioned above. The shrine had been connected with Japanese sword in some way and there was a fact that sword forging was demonstrated in the ground of the shrine in the past. It might be a favourable factor that Chuo Token Kai held regular sword meeting at the Yushukan Museum of the shrine.

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Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation held the first meeting of the board of directors at the minister's room of the War Ministry on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1932. Then the total plan of the Foundation was approved and the Foundation formally started its management at last. In the meantime the Manchurian Incident broke out in September of the previous year, followed by the first Shanghai Incident and thus the flames of war were expanding in the continent. To provide appropriate gunto was an urgent request that was imposed on the Foundation and they immediately started preparing for their work. They started building Sword Forging Factory on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 1933 and Kurata Shichiro made a trip to Izumo and Hoki Provinces in order to research the possibility of resuming tatara operation over there in the same month.

It is now necessary to clarify the real situation of gunto at that time but the whole picture is not

ascertained because only a few documents about it are available. But I have confirmed the existence of a few documents that were confiscated by the U.S. Strategic Air Raid Research Group after the war and returned to Japan later. According to 'The list of Arsenals and the Equipment of Arms' made in 1940, the number of gunto in stock were 162,274 and there was a shortage of 27,800 gunto and 20,875 gunto were provided in the year. All of them seem to have been gunto supplied by the government, but the number of gunto recorded in the list is not compared with those of bayonets and rifles.

Also according to 'The Report of the Situation of Arms Production' (ground arms) conducted from 1941 to 1945, the monthly output of 95-type gunto was from 1,000 to 10,250 and there was a big gap in each month but the output was increasing every year. The total output of gunto reached 160,000 by the end of the war (unit price was 45 yen through five years).

Incidentally the Seki Factory of the Nagoya Arsenal (located in Seki Town, Mugi County, Gifu Prefecture) was equipped with twenty-five machines and seventy-five people were working there and they manufactured 1,000 95-type gunto every month. Gunto production companies were opened in the town and more than two hundred swordsmiths engaged in gunto making. It is known that a certain number of female sword polisher were working there coping with the quantity of the gunto production.

Needless to say, those gunto were made of Western steel with no folding and are so-called 'Showa-to'. Thus clear division must be drawn between Yasukuni-to and those gunto.

As mentioned above, Yasukuni-to was originated in the request of the state but it may not be true that abundant funds were prepared for the project in the beginning. Examining documents concerned, there was little hope of the steady management of the foundation at first despite the subsidy of 70,000 yen for arts and science from the War Ministry was expected, therefore the foundation seems to have intended to ask for donations in order to cover the deficit. Fortunately there were offers of donations from the Harada Sekizen Kai Foundation (100,000 yen), Ms. Mitani Tei living in Kanda of Tokyo (130,000 yen on the day the first meeting of the board was held), the Emperor (1,000 yen) and Mr. Komine Ken living in Omori of Tokyo (the amount is not confirmed) in succession. The total amount of the donations reached 380,1000 yen and the foundation started its operation with it.

Among the donations, the one from the Mitani family must be paid attention. Their donation makes a total of 500,000 yen if a donation to the National Defence Hall of the Yasukuni Shrine (presently Yasukuni Kaikan) is added. The figure of their donation is worthy of note taking into account the

cost of the construction of Nihonto Tanren Kai including its office and workshops (floor space of 301.4 square meters). They were a rich family and run a hardware store. It is said that the widow of Mr. Mitani, who was a member of the Chuo Token Kai, seems to have donated a part of his assets in the wake of the death of her husband.

One of the donors, Harada Sekizen Kai Foundation is one of the oldest subsidy organisations that was founded in 1920 with the fundamental property of 10,200,000 by Harada Jiro, who had been the chief manager of the household of the Konoike family. Harada says in its prospectus that he used to be admonished by his mother 'Never make a big tombstone even if you succeed in business and become rich'. Afterwards he realised what his mother meant and decided he would invest all his assets in public enterprises in order to contribute to the state and the society and he believed it would serve the admonition of his mother. He was involved in 7,703 subsidy enterprises in 45 years up to 1964. In the case of Nihonto Tanren Denshujo founded by Kurihara Hikosaburo, the management had also been supported by many individuals and enterprises from the beginning of its foundation. It might be impossible for shinsakuto (then newly-made sword) of that times to stay survive independently.

It is an interesting fact that there were already organisations to support cultural activities at that time. I am very impressed to know that Yasukuni-to was achieved with the support of good-intentions and sympathy from many people and organisations.

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#### **Success Factors of Nihonto Tanren Kai**

First of all, I wrote that 1933, the year Nihonto Tanren Denshujo and Nihonto Tanren Kai were founded, was an epoch-making year, also it was an important year to establish the management of the Nihonto Tanren Kai. There is no doubt that Yasukuni-to was a product of military request though it was not simply gunto and it is a superficial view to regard it as an abortive flower of the times.

##### **1. Business Strategy**

The manufacture of Japanese swords heavily depends on workshops and individuals. The involvement of enterprise on an industrial scale, was an unprecedented case. The strategy of Araki Sadao, Yamaoka Juko and Kurata Shichiro, that gave guidance to the success of the Foundation is to be worthy of note. They persistently carried out the strategy and employed a new system mentioned below in order to realise their plan.

## 2. Restoration of Tatara Operation

The production of tamahagane (Japanese steel) and sentetsu (pig iron), which are the main materials of the Japanese sword, was discontinued in the last year of the Taisho Era (1926). The Foundation consigned the restoration of Yasukuni Tatara to Yasuki Steel Production Company and it succeeded in producing high quality tamahagane. The tradition of the Yasukuni Tatara was restored to life by the NBTHK (Japanese Art Sword Conservation Association) as 'Nittoho Tatara' and the tatara has been operated up to now.

## 3. Succession of Traditional Techniques

The Foundation's challenge, was to use only the traditional way of Japanese sword forging, without using modern machines. It should not be blamed if they had introduced machines in sword forging under such circumstances, but they seems to have tried to avoid harmful effects of 'quantity first' policy. As a result, they managed to produce only 8,100 swords in 12 years. It can be said that their system was very successful in bringing up talented craftsmen and contributed to the succession of traditional techniques in the post war times.

## 4. Introduction of Quality Control System

All the swords produced at the workshops of the foundation were examined by inspectors and classified into four ranks like 'Ko', 'Otsu', 'Hei', and 'Rejected' and the transfer prices were set at the same time. Most of the inspectors were selected from chief officers in service of the Army and Navy, who were also the members of the Chuo Token Kai. Kozu Haku, who was a member of the designation committee of National Treasures and an authority of shinto swords, was one of the inspectors. Taking a look at the list of the inspection, it becomes clear that a cycle of 'Inspection - Estimation - Instruction' functioned efficiently and maintained a certain level of Yasukuni-to.

## 5. Introduction of the Result of Metallurgical Research

Two authorities of metallurgy, namely Tawara Kuniichi who was a professor of Tokyo Imperial University and Kudo Haruto who was the chairman of Yasuki Steel Production Company joined the Foundation, in addition to military authorities concerned and ministers. Thus it is obvious that the Foundation had the intention of introducing the result of metallurgical research. It was Professor Kudo who invented a method of cooling down quenched sword with oil. This method is often mistaken for so-called oil-quenching, that was employed in mass-producing gunto, but there is no evidence that they employed it in their factory.

## 6. Consistency of Quality Control

The Foundation took measures to supply with sufficient materials and offered sword engineers

favourable circumstances to improve their productivity. They employed more than forty craftsmen including sword polishers and saya makers and implemented thorough quality control throughout the whole processes.

#### 7. Success of Sales Management

The price of Yasukuni-to was set fairly high and it was said that it pushed up the price of old swords. There were too many orders for Yasukuni-to to supply as the quality control was practised carefully and the swords were supplied for certain customers. Good personnel management became possible in accordance with the business management of the Foundation.

Yasukuni-to has not been estimated favourably after the war because of its historical background. Though Yasukuni-to still attracts and moves many people beyond time, because it was accomplished with harmony of tradition and science at a high level, despite that they met with the difficult demands of the times and many restrictions.

Talking about 'Utsuri', some people, who believe that Yasukuni-to is just one type of Showa-to, may say that utsuri of Yasukuni-to is an accidental and exceptional occurrence, but it is not true. It must be remembered that there were people who were studying utsuri and pursuing and the high end of Japanese sword with sublime resolution, even in the difficult times.

Including Yasukuni-to, it is quite understandable that good gendaito (modern swords), which were elaborately made from the Haito-rei (1876) to the end of the war (1945), were quick to be evaluated by many people outside Japan. Taking this opportunity, I would like you to appreciate Yasukuni-to again, taking consideration of the historical background.

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## ALL ABOUT YASUKUNI-TO

### Completion Ceremony of the Sword Forging Factory And Commencement Ceremony of Sword Forging

The completion ceremony of the sword forging factory of the Foundation, the ceremony of giving the names to Yasukuni smiths and the commencement ceremony of sword forging, were held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1935. The completion ceremony started at 10:15 a.m. and was attended by Managing Director Ushijima Mitsuru (Army Colonel), Director Kawaguchi Kiyotake (Artillery Major), Komatsu Kentaro (Judge of the Chuo Token Kai), Manager Kurata Shichiro (Naval Colonel) and so on.

Following the formal announcement of the completion of the sword forging factory, the completion ceremony started at the third workshop of the factory, at 11:00 a.m.. Bamboo trees were set up at every corner of the ceremony site, a sacred straw festoon was hung, and an altar and a household shrine were prepared. The altar was decorated with two bundles of five-coloured ribbons and sakaki (branches of a sacred tree) in the both sides also a mirror and a jewel ball were hung on the right sakaki and a sword was done on the left sakaki.

After the priest purified the site, sprigs of the sacred tree were offered to the god by Chairman Yanagawa Heisuke (Lieutenant General and Vice-minister of the War Ministry), Adviser Araki Sadao (Lieutenant General and the War Minister) and others.

Then the certificates of Yasukuni Toshō with smith names 'Yasuhiro' and 'Yasunori' were given by the War Minister Araki Sadao to the two swordsmiths Miyaguchi and Kajiyama.

Yasuhiro demonstrated the commencement ceremony of the sword forging, with the assistants (sakite) of Sakai Hiroshi and Umezawa Chikara at the second workshop, whilst Yasunori did it with the assistance of Kotani Kenzo and Kajiyama Toshimichi at the fourth workshop. The ceremony proceeded, as described below.

The Engineers (swordsmiths and assistants) were given tools and materials for the sword forging by an organiser of the ceremony. They took up their positions and the manager of the ceremony

informed the chairman that the swordsmiths were ready to start. The chairman then ordered the swordsmiths to commence the demonstration. The swordsmiths hammered iron bars, 20 cm. in length and 5 mm. in thickness, on the anvil more than ten times in order to heat the tip of the bar to a red colour and they lit a chip of wood which contained sulphur with it. The fire was transferred to each furnace, then they started forging swords, which were due to be the object of worship for the household shrine of the workshops.

The chairman announced the completion of the commencement ceremony after the swordsmiths hammered once and the assistants twice.

After the ceremony, the swordsmiths resumed forging in order to finish the swords at their workshops at 2:00 p.m.

On the day of the ceremony, sixty-seven attendants and guests appear to have been expected as follows; the chairman and sixteen members of the board of directors, two clerks, six swordsmiths and assistants, three of construction engineers and an on-the-job superintendent, two auditors, Pay officer Ueda, employee Matsumura, the chief of the reward section and Army Captain Murayama, the War Minister, eight advisers, three staffs of the Yushukan Museum, department manager of the Kaiko-sha Sakaho, a vice-minister, a parliamentary councillor, a representative of the Harada Sekizen Kai Foundation, the Minister and the Vice-minister of the Imperial Household, the chief of the general affairs section of the Imperial Household Ministry, the head of the general affairs section of the Imperial Household Ministry, the chief of the supplies section of the Imperial Household Ministry, a secretary to the Minister of the Imperial household, a member of the Mitani family, a member of the Komine family, six ministers and their advisory secretaries, Adjutant Fukutomi and three construction contractors. Fifty-three of the attendants and the guests are recorded on a souvenir photo taken in front of the Yushukan Museum on the day.

(Photo in bottom row)

Active servicemen wear a medal. The manager of the ceremony, swordsmiths and sakite wear a formal and traditional dress with a cap, they also wear tanto.

The War Minister Araki Sadao is giving the Yasukuni smith name of 'Yasuhiro to swordsmith Miyaguchi.

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(Photo in upper row)

Souvenir photo taken by unknown cameraman before the Yushukan Museum on the ceremony day,



08/07/1933.

The photo is owned by Kotani Kenzo.

● (From left in front row)

- |                  |                    |   |
|------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | : Ushijima Mitsuru | First managing director, Army Colonel and Adjutant  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | : Yamaoka Juko     | First director, first inspector, Major General and the director of the Bureau for War Affairs |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | : Oyamada Shigezo  | First inspector and in charge of Swords for the Imperial Household Ministry                   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | : Hayashi Katsura  | First director, Major General and the director of the Bureau of Maintenance                   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | : Araki Sadao      | Major General and the War Minister  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>  | : Yanagawa Heisuke | First chairman, Major General and the Vice-Minister of War                                    |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | : Hayashi Senjuro  | Adviser, General and the Education Superintendent of the War Ministry                         |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> | : Tanaka Mitsuaki  | Adviser and Baron   |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> | : Kashii Kohei     | Director, Lieutenant General and the head of the Education Supervise Department               |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> | : Kamo Momoki      | First director and the chief priest of the Yasukuni Shrine                                    |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> | : Matsuda Tsuneta  | First director and the curator of the Yushukan Museum   |

● (From left in second row)

- |                  |                   |                                      |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | : Koizumi Shinji  | First inspector and Rear Admiral     |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | : Komatsu Kentaro | First inspector and sword researcher |

(He served as manager until the end of the war, after Manager Kurata Shichiro joined the army in November 1941.)

● (From left in third row)

- |                  |                       |   |
|------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | : Kudo Haruto         | Adviser, Doctor Engineer and the chairman of the Yasuki Steel Company |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | : Sakai Hiroshi       | Sakite  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | : Umezawa Chikara     | Sakite  |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | : Miyaguchi Yasuhiro  | Swordsmith  |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | : Kajiyama Yasunori   | Swordsmith  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>  | : Kotani Kenzo        | Sakite  |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | : Kajiyama Toshimichi | Sakite  |

● (From right in fourth row)

- |                 |             |   |
|-----------------|-------------|---|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | : Kozu Haku | First inspector and judge for National Treasure |
|-----------------|-------------|---|

4<sup>th</sup> : Kurata Shichiro      First inspector, first manager and Naval Captain

(Photo in bottom row)

Yasuhiro is forging sword with Sakite of Umezawa Chikara (foreground) and Sakai Hiroshi (left) at the second workshop of the sword forging factory.

The photo was taken by an unknown cameraman and is owned by Miyaguchi Tsuneo.

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(Reprinting)

## **Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation**

**Kurata Shichiro**

Visiting the Yasukuni Shrine at Kudan in Tokyo, you find a new and dignified building, which looks like an old residence for samurai, situated between a sumo ring and a pond with a fountain. This building is the sword forging factory (or workshop) of the Nihonto Tanren Kai. Sitting on a chair by the pond and feeling a comfortable summer breezing, a subtle rhythm can be heard from a distance between trees. It is the sound of swordsmiths forging swords with all their heart and soul.

The sword forging factory of the Nihonto Tanren Kai has been under construction since the 25<sup>th</sup> of February this year. At last the building was completed and the opening ceremony was held at 11 o'clock on the morning on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July. The ceremony was attended by many dignitaries such as the Minister of War, the Education Superintendent of the War Ministry Hayashi, the Minister of Internal Affairs Yamamoto, the Minister of Justice Koyama, etc.. The purpose of the Nihonto Tanren Kai is explained below.

First of all, the main purpose of the organisation is explained. It is to produce really traditional Japanese swords and supplies them to officers of the Imperial Army and the Navy. If there is productivity in reserve, swords will be supplied to administration offices, shrines, temples, formal organisations as well as individuals people. Furthermore, it supports the lives of the swordsmiths and encourages the development of their skill, whilst also cultivating nation's heart to love the Japanese sword and enhance its fighting spirit.

Since the beginning of the last world war, many new weapons have been invented and the nation was carelessly inclined to think the Japanese sword had lost its practical meaning. However, we have come to realise the importance of the Japanese sword as a weapon yet again, through the experiences in the Manchurian Incident and the Shanghai Incident.

Considering of the present situation of the Japanese sword, the number of old swords is decreasing year after year and it is getting very difficult for the Imperial officers to obtain good gunto for themselves. They have to pay a lot of money even if they find a good sword and want to purchase it.

When the nation is in a state of emergency and servicemen are called up, it seems to be impossible to supply a large number of gunto in the short time needed. Thus we must prepare for the emergency and it is an urgent requirement to increase the stock of gunto.

Also considering of present situation of swordsmiths, they are forced to give up making sword because their financial situation does not allow to them to continue. They have been forced to make agricultural tools since the Haito-rei was issued and wearing swords was banned by the government in 1876. As a result, I regrettably say that there are less than ten swordsmiths who are practically engaging in sword making at present. If the present situation is left as it is, there is no doubt that the forging skills and technique of Japanese sword manufacture, which is a tradition that cannot be compared to that of any other country, as well as being a matter of national pride, will be lost in the near future.

Therefore the foundation (Nihonto Tanren Kai) bears a great responsibility to conserve the Japanese sword and its craftsmanship.

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Comprehensive support to swordsmiths will never be realised unless nation-wide interest in the Japanese sword is enhanced. In order to increase the interest in the Japanese sword, the most efficient way is to improve people's knowledge and educate their eyes to appreciate it. Therefore, the Foundation is planning to send the right men, selected from the members of the board of directors and the staff, and have them give lectures and contribute articles about the Japanese sword to various magazines.

The Nihonto Tanren Kai is funded with the Arts and Engineering Scholarship from the War Ministry and donations from the Harada Sekizen Kai Foundation and the Komine family of Omori in Tokyo. The fund is not yet enough to realise the above project.

In the meantime, the Foundation is under control of the Minister of War and the post of the chairman is customarily taken by the Deputy Minister of War. The present chairman of the foundation is Lieutenant General Yanagawa and the members of the board of directors are five directors of the Ministry of War, Lieutenant General Kashii, Lieutenant General Takahashi, the chief priest of the Yasukuni Shrine and the curator of the Yushukan Museum of the shrine, in addition to Vice-admiral Oyamada of the Imperial Household Agency, Rear Admiral Koizumi, Kozu Haku and Komatsu Kentaro, who are the judges of the Chuo Token Kai.

The following gentlemen have been nominated as advisers to the Foundation; Educational

superintendent of the War Ministry Hayashi, the Minister of Internal Affairs Yamamoto, the Minister of Navy Osumi, the Minister of Justice Koyama, Baron Tanaka Mitsuaki, the former Minister of the Imperial Household Ichiki, Professor Emeritus of the Imperial University D.Eng. Tawara and the chairman of Yasuki Steel Production Company D.Eng. Kudo. It can not be denied that swordsmiths have had an unfortunate custom in that they have been reluctant to innovate and improve their technique and simply tried to keep to their family traditions. The Foundation is trying to introduce modern technology and science in order to innovate and improve the technique of sword making, with the instruction of the directors and the advisers.

It is said by many people, that swordsmiths would be able to make fine swords if they used high-quality steel produced by modern technology. But sword making is not such a simple matter and they must use traditional Japanese steel produced in an ancient method, namely 'Tatara' (traditional smelting). It is very difficult to explain why they have to use the tradition steel, but the most important part of the reason is quoted from a theory of scholars. In tatara, charcoal is used and iron sand is smelted at a considerably lower temperature when compared to Western smelting. Therefore the extract contains extremely low oxygen and comes to have a very flexible nature. This is one of characteristics of the traditional steel of tamahagane and a reason that it is superior to Western steel as material for the Japanese sword. In checking silicon content of steel produced in the Western smelting, this contains ten times as much silicon as the tamahagane does. It is impossible to weld Western steel in forging and folding, which is the traditional way of Japanese sword making, since it contains too much silicon. Thus the Western sword is hammered and extended to the length of the sword, without forging and folding (orikaeshi-tanren) then tempered or quenched using Western steel. As a result, the sword made of the Western steel does not have beautiful and distinguished grain which is seen on the Japanese sword made in the traditional way, and the surface looks like mirror or glass. Also the diversified activities of hamon are never seen in a Western sword. The sword made of the Western steel is fragile and breakable, as it is not forged and folded, unlike the Japanese sword which is folded from fourteen to seventeen times. Only a few examples of the characteristics of the tamahagane are explained above.

(P.40)

Though the tatara was discontinued in the Taisho Era because of financial reasons, swordsmiths have already run out of tamahagane that is good enough to make Japanese swords. In addition, all of the craftsmen engaged in the tatara, are getting very old and it is a serious concern that the traditional tatara would be ceased forever unless it is resumed as soon as possible. This means that Japanese sword forging is becoming extinct and there would be no chance to restore once we lose the way of traditional smelting. Thus the Yasukuni Tanren Kai Foundation has decided to resume the

tatara and the factory is under construction and it is expected to be completed this autumn. We are then required to give thoughtful consideration and make every possible effort in order that swordsmiths are able to forge fine swords.

The Foundation is allowed to have five groups of engineers (swordsmiths) but it has only two groups of them at the moment. It is planned to increase the number of the engineers in the future and they are to be selected by ten judges, who inspect swordsmiths themselves and their works. The judges have no room to give consideration to politics, human relationships and reputation of the smiths in the selection. One of selected smiths is called Miyaguchi Shigeru and comes from Sugamo in Tokyo, thirty-seven years old and the third generation of the family as swordsmith. He learnt sword making from his father when he was very young, afterwards he apprenticed himself to Kasama Ikkansai Shigetsugu and then became a trainee of the Chuo Token Kai. He was engaged in sword making and carving on swords after he finished at the institute and went back home. His sugata looks like that of fine koto blades, the hamon is skilfully tempered and he is very good at horimono or carving. He used to be called 'Toshihiro' but was given the smith name of 'Yasuhiro' by the Minister of War at this time. The other smith is called Kajiyama Tokutaro and comes from Nikata Town of Kamo County in Hiroshima Prefecture. He is fifty-two years old. He is the second generation as swordsmith and learnt Bizen-den from his father, then became an apprentice to Yokoyama Sukeyoshi who calls himself the 58th generation descended from Bizen Tomonari. He has never given up studying sword making since then. This smith forges very strong jigane and a modest sword. He used to be called 'Ujimasa' but was given the smith name of 'Yasunori (Yasutoku)' by the Minister of War this time.

In olden times there were ingenious smiths and they demonstrated Yamashiro-den, Bizen-den, Soshu-den and Mino-den. One smith practised every tradition skilfully, but there appears to be no really magnificent swords made by this kind of multi-tradition skilled smiths. Almost all smiths admired by today's sword lovers as great master, maintained their own tradition throughout their lives and established their own workmanship within the school or family tradition.

I believe that in sword forging, a swordsmith must enhance and concentrate his spirit to his utmost ability, then his virtue makes it possible for him to forge fine swords which enlighten people and keeps evil away from the owner.

The Foundation has inspectors to inspect the swords and implements cutting test with them. After the inspection and the cutting test, the swords are set a price depending on their quality, after that they are to be sold by the Kaiko-sha Association to people who would wish to purchase. This is

naturally a non commercial activity.

The reason that chose the site of the Tanrenjo (sword forging factory) in the ground of the Yasukuni Shrine, is that swordsmiths make fine swords with the help of the divine will and it means they forge the "soul of warrior" in the front of the guardian god of the state. Therefore, we believe we have made the best choice.

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Finally there is one further thing to be mentioned. The Imperial Household has also encouraged the project and granted a monetary gift to the Foundation. All the directors of the Foundation could not stop crying when we heard about the donation from the Imperial Household and promised in the name of god, that we should do our best to accomplish the purpose of the Nihonto Tanren Kai.

In addition, although the Nihonto Tanren Kai and the Chuo Token Kai, are different organisations, there are many people who are the directors and staff of both organisations. Meanwhile, some trainees of the Chuo Token Kai as well as polishers, are also employed by the Nihonto Tanren Kai. It is, therefore, expected that the co-operation of these two organisations, which have a close relationship each with other and share a common purpose, will bring about a distinguished result.

The two organisations are managed independently, but the spirit of the project must be shared by them in order to realise the original purpose, especially full support from the members of the Chuo token Kai is indispensable.

(Reprinting from Token Kai Magazine No.388 October Issue 1933 published by the Chuo Token Kai)

Photo : In front of the sword forging centre of the Nihonto Tanren Kai  
(owned by Ms. Shimazaki Tomi)

(Front row from left)

Miyaguchi Yasuhiro (swordsmith)

Kajiyama Yasunori (swordsmith)

Komatsu Kentaro (director of the foundation)

Kurata Shichiro (manager of the foundation)

Ikedo Yasumitsu (swordsmith)

Kotani Yasunori (swordsmith)

**(Back row from left)**

**Shimazaki Yasuoki (swordsmith)**

**Abe Yasushige (swordsmith)**

**Kajiyama Yasutoshi (swordsmith)**

**Murakami Yasunobu (swordsmith)**

**Ajiki Yasuyoshi (swordsmith)**



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## Characteristics of Yasukuni-to

### Workmanship

The smiths of the Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation consist of the Miyaguchi Yasuhiro group of the Kasama Ikkansai Shigetsugu school, the Kajiya Yasunori group of the Yokoyama Sukeyoshi school and the Ikeda Yasumitsu group of the Suishinshi Masahide school. Yasukuni smiths aimed at the workmanship of Nagamitsu and Kagemitsu of the Osafune school in Bizen Province, this means that their swords have hamon based on sugu-ha, around 66.7 cm. in length, about 1.7 cm. in sori and a sugata with relatively narrow width and a small kissaki which looks like a sue-koto blade.

Nakago is finished with kiri-yasuri. The Yasuhiro and Yasunori groups make kuri-jiri tip and the Yasumitsu group makes iri-yamagata tip.

Yasunori changed the form of his nakago to kiji-momo after his student was given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasunori' ('Nori' is a different character from that of his teacher) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1935 in order to differentiate it from that of his student.

(Photos)

Left : Kiji-momo nakago

Yasumitsu is a grandson of Ikeda Ryuken Isshu related to the Suishinshi school and good at every tradition of sword forging. His speciality is sugu-ha with ko-ashi and nezumi-ashi (very tiny ash). It is rare to see his hamon consisting of nie. He skilfully tempers hamon in nioi-deki, accompanied by a little even nie.

Boshi is sugu then turns back in ko (small)-maru or chu (middle size)-maru. Slight irregular pattern or midare-komi is occasionally seen among the works of the Yasunori group.

The Yasunori group formerly tempered with a narrow hamon at the yokote line, although it was altered to a hamon with proportionate width, following the lead of Manager Kurata Shichiro . (Refer to the illustrations)

(Illustrations)

Two different hamon in the kissaki area

Thus, the swordsmiths from different schools aimed at the workmanship of Nagamitsu and Kagemitsu of Bizen Province in the Kamakura Period under the same circumstances. They frequently had technical exchanges and established a high-level sword forging method, under the direction of a judge for National Treasures, Kozu Haku, Oyamada Shigezo who was in charge of swords for the Imperial Household Ministry, a judge of the Chuo Token Kai Yamaoka Juko and Kurata Shichiro.

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## **Forging**

### **Kawagane (Jacket steel) Making**

Yasukuni smiths basically used only tamahagane in sword forging, but Yasuhiro occasionally used oroshigane (self-made material). They did not practice age-gitae (finish forging) and shita-gitae (foundation forging) separately in order to increase the quantity of the production, therefore they made kawagane by forging and folding about fifteen times in jumonji (criss-cross)-gitae. The Yasunori group appears to have forged swords in konoha (leaves)-gitae but it is not known how many swords were made by that forging method. They occasionally folded twenty times in the early days, but seems to have basically folded fifteen times in forging and thirteen times or less than that, in the later days.

### **Shingane (Core steel) Making**

Shingane must be soft and contains less carbon compared to kawagane, so that the mixture of one third hocho-tesu (iron material for kitchen knife) and two thirds of the third grade (low quality and less carbon-contained) tamahagane (which is not suitable for kawagane) is folded from six to ten times in jumonji-gitae, in order to make shingane.

### **Tsukuri-komi (Forming the steel stock)**

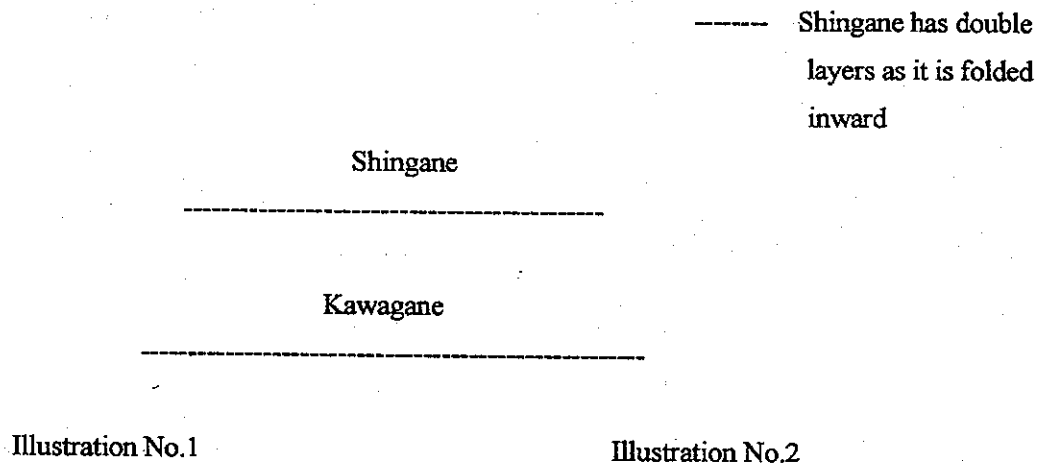
Makuri-zukuri (Illustration No.2), putting shingane on the kawagane and being folded and wrapped the shingane with the kawagane, was mainly employed by them since it was believe to be practical and to suit mass production. Kobuse-zukuri (Illustration No.2) was not popular since it requires more time.

### Yakiba-tsuchi (Clay mixture for quenching)

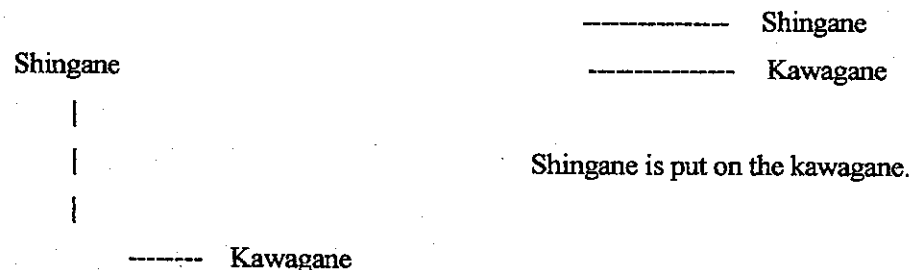
All of the Yasukuni smiths came to use yakiba-tsuchi consisting of 1 part ara-to (grinding stone used in rough polishing), 1 part charcoal powder and 1 part clay from Kannonji Village of Akumi County since Yasumitsu entered the Yasukuni Tanren Kai. They seems to have changed the composition of the yakiba-tsuchi depending on the workmanship.

There is a record on the Yasunori's sword original register of August 1933 that he used a clay mixture consisting of 2 parts clay from Inariyama of Kyoto, 1 part charcoal and 1 part ara-to grains. It seems that he brought in the yakiba-tsuchi from his workshop in Hiroshima.

#### ● Section of the Japanese sword



#### ● Illustrations in cubic effect



Kawagane is wrapped with the shigane.

### Yakiire (Quenching)

Blade is heated up to red at 800 C. degrees then it is soaked in water of around 30 C. degrees at a breath and cooled down. Setting the water temperature relatively high is a countermeasure to prevent the edge from creating ha-gire (vertical crack in the fine edge).

### **Mei (Signature)**

In principle, Yasukuni smiths signed their mei with two characters above mekugi-ana and a date, which is completed with '-Kichi Jitsu (Lucky day)' in tachi-mei for katana and in katana-mei for tanto, except in special cases such as 'Onkashi-to' (swords presented by the emperor).

Sword used as Onkashi-to, were allowed to be signed beneath mekugi-ana, such as "YASU ..... KINSAKU" on the omote (front) only after it was polished and passed inspection. The date, for example, "SHOWA ..... NEN ..... GATSU KICHI JITSU" was signed on the ura (back) in the usual manner.

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(Photo)

Yasuoki Seisaku-to Mokuroku (Swordmaking record of Yasuoki)

### **Mei-kiri (Chiselling signature)**

Yasukuni smiths chiselled their signatures on their own works (jishin-saku) by themselves, but it depends when sword was made by their sakite (so-called 'Dai-saku').

Referring to a record called 'Yasuoki Seisaku-to Mokuroku' by Yasuoki of 1940, he employed different styles of 'En' and 'Tsuki' (parts of kanji) as shown in the illustrations No.1 and No.2 in order to differentiate his own works from dai-saku by his sakite (assistants).

He also changed two parts of 'Oki' from the 181st sword made since early September 1941, as shown in the middle of the illustration No.3 and changed the kanji 'Oki' again from the 377<sup>th</sup> sword since early October of 1942, as shown in the bottom of the illustration No.3.

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From October of 1944 he changed the left part of the kanji (Chinese character) of 'Yasu' as shown in the illustration No.4, from the swords which passed the inspection and was set price at 180 yen. Also he additionally explains the change of 'Oki' for his jishin-saku in the record (Illustration No.5). He had made kiji-mono nakago, but not so emphasised, until the 349<sup>th</sup> sword of early August of 1942, though the shape of the nakago was discontinued since then and he changed the yasuri-me of the nakago's mune, as shown in the illustration of the Page 22.

Yasuoki entered the Imperial Army and had received a military education from the 15<sup>th</sup> of April to the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 1942. Then his senior student Yasunori signed Yasuoki's mei, on his forty-five swords and added his family name 'Kotani' as well during his absence.

Thus, the style of their mei often changed depending on jishin-saku, dai-saku, forging method, workmanship and price, but there are few reliable records written by the swordsmiths themselves and notice must be taken of the research of their mei and kantei of Yasukuni-to.

(Photos)  
Dai-saku (front)

(Illustrations)  
No.1  
No.4  
No.3

(Photos)  
Jishin-saku (front)

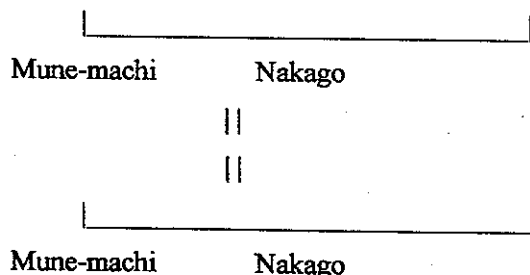
No.5

Dai-saku (back)

No.2

Jishin-saku (back)

\* Date is not always  
chiselled in this way.



(Mune-yasuri was altered like this)

(P.46)

(From right in the top)

Katana Mei : "YASUHIRO"

"SHOWA 11 NEN 6 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of June 1936)

Katana Mei : "YASUNORI"

"SHOWA 9 NEN 2 GATSU KICHI JITSU KUWANA SHOJI" (A lucky day of February 1934, owned by Kuwana)

(From right in the bottom)

Katana Mei : "YASUNORI"

"SHOWA 9 NEN 5 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of May 1934)

Katana Mei : "TAKENORI YASUNORI KAIMU YOKA OITE SHITAKU TSUKURU KORE KYUKOKU BETSUMEI"

(Yasunori, Yasunori made this sword and signed a different smith name at the workshop of my house when I was off duty)

"SHOWA 14 NEN 4 GATSU KICHI JITSU TAME KINEN SEITAN OKURU KURATA SHICHIRO SHI"

(A lucky day of April 1939, I elaborately made this sword in order to present to Mr. Kurata Shichiro)

(P.47)

(From right in the top)

Katana Mei : "YASUMITSU"

"SHOWA 12 NEN 1 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of January 1937)

Katana Mei : "HOKEN ATSUTA JINGU OMAE RIKUGUN DAIJIN TOJO HIDEKI"

(War Minister Tojo Hideki dedicates this sword to the Atsuta Shrine)

"SHOWA 16 NEN 1 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of January 1941)

(From right in to bottom)

Katana Mei : "YASUNORI"

"SHOWA 14 NEN 9 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of September 1939)

Katana Mei : "YASUNORI SAKU OZU MOTOMENI MOTTE YAKUMO TANREN KORE"

(I forged this sword in yakumo-gitae by the request)

"SHOWA 17 NEN 7 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of July 1942)

(P.48)

(From right in the top)

Katana Mei : "TAKEYASU SHOWA 17 NEN 10 GATSU KICHI JITSU"

(Takeyasu, a lucky day of October 1942)

"OZU MOTOMENI KUSAKA TEITOKU" (Made for Admiral Kusaka)

Katana Mei : "YASUTOSHI"

"SHOWA 15 NEN 9 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of September 1940)

(From right in the bottom)

Katana Mei : "KOTANI TAKEYASU SAKU KIGEN 2600 NEN 10 GATSU KICHI JITSU"

(Kotani Takeyasu made this sword, a lucky day of October in the 2600<sup>th</sup> Imperial year)

"HOMEI TO" (Rewarding sword)

Katana Mei : "YASUNOBU"

"SHOWA 13 NEN 2 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of February 1938)

(P.49)

(From right in the top)

Katana Mei : "YASUNOBU"

"SHOWA 15 NEN 10 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (a lucky day of October 1940)

Katana Mei : "YASUNOBU KINSAKU" (Yasunobu elaborately made this sword)

"SHOWA 18 NEN 8 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (a lucky day of August 1943)

There is a horimono of "YASUKUNI" on the omote.

(From right in the bottom)

Katana Mei : "YASUNOBU KINSAKU" (Yasunobu elaborately made this sword)

"SHOWA 18 NEN 6 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of June 1943)

Katana Mei : "YASUSHIGE"

"SHOWA 15 NEN 3 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of March 1940)



(P.50)

(From right in the top)

Katana Mei : "YASUSHIGE"

"SHOWA 15 NEN 8 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of August 1940)

Katana Mei : "YASUYOSHI"

"SHOWA 16 NEN 12 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of December 1941)

(From right in the bottom)

Katana Mei : "YASUSHIGE"

"SHOWA 15 NEN 10 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (a lucky7 day of October 1940)

Katana Mei : "YASUYOSHI"

"SHOWA 17 NEN 1 GATSU KICHI JITSU" (A lucky day of January 1942)

(P.51)

### **Onkashi-to and Hokan-to (Imperial Gift Sword and Custody Sword)**

Sword given as gifts by the emperor to graduates who attained distinguished grades at the Imperial Army and Navy Staff Colleges, were called 'Onkashi-to'. Katana (long sword) were given to the graduates of the Imperial Army Staff College and tanto to the graduates of the Imperial Navy Staff College.

The Onkashi-to had to satisfy the following restrictions in details; the dimensions of the katana is about 66.7 cm. in length, about 1.8 cm. curvature, about 2.9 cm. width in the bottom, 17.6 cm. long nakago and the weight is approximately 637.5 g.. Meanwhile, the dimension of the tanto is about 22.7 cm. in length, no curvature, 2.3 cm. width in the bottom, 9.1 cm. long nakago.

The katana and the tanto were fixed in the mountings, which were made beforehand after the polishing ground work was done. Then mekugi-ana (peg hole) were made on the nakago and the swords were then finished. The swords were formally recognised as Onkashi-to for the first time when they passed the inspection and the swordsmiths were eventually allowed to sign their smith names with two characters and 'KINSAKU (Elaborately made)' beneath the mekugi-ana.

Nihonto Tanren Kai were manufacturing katana for the Imperial Army Staff College but also manufactured tanto for the Imperial Navy Staff College from 1941. This was because Horii Toshihide, who was an appointed smith to the college, had become too ill and found it impossible to engage in sword making.

It was a great honour for Yasukuni smiths that their jishin-saku was recognised as Onkashi-to and Hokan-to, which were of exceptional quality and kept in the Foundation for years.

### **Tameshi-giri (Cutting test)**

A certain number of swords were gathered together, on which the ground work polishing had been already done, and cutting test were practised with three out of ten of them. The cutting test was done in 'Suemono-giri' style. This is where a thumb-thick bamboo tree, is wrapped up with tatami mat or straw and soaked in a pond over night. On the next day, two bundled bamboo trees were put on a stand and the cutting tester swung the blade downward and cut them. Also the cutting tester cut a few parts of double-layered iron plates with 3 mm. thick and 9 mm. width each, using a blade which is due to be disposed of. The sharpness of the Yasukuni-to was reported to the Nihonto Tanren Kai by the military authorities. The Foundation made every effort to manufacture better quality gunto, taking into account the information gleaned in actual fighting.

There is an interesting report from the military authorities. They asked the Foundation to reduce the weight of the currently produced Yasukuni-to, as they realised it became a rather heavy burden for soldiers on a long march.

(Photos in top row)

- Right : Sword by Yasunori (Refer to page 54)
- Left : Sword by Yasushige (Refer to page 57)

(Photo in bottom row)

Demonstration of cutting test by Osaki Shigeharu (Sakite) at Fuigo-matsuri (Festival of swordsmiths), Yasunori is on the right.

From left in the back row : Sato Kiyoshi (saya maker), Yasuoki, Shinomura Yasutaro.

The Photo was taken by unknown cameraman on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1940 and is owned by Kotani

Kenzo.

(P.52)

## Sword Polishers

The 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the board of directors, held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1937, decided that the Foundation had sword polishers and added sword polisher in Article 1, 2, 4 and 6 of 'Chapter 1 General Rules' and Clause 1 of Article 8 of 'Chapter 2 Employment and Discharge' of Regulation of Sword Engineers. Early in 1937, Ozaki Seiko, who was a student of a sword polishing contractor with the Foundation Hirashima Shimazo was employed as sword polisher. He started working at the first workshop for sword forging, but entered the military on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August of the following year.

In early 1939, a new two-story building was constructed in the western part of the sword forging factory. The building had stores for tamahagane and charcoal on the ground floor and sword-polishing and saya-making rooms on the first floor.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April in the same year, Takayama Tatsumi entered the foundation as sword-polishing trainee, as well as his students, Matsubara Toshio, Tabata Kenzo (a younger brother of Shinohara Yasutaro who entered in 1934) and Ito Masakatsu, and they resumed polishing there. Takayama Tatsumi trained about ten sword polishers up to the end of the war.

Saya-maker, Sato Kiyoshi entered the foundation in June 1939 and had provided all the Yasukuni-to with shirasaya. (The Foundation had had no other saya maker.)

A member of the Chuo Token Kai, Yamada Ei, who was a non-regular sword polisher for the organisation, also entered the Foundation in 1944.

## Inspection

The Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation had the inspectors and held sword inspection twice a month. On the inspection day, the manager wrote down necessary items of each sword on the sword original register and handed it over to the inspectors. Swords for the inspection were classified into Ko, Otsu, Hei and disqualification, the transfer prices were set and recorded on the sword original register then the judges sealed on it. The managing director submitted it to the chairman.

With preparing the sword original register, the quality control of Yasukuni-to was implemented not only by swordsmiths but also by sword researchers and scientists, and detailed technical instructions

were given to the swordsmiths in order to realise a steady supply of high quality gunto.

All the inspectors consisted of the members of the Chuo Token Kai like Kozu Haku who was a judge for the designation of National Treasure. The Chuo Token Kai, which aimed at the research and the conservation of the Japanese sword, had their head office in the Yushukan Museum of the Yasukuni Shrine. The organisation engaged in instructing kantei or sword attribution, promoting craftsmanship of Japanese swords and publishing books. As the curator of the Yushukan Museum, Matsuda Tsuneta served concurrently as a director of the Nihonto Tanren Kai and the vice-chairman of the Chuo Token Kai. The swordsmiths of the Nihonto Tanren Kai attended the monthly meetings of the Chuo Token Kai. They were able to appreciate many fine swords and were given guidance there. It is clear that the two organisations had a close relationship.

(Upper row)

- Sword original register of Kotani Yasunori made in August 1933 / Sword original register of Osaki Yasuoki made in August 1942

The table shows the comparison of the weights of kawagane (jacket steel) and shingane (core steel), the weight after Kaji-oshi (rough polish by smith) and the weight after polish per sword, the swords are by Yasunori and Yasuoki. The figures of A show percentages of the weights of the swords after polish to the weights of the material.

The figures prove that five times as much weight is needed of the original material when compared to a completed sword.

	Kawagan e	Shingan e	Weight after Kaji- oshi	Weight after polish	A
Form 1: Yasunori	3,187 g	750 g	795.0 g	761.3 g	19.33 %
Yasuoki	3,375 g	300 g	712.5 g	645.0 g	17.55 %

(P.53)

(Samples of sword original register)

(P.54)

(Samples of sword account book)

(P.55)

## Change of the Number of Swords Produced

The main purpose of the Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation was to make sure that there was sufficient stock of gunto, in preparation for a state emergency. There was no compulsory instruction of the production number from the military authorities. Though Yasukuni smiths engaged in sword forging with maximum effort, in order to attain their maximum number of the swords produced and each swordsmith competed to improve their production ability. They employed a sword forging method called 'Makuri-gitae' which is a relatively less time-consuming method and favoured tempering sugu-ha. This method seemed to meet the situation and suit the forging practical swords, such as gunto.

They appear to have been too busy forging as many swords as possible to study and research other workmanship.

The Foundation manufactured 8,100 swords in the twelve years from the opening of the sword forging factory on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933, to the end of the Pacific War on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.

As shown in the graphic chart, each smith produced about ten swords per month around 1935 and succeeded in increasing the monthly number up to fifteen swords around 1940. Supplying for the Pacific War, which started on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1941, some of them surprisingly produced twenty swords per month in 1942 and the production number reached a peak in that year. It is speculated that the number was achieved by a team consisting of a swordsmith, two sakite (assistants) and a charcoal cutter, using no electric machine. The number of twenty swords per month is probably about the maximum productivity when employing the traditional method of sword forging.

As the war was growing in intensity and the war situation was taking a turn for worse, the production number went into decline as skilled sakite entered military service one after another, from the end of 1943. Only seven swordsmiths and four sakite were working at the factory in 1945 and it is supposed that the circumstances hardly allowed them to engage in sword forging.

In addition, Yasunori, Yasuoki, Yasuaki and Onuki Hisashi moved to Zentsuji Town in Kagawa Prefecture on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1945, in order to set up a branch factory there.

A dotted line in the graphic chart shows estimated figures for 1944 and 1945, since the precise number of the swords produced in that time, has not been confirmed.

● Graphic chart of the change of monthly sword production

				Start of Pacific War (8/12/1941)	End of Pacific War (15/8/1945)
20					
18				(16-19	swords)
16					
14			(14 - 15	swords)	
12					
10		(around 10	swords)		
8	(8 - 10	swords)			
6					
4					
2					
(number)	1933	1935	1940	1942	1945

(P.56)

## Forging Centre of Nihonto TanrenKai

**Kishida Tatsuo**

**(Architect)**

Each building of the forging centre and the charcoal store of Yasukuni Tanren Kai was built by a building contractor called Fujiki Komuten in the western part of the ground of the Yasukuni Shrine and it was located between a sumo hall and a tea house. Under the instruction of Miyaguchi Yasuhiro, Naito Taro and Yanai Heihachi, who were engineers of the building section of the War Ministry, designed the buildings. The ceremony of laying the cornerstone commenced on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1933 and the buildings were completed on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 1933. The opening ceremony was performed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933.

The forging centre was built of wood and reinforced-concrete in part. Entrance, office and guest room were built of wood, and workshops, lounge and ablution room were built of reinforced-concrete.

The forging centre had five workshops and it seems that they were built of reinforced-concrete as fire and water were used there.

The exterior of the building is in traditional Japanese style and looked refined. Square and round windows in the walls remind one of 'Sukiya-zukuri' (a form of traditional Japanese house accomplished in the Muromachi Period) style.

The original charcoal store built in the western part of the shrine was demolished in 1938 and a new charcoal store with two stories were built early 1939. The ground floor was a storage for charcoal and tamahagane and the first floor was allocated for sword polishers and saya makers, as their workshops.

Also a passageway, between a bathroom and a workshop of sword polishers, was made and the ablution room inside the forging centre was demolished in the same year.

The forging centre was remained with the name of 'Seisen-so' since 1945, but inside the building was repaired and refurbished in 1987 and the name was changed to 'Gyoun-tei' and is still used as



tea house (as of November 1994).

A theme of 'Which style of architecture should Japan adopt for the future?' was ardently debated at the end of the Meiji Era. As a result, buildings in traditional Japanese style started to be built of reinforced-concrete. After that, a combination of a traditional roof style and buildings in Western style, became fashionable, the examples are seen in the Kanagawa Prefectural Office built in 1928, the Yushukan Museum of the Yasukuni Shrine built in 1931, the Hall of Servicemen built in 1934 and the Tokyo Imperial Museum built in 1937.

On the other hand, there were a considerable number of architects who tried to reconsider the spiritual background of traditional Japanese architecture, apart from its formality. Then we came to see architecture with the spirit which showed traditional sukiya-zukuri style among residential buildings, and a theme of 'Traditional Japanese Objects' started to be debated widely. The building of the forging centre, is placed in the mainstream of this theme.

The illustrations on pages 42 and 43, are the reconstruction of the forging centre. They were reconstructed in reference to memories of the persons concerned, documents kept in the Yasukuni Shrine, September Issue 1933 of a magazine issued by the Japan Architecture Association and photos of the forging centre.

The dimensions of the workshop for polishing and the bathroom are not given as no precise figures are left, but it is estimated that there is little difference between the sizes of the reconstruction and the original ones.

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### Design of the Newly-built forging Centre

1. A building of Sword Forging Centre : 37.63 meters in length, 290.81 square meters  
and 8.75 meters interval of beam.

(One-storied building of reinforced-concrete with copper-plated roof in ichimonji style and scrapped-finish wall.)

	Ceiling	Wall	Floor	Windows	Others
Entrance	Plaster	Plaster	Slabs		
Hall	Plaster	Plaster	Patterned board	Panelled, glass and paper	

Office	Plaster	Plaster	Patterned board	Panelled, glass and paper	
Guest room	Plaster	Plaster	Patterned board	Panelled, glass and paper	
Workshop	Asbestos	Asbestos Mortar	Dirt	Panelled, glass and paper with wooden doors	Furnace and bellows
Lounge	Saobuchi Finnish	Plaster	Tatami mats	Glass and paper	Dressing shelves
Bathroom	Plaster	Artificial slabs	Artificial slabs	Wooden doors Glass and paper	Bath tab and other fixtures
Lavatory	Plaster	Plaster Artificial slabs	Artificial slabs	Panelled, glass and paper	Toilet seat, drain ventilation, washstand and water tank

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR BUILDING THE FORGING CENTRE

### Income

1. 29,000 yen      Budget for the construction of the forging centre

### Expenditures

1. 21,600 yen      Expenses for the construction of the forging centre.  
Contractor Fujiki Komuten.
2. 2,648.31 yen      Expenses for appurtenant work.  
Partial remodelling.  
Trees, lavatory, telegraph poles paper reading room and removal.
3. 2,948.32 yen      Expenses for the equipment of office and workshops.
4. 250 yen      Expenses for office work of the construction.  
Remuneration for architects.
5. 1,204.90 yen      Miscellaneous expenses.  
Ceremony to celebrate the completion.  
Gift of tanto.  
Remuneration for the ceremony masters.  
Photos and picture cards.  
Compensation for one's forced removal.

Total amount : 28,660.51 yen

Balance : 318.49 yen

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(Illustration in the top)

- Design of east side

(Illustration in the middle)

- Design of north side

(Illustration in the bottom)

- Design of South side

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(Illustration in the top)

- Design of the first floor

Saya-making room	1. Polishing stage	2. Polishing bucket
Dressing room	3. Sword stand	4. Drain
Closet	5. Shinto alter	6. Blackboard & clock
	7. Dinning table	8. Cupboard
Polishing room	9. Charcoal brazier	10. Tatami matted space

- Design of the ground floor

	Ablution room	Lavatory	Living room	Entrance
Tamahagane storage	Passageway	5 <sup>th</sup> workshop	4 <sup>th</sup> workshop	3 <sup>rd</sup> workshop
			2 <sup>nd</sup> workshop	1 <sup>st</sup> workshop
	Bathroom		Lounge (Sword display shelf)	
Charcoal storage			Guest room	Office

- Design of workshop for a swordsmith

1. Sitting position	2. Anvil	3. Water tab for quenching
4. Mud bucket	5. Furnace	6. Bellows
7. Shinto Alter	8. Water bucket for polishing	9. Tap and sink
10. Working table	11. Dress hanger	

## Look to Restoration of Tatara

In order to produce a large number of gunto in accordance with Article 2 and 3 of Chapter 2 Purpose and Activities, it was soon to be necessary to secure the raw material. In February 1933 Kurata Shichiro, who was the manager of the Foundation, started investigating the present situation of tatara, the area of Izumo and Hoki Provinces (Shimane and Tottori Prefectures) where tatara had been in operation until around 1924 and 1925, and how much tamahagane was in stock. He then reported the result of the investigation, entitled, 'The present situation of tamahagane and tatara' to the board of directors on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1934.

### The Present Situation of Tamahagane and Tatara

11<sup>th</sup> March 1933

Manager of the Nihonto Tanren Kai

Kurata Shichiro

#### 1. Tamahagane

High quality tamahagane has been sold out, but the one under four-grade is still in stock. It is said that 2,000 kg. of four-grade tamahagane is held by the Matsuura Yataro Shop, besides the 1,200 kg. which was purchased by the Foundation on this occasion. Apart from this tamahagane, a landlord of Yoshida Town of Iishi County in Shimane Prefecture, Tabe Choemon holds 110 tons of low quality tamahagane in his store, located in Matsue City. This tamahagane seems to be a quite big lump and it appears that one third of four-grade tamahagane would be obtained when it is broken into small pieces and concentrated. (Mr. Tabe speculates that one third of four-grade tamahagane could be obtained and Mr. Matsuura that one tenth of that could be obtained.) There seems to be no tamahagane left in Izumo and Hoki Provinces apart from the ones mentioned above.

#### 2. Tatara

There are two different kinds of tatara which had been operated since ancient times. One is called 'No-datara' or field tatara, which was operated in the short term in various places, but it is difficult to find the ruins today. The other one has a semi-permanent equipment and famous tatara factories are listed below.

	Location	Owner	Present situation
A	Inga-mura, hino-gun, Hoki Province	Kondo Juichiro	Foundation and factory buildings of tatara and barracks for workers remain.
B	Abire-mura, Hino-gun, Hoki Province	a Kinoshita	Nothing left.
C	Torigami-mura, nita-gun, Izumo Pro.	a Bokura	Nothing left.
D	Yokota-mura, Nita-gun, Izumo Pro.	a Sakurai	Nothing left.
E	Minari-mura, Nita-gun, Izumo Pro.	Itohara Taketaro	Nothing left.
F	Sugaya, Yoshida-mura, Iishi-gun, Izumo Province	Tabo Choemon	Factory buildings of tatara and barracks for workers remain.
J	Daikichi, Mizawa-mura, Nita-gun, Izumo Province	Tabo Choemon	(the same as the above)
H	Fube-mura, Nogi-gun, Izumo Province	Iejima Mamao	(the same as the above)

It is said that all of the tatara factories were closed by the end of 1925.

My view of the restoration of tatara:

1. It is urgently needed to restore tatara operation.
2. Two plans to restore the tatara operation.

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- a. Tabo Choemon runs the tatara operation.
- b. The Yasuki Steel Production Company runs the tatara operation.

### 3. Reason

#### a. Present situation of tamahagane

As the present situation of tamahagane was mentioned above, it is doubtful that the four-grade tamahagane is good enough to produce fine swords. Even if it is appropriate as material, the stock is scarce and will be run out in several years. Thus the fact speaks for itself that tatara operation must be restored sooner or later.

#### b. Technical knowledge of tatara

Technical knowledge has been instructed orally by 'Murage' who is a man in charge of tatara operation and there are no documents of the technical knowledge, therefore, it could be lost if the murage disappears. There are only a few murage alive and they are from 65 to 75 years old. It seems to be impossible for some of them to resume their jobs, as they are suffering from paralysis.

#### c. Customary right to gather iron sand

Iron sand is gathered from river beds in spring and summer time and this is called 'Kawa-satetsu' (river iron-sand). It is gathered from mountain sand in autumn and winter time and

this is called 'Yama-satetsu' (mountain iron-sand). In gathering river iron-sand, various problems are caused, such as polluting the river and raising the river bed with earth and sand and the problems used to considerably affect the lives of the habitants in the area. However, no serious claim or accusation has been made by them for several centuries, since there was a kind of customary compromise. But it has been reported that there are protests against gathering iron sand after the Torigame Branch Factory of the Yasuki Steel Production Company resumed the operation. Thus I believe that the customary right of gathering iron sand must be established as soon as possible.

- d. Comparison between the first and the second plans of tatara restoration

#### **Merit of The First Plan**

A round of tatara operation (One round is completed with smelting through three days and nights) needs from 1.4 to 1.6 tons of charcoal. Apart from the mountains owned by the Tabe family, almost all trees of the mountains in the area have been cut and it becomes very difficult for the Torigami Branch Factory of the Yasuki Steel Production Company, to obtain charcoal. The Tabe family has no problem, however, in supplying charcoal, as they own vast areas of mountains and forests.

Also they do not need to worry about the problems caused from gathering iron sand since all works needed in tatara operation are able to be done in their territory.

Craftsmen who used to work at the tatara factory of the Tabe family, changed their job and became charcoal burners after the factory was closed, but the family had them engage in tatara operation for a short time every year. The family is able to use the craftsmen freely, as they are still employed by the family.

As the Tabe family is enormously rich and proud of engaging in the national project, the Foundation will be able to buy the tamahagane produced in their factory at a low price and it may be possible for them to run the factory for a long time, because of their wealth.

The cost for resuming the tatara operation in the first stage is to be relatively low if existing old equipment of the factory can be used and we will see few problems in resuming the tatara operation swiftly at the moment.

#### **Demerit of the First Plan**

This is a kind of national project, but the Tabe family has nothing to do with the Imperial Army and Navy. It is almost impossible to buy up the tamahagane from the family at a considerably profitable price for them.

In the tatara operation, only one-seventh of the tamahagane produced, is available sword forging material. The rest of the tamahagane has to be sold at a low price as the material of Western style steel production. But this problem is to be sorted out if the Yasuki Steel Production Company contracts to buy up the rest of the tamahagane, which is not used for sword forging at a rational price.

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### **Merit and Demerit of The Second Plan**

In this plan, its merit and demerit are the other way round.

#### **4. Reference date**

- a. It would cost approximately ten thousand yen to construct a new tatara factory and it includes a main building for tatara operation and three different-size barracks, but a barrack which accommodates craftsmen is not included. The cost to restore the tatara operation of the Tabe family is calculated at about twenty thousand yen, though a minute investigation is needed before it is concluded.
- b. A furnace, which is 3 m. in length and 1.5 m. in height is used and it is expected to produce 1.5 tons of tamahagane and 2 tons of pig iron in a round of the tatara operation. 0.5 ton of tamahagane, which can be used as material of the Japanese sword, could be obtained. Four times as much iron sand as products produced, is said to be needed four times.
- d. It is reported that a round of the tatara operation costs about a thousand yen.
- e. About a ton of tamahagane and 800 kg. of hocho-tetsu (malleable iron) are needed in a year, when the Foundation has two swordsmiths, and about 2.5 tons of tamahagane and 1.9 tons of hocho-tetsu are needed for five swordsmiths. Therefore two rounds of the tatara operation could be enough to supply tamahagane to two swordsmiths and five rounds of the operation to five swordsmiths. Eventually four days are needed to complete a round of tatara operation, three days for smelting and one day for destroying an old tatara furnace and reconstructing a new one.

**Note**

The Nihonto Tanrei Kai (A) and the Yauski Steel Production Company (B) have a contract as follows.

1. A has B select a site to construct tatara factory and A rents the land for B.
2. The cost for constructing the tatara factory is borne by A and the construction is undertaken by B. All the expenses for the construction of the first tatara factory and the maintenance is paid by A and the factory is leased to B free of charge, as long as it is in operation. B takes charge of all facilities of the factory.
3. B produces tamahagane in accordance with the above clause and supplies it to A as requested by A.
4. The tatara factory is directly run by B and high quality iron sand like 'Ushi-no-kubi' must be used. B must make utmost effort to produce high quality tamahagane in every round of the operation.
5. A rational and reasonable price is to be set on the tamahagane produced by B. The price is discussed and fixed by A and B by the middle of every February.
6. B is not allowed to sell the tamahagane without A's approval. According to the above clauses, B must supply the first tamahagane produced in the factory until April 1934 and continue to supply A after that.

21<sup>st</sup> July 1933

The Chairman of the Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation

Yanagawa Heisuke

The Chairman of the Yasuki Steel Production Company

Kudo Haruto

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The report says that there is no good quality tamahagane in stock today and only fourth-grade tamahagane seems to remain. The method and technique of tatara operation has been passed on by murage (tatara master who presides over tatara operation) by oral instruction and several murage are still alive, but they are very old and some of them are suffering from paralysis. There are two ways of gathering iron sand, one is to gather iron sand which is accumulated on river and sea beds and another one (so-called 'Kanna-nagashi-ho) is to gather iron sand from earth and sand of mountain in the flowing water, during the off-season for farmers. Gathering iron sand, which pollutes the river and lifts the river bed, has damaged agricultural products for several hundreds of years. Inhabitants



in the area have customarily tolerated the damage for years, but Kurata Shichiro is concerned that the delay of resuming the tatara operation, would give the residents time to recall their past bitter experiences caused with the operation, and reconsider of their customary tolerance. Therefore he insists to resume the tatara operation without delay. In order to resume the operation, two options of contracting with Tabe Choemon and the Yasuki Steel Production Company were considered in taking into account the productivity and the conditions of the operation site. Finally the Foundation made a decision to contract with the Yasuki Steel Production Company [Location : Oaza Ohro, Torigami-mura (present Yokota-cho), Nita-gun, Shimane-ken] as the company was expected to produce better quality tamahagane.

The chairman of the Yasuki Steel Production Company, D. Eng. Kudo Haruto is a councillor of the Chuo Token Kai (an influential sword society) and familiar with the Japanese sword also had a close relation with the military authorities through the sword society. Kurata Shichiro was considering introducing the production of tamahagane and sword forging to modern science, by the help of Kudo Haruto. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1933, a note with six clauses was concluded between the chairman of Nihonto Tanren Kai, Yanagawa Heisuke and Kudo Haruto. The construction of the tatara factory was started at the end of July. Yasukuni Tatara Factory was completed and the opening ceremony went off on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 1933.

(Photo in the top)

The building in the centre bottom is the tatara site of Takadono type. Yasukuni tamahagane was produced here.

The photo was taken around 1955 and provided by YSS Torigami Mokutan Sen Factory Ltd.

(Photo in the middle)

Iron sand was gathered in river and sea in the farming season in order to avoid damaging agricultural products.

The photo was taken around 1932 and provided by Hitachi Kinzoku Company

(Photo in the bottom)

Mountain iron sand was gathered in the way of 'Kanna-nagashi' during the off-season for farmers.

The photo was taken around 1932 and provided by Hitachi Kinzoku Company.

## Operation of Yasukuni Tatara

The staffs of the Yasukuni Tatara Operation comprised of two murage (tatara master), two sumi-taki (man putting charcoal in the furnace) and two komawari (general labours) in addition to three carriers. The first Yasukuni Tatara Operation was completed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 1933 and had been operated 118 times. It produced as much as 50,710 kg of tamahagane in eleven years.

The seventh meeting of the board of directors, held in March 1934, decided to give names to the tamahagane produced in the Yasukuni Tatara, such as 'Tsuru or Crane (First-grade)', 'Matsu or Pine (Second-grade)', 'Take or Bamboo (Third-grade)' and 'Ume or Plum (Fourth-grade)' depending on the quality

In February 1934, the estimation of the output of the Yasukuni Tatara manufacture and the cost price, were worked out, as well as the cost accounting. At first, there was no such plan, but it came to produce hocho-tetsu (malleable iron or little carbon-contained iron) which was used as shingane (core iron) from zuku-tetsu or sen-tetsu (pig iron) which was judged to be below their standard.

In tatara manufacture, fourteen tons of iron sand and fifteen tons of charcoal are continually put into the furnace little by little, for three days and nights and the iron sand is gradually melted and deoxidised at a relatively low temperature. A lump of melted iron sand called 'Kera' is produced on the bed of the furnace. A round of the tatara operation, which takes three days and nights, is called 'Hitoyo (One round)'. But the whole works of a round operation took six or seven days in those days, which included making a new furnace each time.

The lump of Kera is taken out of the bed of the furnace, after the furnace is broken. It was then broken into pieces and concentrated in a workshop called 'Doba' and finally the material of Japanese sword, tamahagane is obtained. Especially the deep area of Izumo Province, produces good-quality iron sand called 'Masa-satetsu' and fire-proof clay used for making the furnace. The area is also blessed with natural resources such as a water supply, navigable rivers and woods which produce charcoal. Thus the area accounted for 80 to 90 % of the country's whole production of tamahagane during the Edo Period.

- There are two methods of tatara manufacture. One is called 'Kera-oshi-ho' of which main purpose is to produce steel from masa-satetsu iron sand and the other one is 'Zuku-oshi-ho', which produces zuku-tetsu from akome-satetsu iron sand. Yasukuni Tatara employed kera-oshi-

ho, as its main purpose was to produce steel (tamahagane).

(Photo in the top of the upper row)

Silicon oxide contained in the clay which is used to make the furnace, has a great deal to do with the result of tamahagane's quality, as a medium through which the process of melting and deoxidising iron sand takes place.

Murage : Hosoki Bunnosuke, Abe Yoshizo and Hisamura Kanji.

Photo was taken around 1933 and provided by Hitachi Kinzoku Company.

(Photo in the bottom of the upper row)

Murage, Hisamura Kanji (left) is putting iron sand in the furnace.

Photo was taken around 1933 and provided by Hitachi Kinzoku Company.

(Photo in the top of the bottom row)

The furnace is broken after the operation is completed and kera is taken out of the furnace. The lump of kera is moved to another workshop called O-doba and broken into 14 to 16 pieces.

Photo was taken around 1933 and provided by Hitachi Kinzoku Company.

(Right photo in the bottom of the bottom row)

Sediment and incompletely deoxidised iron, are removed from the surface of the kera, broken into pieces in the O-doba, then the pieces are completed as a product through the next two workshops, called 'Ko-doba' and 'Hagane-zukuri-ba'.

Photo was taken around 1933 and provided by Hitachi Kinzoku Company.

(Left photo in the bottom of the bottom row)

First-grade tamahagane with the Tsuru label and hocho-tetsu (little carbon-contained iron, centre)

The photo is provided by Hitachi Kinzoku Company.

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(Illustration in the top)

In 1933 Fukumoto Kaku, who was then working in the material section of the Torigami Factory of the Yasukuni Steel Production Company, started an investigation of the furnace and the caldron of the Yasukuni Tatara, which was restored in Torigami Village of Nita County in Shimane Prefecture. He then reconstructed and published the design of the furnace and the caldron in November 1936. The illustration is redrawn from the original one by Fukuoka.

The Yasukuni Tataru manufacture reached the peak of its operation in 1939. Then 14 tons of iron sand, 15 tons of charcoal and 3.8 tons of fire-proof clay to make furnace, seem to have been consumed.

- Rough estimate for seven rounds of the first Yasukuni Tataru operation

Grade	Volume (kg)	Total volume	Production cost	Unit price
Tsuru (Special-grade)	413 kg	1,819 kg	6,214.09 yen	6.15 yen / 3.75 kg
Matsu (First-grade)	413 kg			
Take (Second-grade)	788 kg			
Ume A (Third-grade)	206 kg			
Ume B (Fourth-grade)	206 kg	1,981 kg		170 yen / ton
Off grade	2,963 kg			
Others	16,013 kg			

- The number of Yasukuni Tataru operation and the volume of the output

	Number of operation	Output
1933	Seven rounds	1,500 kg
1934	Seven rounds	1,687 kg
1935	Seven rounds	1,650 kg
1936	Seven rounds	1,913 kg
1937	Nine rounds	3,563 kg
1938	Eleven rounds	5,399 kg
1939	Fifteen rounds	8,601 kg
1940	Twelve rounds	5,500 kg
1941	Twelve rounds	5,500 kg
1942	Twelve rounds	5,812 kg
1943	Nine rounds	4,500 kg
1944	Ten rounds	5,625 kg

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## **Kotohira Nichiyo-kigu Kenkyujo** (Kotohira Daily Necessities Research Laboratory)

Address : 205 Kotaki, Oaza-taima, Zentsuji, Nakatado-gun Kagawa-ken

With the invitation of Lieutenant General, Yamaoka Juko, who became a commander of Zentsuji Precinct on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1945, Kotani Yasunori, Shimazaki Yasuoki and Masuda Yasuaki as well as Onuki Hisashi (sakite) moved to Zentsuji of Kagawa Prefecture in order to build a branch factory of Nihonto Tanren Kai, in the grounds of the Kotohira Shrine, escaping from American air-raids which was being intensified. The war ended before it was completed.

The branch factory was completed a short time after the war ended and a new activity of the swordsmiths, who were called up by Yamaoka Juko, was resumed then the name of the factory was changed to 'Kotohira Nichiyo-kigu Kenkyujo (Kotohira Daily Necessities Research Laboratory Foundation)'. Masuda Yasuaki was installed as the chairman of the laboratory and joined by Kotani Yasunori, Shimazaki Yasuoki and Onuki Hisashi, but the laboratory was run by Yamaoka Juko in practice. At first, there was a proposal to name the laboratory 'Wako Kenkyujo (Japanese Steel Research Laboratory)' but Imperial ordinance No. 300, which was issued in the wake of the Declaration of Potsdam Declaration, banned sword manufacturing and Yamaoka did not take up the proposal, since he thought that the naming was irrelevant in view of the difficult situation and would remind people of the Japanese sword, which was recognised as a lethal weapon by Allied Forces during the war. 400,000 yen from the balance of the operation fund of Nihonto Tanren Kai and 100,000 yen from the sale of the forging centre of the Yasukuni Shrine, were put into the operation fund of the laboratory. Also more than 100 swords which were tempered but not finished, tamahagane, material for shirasaya (Japanese magnolia) and other equipment were transferred to the laboratory.

They gathered to make swords, but the circumstances did not allow them to. Instead, therefore, they unwillingly started to make edged-tools and farming appliances. Their productivity was low, as Japanese sword forging was totally different. Their sales were around 300 yen per month at the beginning, but then the annual land rent paid to the Kotohira Shrine was 2,800 yen. In addition, they had to peddle their products and occasionally failed to collect money.

Kotani Yasunori and Shimazaki Yasuoki proposed to Yamaoka that machines should be introduced in order to increase productivity, but this was not realised because of the difficulty of obtaining the

machines. The management of the laboratory had been far from coming to stay and there seemed to be no chance of resuming sword making. Under such circumstances, Kotani Yasunori left the laboratory at the end of December 1945, then Shimazaki Yasuoki did in succession in May 1946.

Masuda Yasuaki suggested Yamaoka to employ engineers in order to increase the productivity though Yamaoka did not take up this suggestion, as he was concerned that they would leak the real purpose of the laboratory (sword making) and other information, as it was secretly keeping more than 100 swords and a certain quantity of tamahagane (Then Japanese were banned from owning any weapons at all after Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration.). They were nearly running out of the operation fund, while the laboratory had achieved no good business results. As a result, Yamaoka retired in 1950 and passed away 1954. The whereabouts of the more than 100 swords, which were transferred from the Nihonto Tanren Kai, is not known since that time.

Matsuda Yasuaki and Onuki Hisashi, who stayed at the laboratory, sold 1,1875 kg of tamahagane to iron smiths for forestry and gained 50,000 yen. With that money, they started to learn making plane edges from Mr. Tamaki, who lived in Kochi City of Kochi Prefecture. They often visited him in Kochi City and successfully acquired the skill in two years. By this time, they were able to sell their plane edges steadily and the management of the laboratory had come to stay.

In spring 1953 the manufacture of Japanese Art Sword was approved by the government, meanwhile Masuda Yasuaki and Onuki Hisashi eventually obtained sword-making licenses on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 1954, after nine years of hardships.

The laboratory became a sword forging centre by the appointment of Kagawa Prefecture and they forged several swords and submitted them to an exhibition sponsored by the prefecture. On that occasion, Onuki Hisashi signed his smith name 'Yasuhisa' on his two swords, which was given by Yamaoka Juko, just before the war ended.

The laboratory was disbanded in the same year, as there was a request of the return of the site to the Kotohira Shrine. Masuda Yasuaki started sword making in full-scale after 1970.

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## **Record of Yasukuni Tosho With Photographs**

**Designation ceremony and commencing ceremony of sword forging by Miyaguchi Yasuhiro and Kajiyama Yasunori held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933.**

From left : Koizumi Shinji (fourth), Miyaguchi Yasuhiro (fifth), Umezawa Chikara (sixth), Sakai Hiroshi (seventh), Kajiyama Yasunori (eighth, behind the pillar), Kotani Kenzo (ninth), Kajiyama Toshimichi (tenth).

The photo is provided by Miyaguchi Tsuneo.

**The fourth workshop in July 1933.**

Left : Kajiyama Yasunori.

Sakite : Kotani Kenzo (front), Kajiyama Toshimichi.

The photo is provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

**Commencing ceremony of sword forging by Ikeda Yasumitsu at the third workshop on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1933.**

Left : Ikeda Yasumitsu.

Sakite : Abe Shigeo (front), Murakami Ensaku.

The photo is provided by Abe Shigeo.

**After the designation ceremony of Kotani Yasunori as Yasukuni Tosho on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1935.**

From left in the front row : Miyaguchi Yasuhiro, Ikeda Yasumitsu, Koizumi Shinji, Kajiyama Yasunori, Kotani Yasunori.

From left in the second row : Name is unknown, Yamaoka Juko, name is unknown, name is unknown,

Kozu Haku.

From left in the third row : Komatsu Kentaro (second), Kurata Shichiro (fifth).

From left in the fourth row : Murakami Ensaku, Shinomura Yasutaro, Shimazaki Nao-oki, Abe Shigeo, Kajiyama Toshimichi.

From left in the fifth row : Sakai Hiroshi, name is unknown, Ajiki Haruyoshi, Yakuwa Takeshi, Takeda Sadayoshi.

The photo is provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

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**The fifth workshop around July 1935.**

Left : Kotani Yasunori.

Sakite : Shinomura Yasutaro (front), Ajiki Haruyoshi.

The photo is provided by Masuda Kaname.

**Instructors from the Toyama School of the Army are teaching batto-jutsu (a kind of swordplay) around 1936.**

From left : Nakajima Takashi, Ajiki Haruyoshi, Shimazaki Nao-oki, Murakami Ensaku, Kotani Yasunori, Takeda Sadayoshi, Shinomura Yasutaro, Abe Shigeo, name is unknown, Kajiyama Toshimichi, instructor, instructor, Yakuwa Takeshi.

The photo is provided by Kotani Kenzo.

**Farewell party for Miyaguchi Yasuhiro, Sakai Hiroshi and Takeda Sadayoshi on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1936 (they are traded to the Okura Tanren Dojo).**

From left : Nakajima Takashi, Murakami Ensaku, Kotani Yasunori, Shimazaki Nao-oki, Isomura Yasutaro, Ajiki Haruyoshi, Abe Shigeo, Kajiyama Yasunori, Sakai Hiroshi, Miyaguchi Yasuhiro, Takeda Sadayoshi, Ikeda Yasumitsu, Yakuwa Takeshi, Kajiyama Toshimichi.

The photo is provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

**Kajiyama Yasutoshi at the designation ceremony of Yasukuni Tosho held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.**

Kajiyama Toshimichi is given a certificate of Yasukuni Tosho name 'Yasutoshi'.

The photo is provided by Kajiyama Sumiaki.

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**Murakami Yasunobu at the designation ceremony of Yasukuni Tosho held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.**

Murakami Ensaku is given a certificate of Yasukuni Tosho name 'Yasunobu'.

The photo is provided by Kajiyama Sumiaki.

**Kajiyama Yasutoshi and Murakami Yasunobu holding certificates of Yasukuni Tosho in the front of the entrance of the workshop on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.**

From left in the front row : Murakami Yasunobu, Kajiyama Yasutoshi, Ikeda Yasumitsu, Koizumi Shinji, Kajiyama Yasunori, Kotani Yasunori.

From left in the second row : Shimazaki Nao-oki, Takeda Sadayoshi, Onuki Hisashi, Abe Shigeo,



Nakajima Takashi, Osaki Shigeharu, Ajiki Haruyoshi.

From left in the third row : Shinomura Yasutaro, Komatsu Kentaro, name is unknown, name is unknown, Yamaoka Juko, Kozu Haku, Kudo Haruto.

From left in the fourth row : Yakuwa Takeshi, Kikuzawa Kei, name is unknown, name is unknown, Kurata Shichiro, name is unknown.

The photo is provided by Kikuzawa Makie.

**The second workshop in January 1939.**

Left : Kajiyama Yasutoshi.

Sakite : Onuki Hisashi (front), Osaki Shigeharu (replacement of Nakajima Takashi).

The photo is provided by Kajiyama Sumiaki.

**The first workshop in January 1939**

Left : Murakami Yasunobu.

Sakite : Kikuzawa Kei (front), Takeda Sadayoshi.

The photo is provided by Abe Shigeo.

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**Abe Yasushige at the designation ceremony of Yasukuni Tosho held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1939.**

The sixth chairman Yamawaki Masataka gives Abe Shigeo a certificate of Yasukuni Tosho name 'Yasushige'.

The photo is provided by Abe Shigeo.

**The third workshop in October 1939.**

Left : Abe Yasushige.

Sakite : Masuda Kaname (front), Yakuwa Takeshi.

Right : Ikeda Yasumitsu.

The photo is provided by Abe Shigeo.

**Commencing ceremony of sword forging by Shimazaki Nao-oki at the fourth workshop on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1940.**

Left : Shimazaki Nao-oki.

Sakite : Uchiyama Kenzo (front), Osaki Shigeharu.

The photo is provided by Kikuzawa Makie.

(Left in the bottom)

**10<sup>th</sup> Ikeda Kazumitsu (Ikko) is performing sword forging in the entrance examination of Nihonto Tanren Kai held in Yamagata Prefecture on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1933.**

Left : Ikeda Kazumitsu.

Sakite : Abe Shigeo (front), Murakami Ensaku.

The photo is provided by Abe Shigeo.

(Right in the bottom)

**Photo taken around 1940.**

Left : Ajiki Yasuyoshi

Sakite : Sato Takayoshi (front), Onuki Hisashi.

The photo is provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

(Left in the bottom)

**10<sup>th</sup> Ikeda Kazumitsu (Ikko) is performing sword forging in the entrance examination of Nihonto Tanren Kai held in Yamagata Prefecture on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1933.**

Left : Ikeda Kazumitsu.

Sakite : Abe Shigeo (front), Murakami Ensaku.

The photo is provided by Abe Shigeo.

(Right in the bottom)

Photo taken around 1940.

Left : Ajiki Yasuyoshi

Sakite : Sato Takayoshi (front), Onuki Hisashi.

The photo is provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

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**Topping-out ceremony of the workshop held in March 1933.**

The photo is provided by Miyaguchi Tsuneo.

**Tosho and sakite at Kamiike pond in the ground of the Yasukuni Shrine in the beginning of 1939.**

From left in the front row : Osaki Yasuharu, Kotani Yasunori.

From left in the back row : Ikeda Yasumitsu, Takeda Sadayoshi, Kikuzawa Kei, Ajiki Haruyoshi,  
Murakami Yasunobu, Abe Shigeo, Yakuwa Takeshi, Onuki Hisashi,  
Kajiyama Yasutoshi.

The photo is provided by Kikuzawa Makie.

**Front of the building of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation around 1940.**

From left in the front row : Murakami Yasunobu, Kajiyama Yasutoshi, Kotani Yasunori, Kajiyama Yasunori, Koizumi Shinji, Ikeda Yasumitsu, Yasushige, Takayama Tatsumi, Sato Kiyoshi.

From left in the second row : Kikuzawa Kei, Ajiki Haruyoshi, Shinomura Yasutaro, Shimazaki Nao-oki, Osaki Shigeharu, Nakajima Takashi, Takeda Sadayoshi,  
Onuki Hisashi, Yakuwa Takeshi, Masuda Kaname.

From left in the fourth row : Komatsu Kentaro (second), Kurata Shichiro (sixth), Kozu Haku (seventh), Uchiyama Kenzo (eleventh).

The photo is provided by Takayama Takeshi.

**1944**

Onuki Hisashi (left) and Masuda Yasuaki (front right) are forging at Kotohira Daily Necessities Research Laboratory.

The photo is provided by Onuki Hisashi.

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(Left in the top)

**Managing director, Kurata Shichiro**

In cutting test they used fresh bamboo trees tightly wrapped with tatami mat's cover and straws that were soaked in the pond overnight.

The photo is provided by Miyaguchi Tsuneo.

(Right in the top)

**In the front of the entrance of the workshop around 1939.**

Left : Kajiyama Yasunori.

Right : Kajiyama Yasutoshi.

The photo is provided by Kajiyama Sumiaki.

(Middle and bottom photos)

General Araki Sadao paid a visit to Tobata Casting Company, Yasuki Steel Production Company and the Torigami Factory on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 1935 in order to attend the unveiling ceremony of a monument of Yasukuni Tatara.

1. Nomura Etsuzo (factory worker)
2. Araki Sadao (Army General)

3. Koshikawa Sukesaku (factory worker)
4. Kudo Haruto (executive director of Tobata Casting Company and chief manager of Yasuki Steel Production Company)
5. Adjutant
6. Hosoki Bunnosuke (murage)
7. Goto Rin-ichi (in charge of charcoal square-shaped blast furnace)
8. Fujiki Otoichi (operator)
9. Abe Yoshizo (murage)
10. Doi Rin-ichi (charcoal burner)
11. Horie Rinnosuke (head of Torigami Village)
12. Fukumoto Kaku (office worker of the materials department)
13. Kawanishi Tsuyoshi (operator)
14. Takeda Yoshio (operator)
15. Matsuura Junzo
16. Horie Shigeyoshi
17. Fukuda Kinnosuke
18. Fukuda Tario (factory manager of the Yasuki Factory of Hitachi Seisakujo Company)
19. Fukushima Uzo (vice chief-manager of the Yasuki Steel Production Company of Tobata Casting Company)

The photo is provided by Y.S.S. Torigami Charcoal and Pig Iron Factory.

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**At the Takuno Tekketsu-ba located in Torigami Village, Nita County, Shimane Prefecture (presently Oaza Oro, Yokota Town, Shimane Prefecture) on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1942.**

Left : Namikawa Takayoshi (Factory manager of the Torigami Branch Factory of the Yasuki Factory)

Centre : Suzuki Takao (Chief priest of the Yasukuni Shrine, Army general)

Right : Kikuta Tario (Factory manager of the Yasuki Factory of Hitachi Seisakujo Company)

The photo is provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

**Encouraging meeting for Shimazaki Nao-oki on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1939.**

From left in the front row : Onuki Hisashi, Matsubara Toshio, Tabata Kenzo, Takahashi Saburo, Ise Masakatsu, Uchiyama Kenzo.

From left in the second row : Name is unknown, name is unknown, Kurata Shichiro, Shimazaki Nao-oki, Yamakura Juko, Koizumi Shinji, Kozu Haku.

From left in the third row : Yakuwa Takeshi, Kanazaki Giichi, Ajiki Haruyoshi, Osaki Shigeharu,

Komatsu Kentaro, Shinomura Yasutaro, Ikeda Yasumitsu, Abe Shigeo,  
Kajiyama Yasunori, Kariya Naoharu, Takayama Tatsumi, Murakami  
Yasunobu, Kotani Yasunori, Takeda Sadayoshi, Nakajima Takashi,  
Kajiyama Yasutoshi, Kikuzawa Kei.

The photo is provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

**Encouraging meeting for Osaki Shigeharu who is going to the front on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 1939.**

From left in the front row : Nakajima Takashi, Ida Masakatsu, Yakuwa Takeshi, Tabata Kenzo, Ajiki  
Haruyoshi, Onuki Hisashi, Kitajima Tomisaburo, Takahashi Saburo,  
Masuda Kaname, Uchiyama Kenzo, Kikuzawa Kei.

From left in the second row : Kajiyama Yasutoshi, Komatsu Kentaro, name is unknown, Osaki  
Shigeharu, Yamaoka Juko, Kurata Shichiro, name is unknown.

From left in the third row : Sato Kiyoshi, Abe Yasushige, name is unknown, Takayama Tatsumi,  
Kozu Haku, Kajiyama Yasunori, Ikeda Yasumitsu, Kotani Yasunori,  
Murakami Yasunobu, Takeda Sadayoshi, Shinomura Yasutaro, Shimazaki  
Nao-oki.

The photo is provided by Osaki Shigeharu.

**Encouraging meeting for Abe Yasushige who is drafted into the army held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1944.**

From left in the front row : Office worker, Kotani Yasunori, Yamaoka Juko, Abe Yasushige,  
Komatsu Kentaro, Murakami Yasunobu, Takayama Tatsumi.

From left in the back row : Ajiki Yasuyoshi, errand (Horio), Yakuwa Takeshi, Ishibashi Shigeru,  
Kitazawa Tomisaburo, Ogawa Mitsuyoshi, Sakakibara Susumu, Masuda  
Kaname, Yamakawa Hisashi, Nakamori Kanehisa, Tokuda Masahiro,  
Suma Iwao, Takahashi Saburo, office worker (Mori), name is unknown,  
name is unknown, Shimazaki Yasuoki, Sato Kiyoshi, Tabata Kenzo, Ida  
Masakatsu.

The photo is provided by Abe Shigeo.

## ESSAYS TO YASUKUNI-TO

### "Soldiers and Gunto"

Mori Masahiro

It was said that Japanese sword had finished its life as a weapon when the matchlock was introduced in the Sengoku Period (Late Muromachi Period). The same thing was said again in the Boshin War (the battle between the Tokugawa shogunate government and the Royalist feudal lords). There had been no development and revaluation of main weapons for three hundred years in Japan. Some people would say that it is an undeveloped mentality of Japanese on weapons. Anachronism is not simply a proper word for the fact that many Imperial soldiers eagerly searched for gunto and wore them on their waists during World War II.

We can find various sagas of Japanese swords, which indicate superiority of the Japanese sword to modern firearms in battle fronts, in the documents of the war and the propaganda of the Imperial Army. For instance, 'Second Lieutenant . . . . . (name) Brilliant!!! He killed . . . . (number) enemies with his gunto.' This kind of news appears to have been reported ostentatiously. Apart from whether it was possible for the feats in these stories to be accomplished in the fiercely-fought battle fields, the Japanese sword, which mentally united bushi-do and the Imperial soldiers, was really a relevant article to symbolise their loyalty to the state and militarism.

War is started with the precondition that justice is on our side and our nation (tribe) is superior to other nations. Japanese formalised their fighting instinct with the name of bushi-do and tried to make up for the inferiority of its national power with 'Spirit'. The Japanese sword, which was a sacred but pre-modern weapon, was a means to justify the theory. It is free from running out ammunition differing from modern firearms and can give a fatal wound in cutting enemy's bone, even though he may already be cut through his flesh in the fight. Thus the Japanese sword is really a weapon based on Oriental philosophy.

Imperial soldiers instinctively understood very well, without education and instruction, that wearing a Japanese sword had some important meanings. First of all, the Japanese sword has a long history that it has been regarded and handled as the soul of the Japanese. It was quite natural that they regarded the Japanese sword as a mystic and miraculous object and not as simply a weapon, which guarded their life in order to practice bushi-do, of which main principle, was to disregard the peril of

their own life. Human beings try to personalise their weapon and imbue it with soul and character, since they know their own weakness and fragility. With their wishes, swordsmiths purify themselves, pray to the god and forge swords in their scared workshops. There are no other weapons which have such high spiritual qualities, except for the Japanese sword.

If it is not a good attitude to have a longing for a weapon with this unique spirituality, but it can be understood as a talisman. For over a thousand year's of history of the Japanese sword, a culture has been cultivated in the Japanese mind which brought about awe and respect for it and even created a religion. Even aircraft pilots flew with gunto, which was never used in aerial combat and soldiers took it with them when they were wounded and hospitalised during the last war (World War II). We have heard of stories that soldiers regained the presence of mind and were encouraged to take a look at their swords before their last fatal assault. It is also said that even high ranking officers, always took care of their swords personally.

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These documents and testimonies may not tell the whole truth sometimes, but I believe this kind of feeling must also be understood by today's sword lovers.

There is an expression 'A Clan is allowed to wear the sword and use a family name, as authorised by the shogunate government in the Edo Period' and this meant that the family attained economical and political success. The expression, 'The Soul of the Japanese' is not a correct expression and it should be expressed as, 'The Soul of bushi (samurai) and nobility'. The Japanese sword used to be collected and studied by people from the upper class, but soldiers of the Imperial Army are neither bushi nor nobility. It is beyond our imagination to understand how proud they were of wearing a sword at their waists, in a period that still maintained a feudalistic hierarchy.

We are sorry to know that most gunto were mass-produced and low quality swords and the soldiers had to recognise them as the prop and stay of their spirit. Yasukuni-to, however, were elaborately made in order to be dedicated to the soul of the Imperial soldiers and they were the highest quality newly-made swords of that time. Gunto should be reconsidered and regarded as the soul of the soldiers, if people have respect for Japanese swords, worn and used by bushi in the Sengoku and the Bakumatsu Periods. The Imperial soldiers and bushi should not be confused, since these two warrior classes have a different historical background. In the meantime, we should not ignore that gunto were occasionally used as an effective weapon in wartime.

The sense of value of the Japanese sword was totally denied in the wake of Japan's defeat by the

Allied Forces and the Japanese sword had to endure a gloomy and criminal reputation. It is natural that people tend to have a negative idea about swords with the name of 'Yasukuni'. Japan's Imperialism is an unfortunate and regrettable part of our history, but we should not forget that we entrusted the Japanese sword with a sense of beauty and pride in the Japanese nation. People concerned with Japanese swords, applied themselves to their work with untiring zeal. I wonder if we can say we have any kind of soul today? I hope this book will be a directional sign to Japan's future, in a modest way.

(Novelist)

## **"Memories of Yasukuni Tanren Kai"**

**Osaki Yasumune**

I became a member of Yasukuni Tanren Kai Foundation as a trainee charcoal cutter by the introduction of Mr. Yakuwa Takeshi (later Yasukuni smith, Yasutake) who was a good friend of my elder brother, in September 1937. First of all I was very surprised to see that there was no old apprentice system there and I was paid from the first day, senior members instructed me how to do muko-zuchi (sakite's hammering). Then I was able to do most of the work, apart from makuri, wakashi and sunobe, within a month. After six months, forging teko-gane and shingane was turned to me. Also I was able to practice quenching using swords that were rejected by inspectors. I did this after my work duty or when I was on night duty. The War Ministry did the management of the Foundation and it owned an abundant supply of tamahagane and charcoal. We could concentrate on our job without any concern, as we were paid enough to look after ourselves. It was unimaginable for people like me who had worked under an old apprentice system in the countryside.

With the increase of the demand for gunto, two persons were promoted to swordsmiths and became sword engineers in January 1939. I was allowed to finish the first sword after three months, I became a sakite of Kajiyama Yasunori and I will never forget the deep emotion of that moment. Next morning I could not open my mouth as I worked hard in clenching my teeth all day long. I became a sakite of Shimazaki Yasuoki in July 1940 and I gained self-confidence when I substituted for Shimazaki Yasuoki in 1942, while Shimazaki Yasuoki was on service of military education. Also I am convinced that I owed my teachers and senior members of the Foundation a great deal.

I am sure that today's development and prosperity of sword forging is due to the manufacture of a large quantity of high quality gunto, that was started around 1932 preparing for emergency, and the



restoration of sword forging technique that a few swordsmiths maintained then. It is a great pleasure for people involved in Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation to hear that the quality of the jigane and the hamon of Yasukuni swords have been evaluated once again apart from their gunto sugata that was designed for practical military-use. In addition, a few survivors of Yasukuni smiths including me are deeply impressed to see the publication of a book of Yasukuni smiths. Also I am sure that the founders and Yasukuni smiths would have been moved to tears if they knew the document of Yasukuni Tanren Kai Foundation was published.

(Swordsmith and Intangible Cultural Asset of Sumida Ward)

(P.76)

## **“Hoto Water in Polishing Bucket”**

**Tabata Kenzo**

(Former name, Shinomura)

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1939, a master polisher, Takayama Tatsumi entered the Nihonto Tanren Kai and his students, Matsubara Toshio, Ida Masakatsu and I became the sword-polishing trainees of the Foundation at the same time. The daily wages of the trainees was 66 sen (0.66 yen). At that time, I had to be looked after by my brother, Shinohara Yasutaro. Since 15 sen for breakfast, 20 sen for lunch and 25 sen for dinner were paid from my daily wages and little money was left in my hand.

We, trainees practised sword polishing with swords which did not pass the inspection and were due to be disposed of in the first six months. After that, we came to polish and finish two swords every month. Polishing of the kissaki and finishing work on all swords, were done by our teacher (Takayama Tatsumi).

Whilst the teacher was mending our ground work, we had to sit straight on the floor of the workshop. It was very painful to sit on the boarded floor in that way and we could not walk at all after the teacher left the workshop. Naturally the situation was worse in the cold winter and our fingers were numbed with the cold. I will never forget that the teacher brought a kettle of hot water and poured it into my polishing bucket on cold days.

Our teacher appeared to have been unable to finish more than three swords in a month, as he had to spend a lot of time to repairing our ground work. The trainees were allowed to do finishing work, two years after we entered the Foundation. I remember that about sixteen swords were finished by four of us, including our teacher, every month since then.

We were designated as official sword polishers of the Foundation two years later and it made me independent from my brother.

Kitazawa Tomisaburo and Kobayashi entered the foundation in April 1941 and a little later Komatani Hidefumi joined us too. Our teacher did not scold us harshly, since we became senior students.

Oshita and Kanemura entered the foundation in April 1943 and Yamada Ei in 1944. In those days eight sword polishers were in full swing and finished about thirty swords every month.

(Photo)

Master polisher, Takayama Tatsumi (centre) is instructing his students finishing work.

Taken by unknown cameraman in February 1941.

From left : Tabata Kenzo, Takayama Tatsumi, Ida Masakatsu, Matsubara Toshio

The photo is provided by Takayama Takeshi.

(One of ex-sword polishers of Nihonto Tanren Kai)

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## **“Centlight and Japanese Sword”**

**Suzuki Takeo**

Centlight is the first horse that won three major horse races in the history of Japan's horse racing. The horse was crowned with the victories in 1941 and it was the year the Pacific War broke out.

A record says that the Japan Horse Race Association (presently Japan Central Horse Race Association) gave a Japanese sword to the owner of the horse, honouring the last victory of the major three races.

There is a description of the sword in the Vol. 6 of 'The History of Horse Racing of Japan', that the Chairman of the Japan Horse Race Association, Yasuda called a committee meeting at the head office on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1938. It was attended by chief managers and bureau chiefs of racecourses all over the country. Among the subjects for discussion, there was an explanation as following; "The Association has taken consideration of the choice of prizes that is suitable for the current state of affairs, for instance adding Japanese swords to the current prizes. The Association

has decided to add a Japanese sword to the list of horse race prizes today. Though it will have to be considered other prizes when the situation of allocating Japanese sword becomes worse.”

Nevertheless, the allocation of Japanese swords appears to have been very difficult, therefore, the Association decided to award Japanese sword only to the winners of the major five horse races competed by four-year-old horses in 1939. (A Japanese sword presented by Hara Toshikazu who was a horse owner to the Association became the first Japanese sword used as the winning prize of the first Oka-sho (Cherry blossom Award) Race (one of major race competed in spring) in April 1939.

By chance, the sword, which was awarded to Mr. Kato Yusaku, who is the owner of the winning horse at the tenth Japan Derby, was on sale at the Matsudo Branch of Isetan Department Store in 1992. Mr. Kagami Tomiya who was then the general manager of License Registration Department of the Japan Horserace Association, found the sword at the sale and informed me of the discovery immediately. I was then the director of the Horse Race Museum. I started negotiating with the sword dealer in order to purchase the sword and found a description with Indian-ink on the wooden sword box like ‘Award’ on the front of the lid and ‘Tokyo Horserace Fine Horses Competition in Spring 1941, Japan Horserace Association Award’ on the back. A sword in the shirasaya was in the box. I could read the mei on the nakago and it said “SHOWA 16 NEN SHUNKI TOKYO KEIBA YUSHUN KYOSO NIHON KEIBAKAI SHO” “TAKENORI SHOWA 16 NEN 2 GATSU KICHI JITSU”. The sword was mounted with uchigatana-koshirae but kozuka and kogai were lost.

I asked Mr. Ogasawara Nobuo, who was then the chief of the Japanese Sword Room of the Tokyo National Museum to appraise the sword. He concluded that the sword was a work of a Yasukuni smith, Yasunori whose real name is Kotani Kenzo and made in the early Showa Era, considering the workmanship.

In addition, it became clear that Mr. Kotani was still alive and living in Kure City of Hiroshima Prefecture after I inquired the Yushukan Museum of the Yasukuni Shrine about Kotani Kenzo. Fortunately I was able to contact with him and have a conversation on the telephone, as the museum gave me his telephone number. Mr. Kotani answered my questions by telephone, as follows;

1. He was called up by managing director of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation and asked if he wanted him to make swords for the Japan Horse Race Association, that would be used as a prize in a horse race.
2. He had made all swords for the Association, using his private time like national holidays and festival holidays in spring and autumn, at the Yasukuni Shrine.

3. On the occasion of forging swords for the Japan Horse Race Association, he used the smith name of 'Takenori', not 'Yausnori' (incidentally he signed Yasunori on the sword for the prize of the first Oka-sho Race).

(P.78)

The Horse Race Museum decided to purchase the sword without hesitation, shortly after I saw the sword, as I convinced that the sword was a historically important item and worthy of being added to the collection of the museum.

I visited him and asked about his personal history when I went to Hiroshima on business in December 1994, as there was something that had been weighing on my mind since that time.

Mr. Kotani Kenzo was born to the family that ran a long-established file shop called 'Tsuboman' as their second son on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1910. He became a sakite of Kajiyama Yasunori while Mr. Kajiyama was studying sword making under Mr. Yokoyama Sukeyoshi. In the wake of the foundation of Nihonto Tanren Kai, that was organised in order to restore the traditional sword production, his teacher Mr. Kajiyama became a Yasukuni smith and Mr. Kotani entered the Nihonto Tanren Kai at the same time. He was given a certificate of Yasukuni smith name 'Yasunori' by the then War Minister Hayashi Senjuro, on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 1935 and said that he had forged about 1,700 swords since then. Mr. Kotani got married in 1937 and started his new life at San-bancho of Kojimachi Ward (Chiyoda Ward at present) of Tokyo and applied himself to sword making. He moved to a branch factory of the Foundation located in Zentsuji of Kagawa Prefecture on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1945 with the help of Lieutenant General Yamaoka Juko, who was an inspector of the Foundation. As the odds of the war seemed to have turned against Japan, he saw the end of the war there and returned to his home town.

Concerning a person who was sent from the Japan Horse Race Association to the Foundation, in order to ask them to make swords for prizes the horse races of the Association, he remembers that they passed each other in the office of the Foundation, when he was called up by Kurata Shichiro though he has little memory of him. Then he was orally asked by Kurata to make the swords for the Association. He clearly remembers that he started making the swords in autumn 1938 and had forged twenty swords in five years and signed the names of races and dates on the nakago.

He confessed that he used a smith name of 'Takenori' when he made the swords for the Association and Nara Taketsugu who was an officer in attendance on His Majesty, gave him the first character 'Take' of his first name and allowed to use it in his smith's name. The workmanship of the swords is

that the swords have a traditional tachi sugata, sugu-ha with gunome-ashi is tempered in ko-nie-deki and it can be said that the swords represent fine Yasukuni swords. His works are highly estimated nowadays.

I studied documents concerned after I come back to Tokyo. The chairman of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation Yanagawa Heisuke (Lieutenant General) is the man who promoted a project of modernising cavalry into armoured troops during the Japan and China Incident. Cavalry Colonel Iida Sadamoto, who was a member of the board of directors of Nihonto Tanren Kai, was the president of Narashino Cavalry Academy trained jockeys at the academy too. In addition, Yoshikawa Toyosuke, who was an auditor of the Japan Horse Race Association when the Association was founded in 1936, assumed an important post in the Narashino Cavalry Academy. Thus it is speculated, that officers of Army Cavalry and people concerned were deeply involved in the foundation of the Japan Horse Race Association. This is an interesting anecdote of the history of horse racing and the Japanese sword.

By the way, the owner of the sword and fine horses, Komohata and Centlight, Kato Yusaku (born on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1902) took up the position of the senior managing director of Bungei Shunju Publishing Company in March 1933 through the positions of the managing director of Heibon-sha Publishing Company and the chairman of Hibonkaku Publishing Company. He was killed in the American air raid on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1945 when he was 44 years old. It is said that he left his wife, three sons and three daughters, though news of them is not available. Also the whereabouts of the other two swords are unknown.

Centlight became a stallion after he retired at the age of 4 and was moved to a breeding ranch in Iwate Prefecture as Koiwai Ranch where he was born. It had already discontinued horse breeding by then. He was not favoured with a mare and not successful in mating and died in 1965. All people concerned have passed on by now and now only the prize Japanese sword is left after their deaths.

## **“Think About Workmanship of Yasukuni-to”**

**Fujishiro Okisato**

What the leaders of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation were trying to realise is sugu-ha choji practised by Nagamitsu and Kagemitsu of the Kamakura Period. It is quite natural that they aimed at their hamon as they left largest number of masterpieces in the history of Japanese sword. Meanwhile there

seems to have been another reason in the leaders' mind. It is the background that produced Nagamitsu's sugu-ha-choji.

The Osafune smith group was thriving and wielding their influence in the Kamakura Period. Though Nagamitsu changed his workmanship with gorgeous choji-midare to sugu-ha-choji that was challenged by Yasukuni Tosho in the wake of the Mongolian Invasion in the Ben-ei and the Koan Eras. It can be imagined that tension was abruptly growing among Japanese warriors and swordsmith who supplied them with swords, facing the country's crisis of the invasion. I suppose the swordsmiths who lived at that time pursued a common workmanship in order to cope with the severe situation.

(P.79)

The normal ha-watari of Yasukuni-to is between 63.6 and 66.7 cm., as it was slung and worn lengthwise, differing from tachi made in the Kamakura Period of which original ha-watari is from 79 to 82 cm. Yasumitsu sees the typical sugata of Yasukuni-to in the photo of a katana and the jihada is dense ko-itame-hada with ji-nie and the hamon is sugu-ha with ko-ashi. The blade shows a modest but tense workmanship and is one of his masterpieces.

Sword forging was banned on the 15<sup>th</sup> August in 1945, as a result of Japan's defeat at the Pacific War. Thus Yasukuni Tosho virtually became the last group of swordsmiths who forged Japanese sword for practical use in the battle. Though Yasukuni Tosho, who scattered to various places and experienced a time after the war, resumed sword forging independently, as the government allowed Japanese swords to be made in 1954. Most of the Yasukuni Tosho started demonstrating a workmanship with grand sugata, gorgeous midare and long ha-watari. Comparison between the workmanship during the war and the one after the war is shows similarity between the workmanship of the Sengoku Period with sugu-ha and short ha-watari and the one of the beginning of the Edo Period with gorgeous hamon, grand sugata and long ha-watari. It is interesting to know that the comparisons reflect the times of war and peace.

I have been taking care of the sword collection of the Yasukuni Shrine once a year since I started learning polishing 32 years ago. During the cleaning of swords, my father told me about Yasukuni-to. I started to become interested in this swordsmith group that is called Yasukuni Tosho and does not exist today, after I spoke to Mr. Yakuwa Yasutake and Mr. Osaki Yasumune at a monthly sword meeting. Then I decided to study Yasukuni-to that was made in the ground of the Yasukuni Shrine that is located near my house. Yasukuni-to is, are so to speak, my local swords, as I was born nearby the shrine. I started collecting information and documents from the two Yasukuni Tosho then Mr.

Shimazaki Yasuoki kindly offered me an interesting document that explains the signatures of his own works and his substitutes (works by his students). Also I could find documents (from 1932 to 1938) of the board of directors of Nihonto Tanren Kai, that explain the early days of the Foundation, including documents of the construction of the workshops and the Yasukuni Tatara. Afterwards I wrote a short essay of 'About Nihonto Tanren Kai' for 'Token Bijutsu' (January and February Issues 1981). In 1983, living Yasukuni Toshō dedicated an o-dachi (long tachi) to the Yasukuni Shrine commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of Nihonto Tanren Kai. Mr. Yakuwa, Mr. Osaki and Mr. Shimazaki were at the centre of the event. I met with Mr. Kishida who had been taking photos of Mr. Shimazaki when the first preparatory meeting for the event was held at the Yasukuni Shrine.

(P.80)

With the co-operation with Mr. Kishida, two exhibitions of Yasukuni-to and events concerned were realised at the Yasukuni shrine in 1994 and at the Sword Museum in 1995. Many photos of Nihonto Tanren Kai concerned and living Yasukuni smiths, which Mr. Kishida has taken and collected, played a very important part in the exhibitions. There is no way I can measure all that we gained from the exhibitions, particularly increasing interest in Yasukuni-to and introducing fine Yasukuni-to to the general public.

We recognised anew the wider range of their workmanship, that they made larger swords with more gorgeous midare-ba than usual. The work of Yasunori shown in the photo is a good example and the jihada is beautifully forged itame-hada and the hamon is tempered in skilfully formed midare-ba and shows a high quality workmanship.

The fruit of his efforts has become to achieve the new version of Yasukuni Toshō book. This book introduces characters and various aspects of Yasukuni Toshō and I believe the contents will attract many people including people who have not seen Japanese swords before. Here I would like to express my deepest respect for his achievement.

(Sword polisher)

## **Encounter with Yasukuni-to**

**Kenji Mishina**

My first encounter with Yasukuni-to was not in Japan but unexpectedly occurred during my stay in England. I apprenticed myself to one of the master polishers in Japan, Kokan Nagayama in 1974 and

studied sword polishing under him for 13 years. During that period, I had no interest in Yasukuni-to and had never polished one. In other words, people had little interest in Yasukuni-to and there were few people who asked a first-class sword polisher to polish Yasukuni-to in those days. Therefore I simply understood at this time, that they were categorised as one of the Showa-to (swords made in the Showa Era) or gunto.

I emigrated to England in August 1986 and started working for Western sword collectors as a Japanese sword polisher. I remember that it was in the second spring in England that I encountered Yasukuni-to for the first time in my life. On one occasion, one of my English friends asked me to polish one of his swords and then he explained about the sword and its signature. At first, I naturally thought that the sword was the work of a koto smith, as he pronounced the smith name "Yasunori" (several smiths called "Yasunori" existed in the koto times) and I answered him that I would be glad to polish it for him, if the signature was genuine.

Shortly after we talked about the sword, it became clear that there was a date of the Showa Era on the back of the tang and it was a so-called Showa-to. Though I had never heard of a smith called 'Yasunori' in the Show Era, I speculated that it was one of the military swords made during the war. I told him that first-class polishers never accepted Showa-to in Japan and I had not polished them in the past and had no intention of polishing them in the future. At that time, I managed to get out of trouble for the time being with the excuse that I would polish his Yasunori, after I examined the sword and if I then considered it worth polishing.

After two months, the owner of the Yasunori visited me at my workshop and showed the sword. I started examining the blade and I was somewhat surprised to see that it had unusually long ha-watari for a Showa-to and a beautiful tachi sugata of the Kamakura Period. This first encounter with the Yasunori sword totally reversed the image of Yasukuni-to that I had before and I could not control my impatience to see the jihada and the hamon.

The jigane looked soft and the jihada was well-forged ko-itame, combined with running o-hada and faint midare-utsuri appeared in the ji. The hamon was choji-midare that consists of nioi in company with ko-nie and reminds one of Osafune Nagamitsu's workmanship. By that time, I was very interested in polishing this tachi by Yasunori and could fully understand why the owner had become an admirer of Yasukuni-to.

(P.81)

I started polishing the Yasunori after a little while and decided to employ sashikomi finish, as the



hamon is in nioi-deki and in order to emphasise the utsuri. I was surprised to discover that the jigane was unexpectedly soft and flexible and I realised that the nature of the jigane somewhat resembled that of fine koto blades. The result of the polish looked modest and elegant and pleased me very much. Needless to say, the owner of the sword was very excited and content with the result and the sword became one of his proudest possessions. I understand Yasukuni-to started interesting sword collectors and they came to have a better opinion of Yasukuni-to. Accordingly the estimation of Yasukuni-to has been rising considerably.

It was entirely by chance that I came across the Yasunori sword that I polished in England. A few years later, I returned Japan and I am very glad to show the photos of the sword here. It is really a strange phenomenon that Yasukuni-to, that had been ignored for years in Japan, was evaluated outside Japan at first and then later the Japanese became aware of the beauty and value of Yasukuni-to. This might be an ironic result of the internationalisation of Japanese swords. At all events, it is my great pleasure that the existence of Yasukuni-to, which attracted no public attention here after World War II, is correctly recorded in the history of Japanese sword, by the publication of this book.

(Sword polisher)

(P.82)

## NIHONTO TANREN KAI FOUNDATION CONCERNED

### CHAIRMEN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1 <sup>st</sup> Chairman	Yanagawa Heisuke	23rd December 1932 to 1st August 1933
2 <sup>nd</sup> Chairman	Hashimoto Toranosuke	1 <sup>st</sup> August 1933 to 21 <sup>st</sup> September 1935
3 <sup>rd</sup> Chairman	Furuso Mokiyo	21 <sup>st</sup> September 1935 to 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 1936
4 <sup>th</sup> Chairman	Umezu Yoshijiro	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 1936 to 30 <sup>th</sup> May 1938
5 <sup>th</sup> Chairman	Tojo Hideki	30 <sup>th</sup> May 1938 to 10 <sup>th</sup> December 1938
6 <sup>th</sup> Chairman	Yamawaki Masataka	10 <sup>th</sup> December 1938 to 14 <sup>th</sup> October 1939
7 <sup>th</sup> Chairman	Anami Korechika	14 <sup>th</sup> October 1939 to 10 <sup>th</sup> April 1941
8 <sup>th</sup> Chairman	Kimura Heitaro	10 <sup>th</sup> April 1941 to 11 <sup>th</sup> March 1943
9 <sup>th</sup> Chairman	Tominaga Kyoji	11 <sup>th</sup> March 1943 to 30 <sup>th</sup> August 1944
10 <sup>th</sup> Chairman	Shibayama Kenshiro	30 <sup>th</sup> August 1944 to 18 <sup>th</sup> July 1945
11 <sup>th</sup> Chairman	Wakamatsu Tadaichi	18 <sup>th</sup> July 1945 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 1945

(The first members of the board of directors are introduced on page 101.)

### INSPECTORS OF THE NIHONTO TANREN KAI

Yamaoka Juko	Major General	Judge of the Chuo Token Kai
Kozu Haku		Judge for National Treasure
		Judge of the Chuo Token Kai
Oyamada Shigezo	Vice-admiral	Member of the Chuo Token Kai
		In charge of swords for the Ministry of the Imperial Household
Koizumi Shinji	Rear Admiral	Councillor of the Chuo Token Kai
Kobayashi Jun	Army Colonel	Member of the Chuo Token Kai
Isobe Miokichi	Naval Captain	Judge of the Chuo Token Kai
Komatsu Kentaro	Sword researcher	Judge of the Chuo Token Kai
Kurata Shichiro	Naval Captain	Judge of the Chuo Token Kai

(Inspectors from the Army were often altered depending on the war situation.)

## **ARAKI SADAŌ**

**(First Adviser for the Foundation)**

(Born 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1877, died 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1966). Originally from Wakayama Prefecture.

July 1927	Lieutenant General
August 1928	President of the War Collage
August 1929	Commander of the 6 <sup>th</sup> Division
August 1931	Educational Superintendent of the War Ministry
December 1931	War Minister
October 1933	General
January 1934	Military Councillor
December 1935	Baron
March 1936	Transferred to the first reserve
October 1937 – May 1938	Councillor for the Cabinet
May 1938 – August 1939	Education Minister
January 1940 – July 1940	Councillor for the Cabinet

## **YAMAGAWA HEISUKE**

**(First Chairman)**

(Born 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1879, died 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1945). Originally from Saga Prefecture.

November 1900	Graduated the Military Academy.
November 1912	Graduated the Military Staff College.
August 1920	Attaché to the General Staff Office (Dispatched to the League of the Nations and resided in Europe)
April 1927	Major General
December 1931	Lieutenant General
August 1932	The Vice-Minister of the War Office
September 1936	Went into the first reserve.
March 1938	Called up and appointed the Commander of the 10 <sup>th</sup> Army
March 1941	The Chairman of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association.
July 1941	A minister of state

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**YAMAOKA JUKO**  
**(First Director of the Board)**

(Born 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1892, died 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1954). Originally from Kochi Prefecture.

August 1931	Major General
August 1931	Commander of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade
February 1932	The Director of the Bureau of the Military Affairs
March 1934	The Director of the Bureau of the Military Equipment
August 1935	Lieutenant General
December 1935	Commander of the 9 <sup>th</sup> Division
December 1936	To the General Staff Office
March 1937	Transferred to the first reserve.
August 1937	Commander of the 10 <sup>th</sup> Division
November 1938	To the General Staff Office
January 1939	Released from military service.
April 1945	Commander of Zentsuji Precinct
June 1945	To the Head Office of Shikoku Precinct
December 1945	Released from military service.

**KURATA SHICHIRO**  
**(First Managing Director & Inspector)**

(Born 1<sup>st</sup> April 1884, died 27<sup>th</sup> September 1949). Originally from Fukuoka Prefecture.

20 <sup>th</sup> December 1907	Second Sublieutenant
11 <sup>th</sup> October 1909	Sublieutenant of the first class
1 <sup>st</sup> December 1912	Naval Lieutenant
24 <sup>th</sup> May 1913	Graduated the Naval Staff College.
11 <sup>th</sup> December 1918	Lieutenant Commander
1 <sup>st</sup> December 1923	Commander
10 <sup>th</sup> December 1928	Naval Captain
25 <sup>th</sup> December 1928	Went into the first reserve.
15 <sup>th</sup> December 1932	Director and Inspector of Nihonto Tanren Kai
November 1941	Called up and appointed Commander of Minesweeper.

## KOZU HAKU

(Inspector)

(Born 6<sup>th</sup> December 1872, died 20<sup>th</sup> March 1951). Originally from Shizuoka Prefecture.

1913	Judge of Chuo Token Kai
1920	Secretary of Chuo token Kai
May 1921	Published 'Shinto Kaji Koryo' from Yoshikawa Kobunkan.
1927	Retired from the Waterway Bureau of the Naval Ministry.
1928	A member of the National Treasure conservation Committee.
1929	A member of the Conservation and research Committee of Juyo Bijutsu-hin (Important Art Objects)
15 <sup>th</sup> December 1932	Inspector of Nihonto tanren Kai Foundation

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### Lineage of Tosho and Sakite of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation

Miyaguchi Yasuhiro \_\_\_\_\_ Umezawa Chikara

\_\_\_\_\_ Sakai Hiroshi

\_\_\_\_\_ Takeda Sadayoshi (formerly 'Kakizaki')

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_\_ Ajiki Yasuyoshi \_\_\_\_\_ Onuki Hisashi

| (Yasuhisa / formerly 'Nonaka')

| \_\_\_\_\_ Yamakawa Hisashi

| \_\_\_\_\_ Shinomura Yasutaro \_\_\_\_\_ Yamakawa Hisashi

| (Yasunori)

| \_\_\_\_\_ Sato Takayoshi

| \_\_\_\_\_ Sugita Shogo

| \_\_\_\_\_ Kariya Naoharu (Yasukuni)

| \_\_\_\_\_ Takahashi Saburo

		<input type="checkbox"/> Nakamori Kanehisa
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sakakibara Susumu
	<input type="checkbox"/> Kajiyama Yasutoshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Nakajima Takashi
		<input type="checkbox"/> Onuki Hisashi (Yasuhisa / formerly 'Nonaka')
	<input type="checkbox"/> Shimazaki Yasuoki	<input type="checkbox"/> Osaki Shigeharu (Yasumune)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Uchiyama Kenzo
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ishibashi Shigeru
	<input type="checkbox"/> Osaki Shigeharu (Yasumune)	

<b>Ikeda Yasumitsu</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Murakami Yasunobu	<input type="checkbox"/> Takeda Sadayoshi (formerly 'Kakizaki')
		<input type="checkbox"/> Kikuzawa Kei
		<input type="checkbox"/> Kanazaki Yoshikazu
		<input type="checkbox"/> Masuda Yasuaki
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ogawa Mitsuyoshi
	<input type="checkbox"/> Abe Yasushige	<input type="checkbox"/> Yakuwa Yasutake
		<input type="checkbox"/> Masuda Yasuaki
		<input type="checkbox"/> Tokuda Masahiro
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sudo Iwao
	<input type="checkbox"/> Nakajima Takashi	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yakuwa Yasutake	

**Note:**

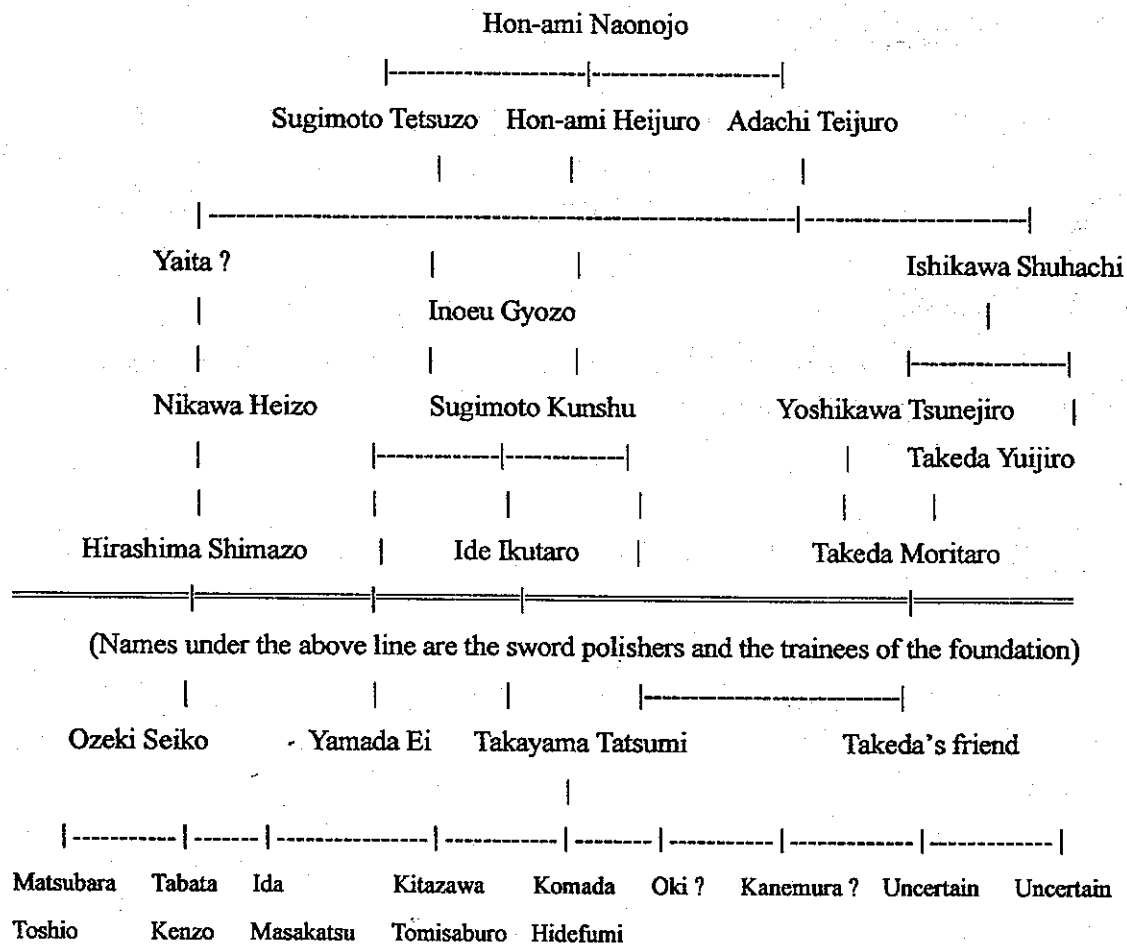
Shinomura Yasutaro was given a smith name 'Yasunori' with Kajiyama Yasunori's approval on 25<sup>th</sup> of September 1973.

Kariya Naomasa changed his smith name to 'Yasukuni' in July 1983.

Osaki Shigeharu was given a smith name 'Yasumune' with the approval of Yasuoki and Yasutake in May 1971.

Lieutenant General Yamaoka Juko (Director of the Foundation) gave Onuki Hisashi a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasuhisa' just before the end of the war in 1945.

# Lineage of the Sword Polishers of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation (including trainees)



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**(Tosho and Sakite)**

**Miyaguchi Yasuhiro**

(11<sup>th</sup> May 1897, died 21st March 1956). Given name: Shigeru.

Originally from Shizuoka Prefecture.

- Became a member of Yasukuni Tanren Kai Foundation on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1933.
- Given a smith name of 'Yasuhro' by the War Minister, Araki Sadao on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1933.
- Commenced sword forging at the forging centre of the Yasukuni Tanren Kai on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1933.
- Left the Foundation on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1936.
- Baron Okura Kihachiro founded the Okura Tanren Dojo and Miyaguchi was invited to be chief instructor of sword making, accompanied by Sakai Hiroshi and Takeda Sadakichi (formerly Kakizaki) as sakite on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1936.
- Obtained a license to make art swords in 1954.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 500 swords**

**\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in August 1933.
- Made a sword for the Imperial army using shin-tamahagane from the Yasukuni tatara for presentation to the Emperor Hirohito on 29<sup>th</sup> of January 1934.
- Donated a sword to the festival that commemorated the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the retired-Emperor Gotoba (maybe his demise) in 1939.
- Made a tachi on the occasion of the reconstruction of the Ise Shrine that was rebuilt in 1953, which is rebuilt every 20 years.

**\*Awards**

- War Minister Award at the Nihonto Tenran Kai held by the Dai-nippon Tosho Kyokai and sponsored by the Education Ministry.

**\*Lineage**

Miyaguchi Ikkansai Shigetoshi \_\_\_\_\_ Masatoshi (father) \_\_\_\_\_ himself

(grandfather)

| \_\_\_\_\_ Kasama Ikkansai Shigetsugu



Apart from 'Yasuhiro', he also signed like "Miyaguchi Ikkansai Toshihiro" and "Miyaguchi Toshihiro". When he used western steel at Okura Tanren Dojo to make swords (gunto) he signed "Ikkansai Kunimori". He was skilled at carving horimono that he learnt from his cousin Kasama Ikkansai Shigetsugu.

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## Kajiyama Yasunori

(Born 16<sup>th</sup> February 1881, died 8<sup>th</sup> January 1957). Given name: Tokutaro.

Originally from Hiroshima Prefecture.

- Became a member of the Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933.
- Given a smith name 'Yasunori' by the War Minister, Araki Sadao on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933.
- Commenced sword forging at the forging centre of the Yasukuni Tanren Kai on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1933.
- Left the Foundation in June 1940.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 1250 swords.**

### **\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in August 1933.
- He made a sword for the Imperial Army using shin-tamahagane from the Yasukuni tatara for presentation to the Emperor Hirohito on 29<sup>th</sup> of January 1934, also he made many swords to the royal family.
- Donated a sword to the Ise Shrine in December 1939, also he made many swords to shrines and temples.
- Donated a sword to the Hosan-kai (organiser) of the festival that commemorated the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of retired-Emperor Gotoba in March 1939.
- Donated two swords (with the signature of 'Masamune') to the Itsukushima Shrine in August 1943.

(Photo, from left)

Kajiyama Yasunori, Kajiyama Toshimichi, Kotani Kenzo.

The photo was taken around 1933 and provided by Miyaguchi Tsuneo.

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- Made an o-dachi of 109.1 cm. in length, assisted by his sixth son, Sumiaki as sakite in 1944.

- Made twenty-three onkashi-to (swords given by the emperor to Imperial Army officers).

#### **\*Main awards**

- Won the Supreme Honour Award from the Education Minister at the Nihonto Tenran Kai held by the Dai-nippon Tosho Kyokai and sponsored by the Ministry of Education on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1942.

#### **\*Lineage**

58<sup>th</sup> descendant of Bizen Tomonari, Yokoyama Sukeyoshi \_\_\_\_\_ himself

His father, Tomohira was also a swordsmith and used a smith name of 'Ujimasa'. Yasunori used smith names of 'Fujiwara no Ujimasa' and 'Geishu Ju Ujimasa' before he became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai. He was given a smith name of 'Takenori' by General Nara Taketsugu on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1934 and used this smith name when he made swords at his own workshop. He became to sign 'Daitoa no Kami Masamune' and 'Masamune' since the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1943 after he left the Foundation and went back to his hometown.

## **Ikeda Yasumitsu**

(Born 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1879, died January 1941). Given name : Shuji.

Originally from Yamagata Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as well as sakite, Abe Shigeo and Murakami Ensaku.
- Given the Yasukuni smith name "Yasumitsu" by the War Minister, Araki Sadao on 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1933.
- Retired on 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1939. He was still in a position of leadership and made a small number of swords after his retirement.
- Left the Foundation and went back to his hometown at the end of 1945.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 1,100 swords.**

#### **\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in 1933.
- Made a sword for Prince Mikasa in the occasion of his coming-of-age celebration in 1934.

- Donated a sword to the festival of the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the retired-Emperor Gotoba in March 1939.
- Had made uncertain number of onkashi-to.

#### **\*Lineage**

Suishinshi Masahide \_\_\_\_ Ikeda Ishu (Nyudo) Ryuken \_\_\_\_ Ikeda Kazumitsu (or Ikko)  
 \_\_\_\_ 10<sup>th</sup> Ikeda Kazumitsu (Yasumitsu)

The smith name of 'Kazumitsu (or Ikko)' had been succeeded for generations since the second generation and they also signed 'Ushu Shonai Ju Ikeda Kazumitsu Saku'.

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## **Sakai Hiroshi**

(Born 19<sup>th</sup> August 1905, died 14<sup>th</sup> September 1995). Originally from Shizuoka Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as a sakite of Miyaguchi Yasuhiro on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933.
- Left the foundation as well as Miyaguchi Yasuhiro and Takeda Sadayoshi (former Kakizaki) on 26<sup>th</sup> of December 1936.
- Transferred to Okura Tanren Dojo on 26<sup>th</sup> of December 1936.
- Became an independent smith and opened his own workshop in his house.
- Designated as a Jumei Tosho (appointed smith) for the Department of the Manufacture of Arms in the Imperial Army in December 1941.
- Designated as a Jumei Tosho for the Imperial Navy in 1943.
- Obtained a license to make art swords and resumed sword forging on 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1954.
- Designated as a mukansa smith by the NBTHK on 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1981.

#### **\*Main works**

- Made 10 tanto with Endo Mitsuoki at the request of Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku in 1943.
- Made 5 tachi on the occasion of the reconstruction of the Ise Shrine in 1953.
- Donated a tanto that was co-worked with Yakuwa Yasutake to the Yasukuni Shrine on the occasion of the 100 anniversary of the shrine in 1969.
- Made 2 tachi on the occasion of the reconstruction of the Ise Shrine in 1973.

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**\*Awards**

- President Honour Award and the War Minister Award at the Nihonto Tenran Kai held by the Dai-nippon Tosho Kyokai in June 1933.
- Superior Award at the 1<sup>st</sup> Gunto Tenran Kai (Military Swords Exhibition) held by the Head Office of the Arms Administration of the Army in November 1943.
- 5 Yushu-sho (or Shorei-sho, Second Prize) and 2 Nyusen (accepted) at the Sakuto Gijutsu Happyo Kai (Sword Forging Technique Exhibition).
- 3 Yushu-sho, 5 Doryoku-sho (Endeavour Prize) and 2 Nyusen at the Shinsaku Meito Ten (Newly-made Fine Sword Exhibition).

**\*Lineage**

Miyaguchi Ikkansai Shigetoshi \_\_\_\_ Kasama Ikkansai Shigetsugu \_\_\_\_ himself  
Miyaguchi Yasuhiro \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Signature**

“Sakai Ikkansai Shigemasa” (the name was given by his teacher, Kasama Ikkansai Shigetsugu)

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## Umezawa Chikara

(Presumably, born in 1894, died ?). Birthplace is unknown.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai foundation on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933.
- Left the Foundation in autumn 1935 and passed away shortly.

**\*Lineage**

Miyaguchi Yasuhiro \_\_\_\_ himself

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## Kotani Yasunori

(Born 7<sup>th</sup> of January 1909 ---). Given name : Kenzo.

Originally from Hiroshima Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as Kajiyama Yasunori's sakite.

- Given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasunori' by the War Minister, Hayashi Senjuro on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1935.
- Moved to Zentsuji Town of Kagawa Prefecture in order to open a branch factory of the Nihonto Tanren Kai on 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1945.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.
- Participated in the foundation of Kotohira Daily Necessities Research Laboratory in 1945 but retired on 28<sup>th</sup> of December in the same year and went back to his hometown.
- Obtained a license to make art swords on 29<sup>th</sup> of May 1945.

(Photo)

A kendo instructor of the Toyama school of the Army was sent to the foundation every two weeks.

Front from left : Nakajima Takashi, Kajiya Yasunori, Yakuwa Takeshi.

Bottom from left : Ajiki Harukichi, Shimazaki Nao-oki.

The photo was taken by an unknown person on 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1936 and provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 1,600 swords.**

**\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in 1935.
- Made a military sword for the Kuninomiya family (for the coming-of-age celebration of Prince Moriatsu) in 1936.
- Donated a sword to the festival that commemorated the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the retired-Emperor Gotoba in March 1939.
- Donated a sword in the celebration of the 2600<sup>th</sup> Imperial year at the request of the governor of Kanagawa Prefecture.

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- Donated a sword to the Atsuta-shrine at the request of the War Minister, Tojo Hideki.
- Had made about 13 onkashi-to.

**\*Awards**

- Exhibition Chairman Award at the 2nd Gunto Tenran Kai held by the Head Office of Arms Administration of the Army.
- Accepted 5 times at the Shinsaku Meito Ten.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

Kotani already worked as sakite when Kajiyama Yasunori was learning sword forging from Yokoyama Sukeyoshi. He opened his own workshop in his house in 1938 and engaged in sword forging on holidays and made for his relatives and friends. He signed 'Takenori' as his smith name, (which was given by General Nara Taketsugu) on the swords that were made in his workshop as did Kajiyama Yasunori.

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## Kajiyama Yasutoshi

(Born 20<sup>th</sup> July 1915, died 24<sup>th</sup> March 1942). Given name : Toshimichi.

Originally from Hiroshima Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as a sakite of his father, Kajiyama Yasunori on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933.
- Given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasutoshi' by the War Minister, Itagaki Seishiro on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1939.
- Left the Foundation because of unhealthy condition and went back to his hometown in April 1941.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 350 swords.**

### **\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in February 1939.
- Donated a sword to the festival of the 700 anniversary of the retire-Emperor Gotoba in March 1939.
- Made an uncertain number of onkashi-to (swords given by the Emperor to Imperial Army officers).

### **\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori (father) \_\_\_\_ himself

Yasutoshi is the fifth son of Kajiyama Yasunori and was adopted into the Kutsuki family between 12<sup>th</sup> of March 1926 and 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1937.

(Photo in the top)

Nakago of tanto by Kotani Yasunori.

((Photo in the bottom)

Commencing ceremony of sword forging by Yasutoshi and Yasunobu after their naming ceremony.

The photo was taken by an unknown person on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939 and provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

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## Murakami Yasunobu

(Born 24<sup>th</sup> April 1907 ---). Given Name : Ensaku.

Originally from Yamagata Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1933.
- Given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasunobu' by the War Minister, Itagaki Seishiro on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.
- Left the Foundation on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945 in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 1,000 swords.**

### **\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in February 1939.
- Donated a sword to the festival of the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the retired-Emperor Gotoba in March 1939.
- Made an uncertain number of onkashi-to.

### **\*Awards**

- Chairman Award at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gunto Tenran Kai held by the Head Office of Arms Administration of the Army on 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1944.

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### **\*Lineage**

Ikeda Yasumitsu (Ikko or Kazumitsu) \_\_\_\_ himself

He was making agricultural tools under Ikeda Ikko in Yamagata Prefecture.

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## Abe Yasushige

(Born 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1911 —). Given name : Shigeo.

Originally from Yamagata Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as Yasumitsu's sakite on 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1933.
- Given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasushige' by the War Minister, Hata Shunroku on 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1939.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 850 swords.**

### **\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in 1939.
- Had made uncertain number of onkashi-to.

### **\*Awards**

- President Award at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gunto Tenran Kai held by the head Office of the Arms Administration of the Army on 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1944.

### **\*Lineage**

Ikeda Yasumitsu (Ikko or Kazumitsu) \_\_\_\_ himself

He was making agricultural tools in Yamagata Prefecture.

(Photo in the top)

Certificate of the President Award to Yasushige.

(The smiths of the Foundation participated only in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gunto Tenran Kai.)

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## Ajiki Yasuyoshi

(Born 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1912, died 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1994). Given name : Haruyoshi.



Originally from Yamagata Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1933.
- Became a sakite of Kotani Yasunori on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1935.
- Given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasuyoshi' by the War minister, Hata Shunroku on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1940.
- Moved to the second workshop and succeeded Yasutoshi's place after he left the Foundation around April 1941.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.
- Obtained a license to make art swords on 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1955.
- Made two swords at the workshop of Miyaguchi Yasuhiro and signed "Boshu Junin Ajiki Yasuyoshi Tokyo To Oite Kore Tsukuru" in 1955.

(Photo in the bottom)

Yasuyoshi (third person from left in the front) and Yasuoki (fifth person in the front) with certificates of Yasukuni smith names.

The photo was taken by an unknown person in December 1940 and provided by Shimazaki Tomi.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 730 swords.**

**\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in August 1940.
- Made an uncertain number of onkashi-to.

**\*Awards**

- Nyusen (Accepted) at the Gunto Tenran Kai held by the Head Office of the Arms Administration of the Army on 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1944.

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- A Yushu-sho (Superior) Award at Sakuto Gijutsu Happyo Kai.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiya Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

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**Shinomura Yasutaro**

(Born 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1917, died 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1989).

Originally from Akita Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in 1934.
- Became a sakite of Kotani Yasunori on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1935.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army in April 1941.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945.
- Obtained a license to make art swords and resumed sword forging on 25<sup>th</sup> of September 1973 then given a smith name 'Yasunori' by Kotani Yasunori.
- Had made about five swords.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

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## Shimazaki Yasuoki

(Born 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1916, died 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1986). Given name : Nao-oki

Originally from Kochi Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1935.
- Became a sakite of Kajiyama Yasunori after Kotani Yasunori left the Foundation on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1935.
- Given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasuoki' by the War Minister, Hata Shunroku on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1940.
- Moved to Zentsuji Town of Kagawa Prefecture when a branch factory was opened there on 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1945.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.
- Joined the Kotohira Daily Necessities Research Laboratory but left the laboratory in May then went back to his hometown.
- Obtained a license to make art swords on 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1955.
- Resumed sword forging in 1966.
- Received the Elaborate Worker Award from Fuchu City Council of Tokyo Metropolitan on 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1981.

(Photo right in the top)

Certificate of the naming of Yasukuni smith 'Yasuoki'.

(Photo right in the bottom)

Commencing ceremony of sword forging by Yasuoki.

From left : Yasuoki, Uchiyama Kenzo, Osaki Shigeharu

The photo was taken by an unknown person and provided by Kikuzawa Makie.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 750**

**\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine on August 1940.
- Donated a sword in commemorating the 2,600<sup>th</sup> Imperial year at the request of the governor of Kanagawa Prefecture.
- Made a guardian tanto for Princess Takeda-no-miya Motoko in February 1942.
- Had made onkashi-to of 9 katana and 3 tanto.

**\*Awards**

- Chairman Award at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gunto Tenran Kai held by the Head Office of the Arms Administration of the Army on 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1944.
- A Yushu-sho (or Shorei-sho) Award at the Sakuto Gijutsu Happyo Kai.
- Two Doryoku-sho Awards and 8 Nyusen (Accepted) at the Shisaku Meito Ten.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

(Photo in the left)

Certificate of the Chairman Award for Yasuoki at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gunto Tenran Kai.

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## **Records of Swordsmiths**

(Examples of Shimazaki Yasuoki)

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## Certificates of Yasukuni Tosho Name

The following 12 smiths were formally given Yasukuni smith names by Nihonto tanren Kai Foundation.

1. Miyaguchi Yasuhiro
2. Kajiya Yasunori
3. Ikeda Yasumitsu
4. Kotani Yasunori
5. Kajiya Yasutoshi
6. Murakami Yasunobu
7. Abe Yasushige
8. Ajiki Yasuyoshi
9. Shimazaki Yasuoki
10. Yakuwa Yasutake
11. Masuda Yasuaki
12. Onuki Yasuhisa (He was given the Yasukuni smith name by Yamaoka Juko at the branch factory)

(Right in the top)

Miyaguchi Yasuhiro (8<sup>th</sup> July 1933)

(Right in the middle)

Kajiya Yasunori (8<sup>th</sup> July 1933)

(Right in the bottom)

Kotani Yasunori (1<sup>st</sup> July 1935)

(Top in the left)

Kajiya Yasutoshi (11<sup>th</sup> January 1939)

(Second in the left)

Abe Yasushige (4<sup>th</sup> October 1939)

(Third in the left)

Shimazaki Yasuoki (12<sup>th</sup> July 1940)

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## **Takeda Sadayoshi**

(Former name, Kakizaki)

(Date of birth uncertain, died 1991). Originally from Yamagata Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in 1935.
- Succeeded to Miyaguchi Chikara's place and became a sakite of Miyaguchi Yasuhiro in autumn 1935.
- Left the Foundation with Miyaguchi Yasuhiro and Sakai Hiroshi on 26<sup>th</sup> of December 1936.
- Transferred to the Okura Tanren Dojo on 26<sup>th</sup> of December 1936.
- Returned to Nihonto Tanren Kai and became a sakite of Murakami Yasunobu on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army around April 1941 and saw the end of the war in the army in 1945.

### **\*Lineage**

Miyaguchi Yasuhiro \_\_\_\_\_ himself

Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_\_\_\_ Murakami Yasunobu \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Nakajima Takashi**

(Born 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1913 ---). Originally from Kochi Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1935.
- Became of a sakite of Ikeda Yasumitsu on 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1937.
- Became a sakite of Kajiyama Yasutoshi on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.
- Left the Foundation in spring 1941 and returned to his hometown and engaged in making gunto there.
- Had been a guest smith of the Nihonto Tanren Denshujo sponsored by Kurihara Hikosaburo between May and July of 1942.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army in mid-September 1942 and saw the end of the war in the army in 1945.

- Obtained a license to make art swords on 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1965 and has produced about 10 swords since that time.

**\*Main works**

- Navy Minister Award at the 6<sup>th</sup> Nihonto Tenran Kai Exhibition held by the Dai-nippon Tosho Kai and sponsored by the Agency for Cultural Affairs in 1941.
- Prime Minister Award at the 7<sup>th</sup> Nihonto Tenran Kai Exhibition in 1942.

**\*Lineage**

Tateibetsu Nakajima Ujiaki \_\_ Ujiyoshi \_\_ Ujihide (father) \_\_\_\_\_ himself  
Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_ Kajiyama Yasutoshi \_\_

**\*Signature**

“Nakajima Akihide” (only one sword was made with this signature, which won the Navy Minister Award in 1941)

“Nakajima Hidenori”

## Yakuwa Yasutake

(Born 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1909, died 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1984). Given name : Takeshi.

Originally from Yamagata Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1935.
- Succeeded to Murakami Yasunobu' place and became a sakite of Ikeda Yasumitsu on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.
- Became a sakite of Abe Yasushige on 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1939.
- Given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasutake' by the War Minister, Sugiyama Moto on 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1944.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945.
- Obtained a license to make art swords on 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1954 and he was the first amongst the Yasukuni smiths, to resume sword forging after the war.
- Designated as mukansa smith (smith exempted from judging) of the NBTHK on 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1981.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 30 swords.**

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**\*Main works**

- Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in 1944.
- Donated a tanto co-worked with Sakai Hiroshi to the festival of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Yasukuni Shrine in 1970.
- Made a tachi on the occasion of the reconstruction of the Ise Shrine in 1973.
- Donated a tachi to Sakekawa Village of Mogami County in Yamagata Prefecture on 8<sup>th</sup> of October 1982.
- His family donated a tachi by Yasutake to his family temple, the Hase Temple of Kamakura after his death.

**\*Awards**

- 2 Yushu-sho (Shorei-sho) Award, a Doryoku-sho and 3 Nyusen at the Sakuto Gijutsu Happyo Kai.
- A Masamune-sho Award, 2 Honorary Chairman Awards, a Kanzan-sho Award, 6 Yushu-sho (Shorei-sho) Awards, 4 Doryoku-sho Awards, 3 Nyusen.

**\*Lineage**

Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_\_\_\_ himself

Abe Yasushige \_\_\_\_\_

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## Kikuzawa Kei

(Born 8<sup>th</sup> of March 1921, died 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1992). Originally from Ehime Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai on 31<sup>st</sup> of January 1937.
- Became a sakite of Murakami Yasunobu on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army on 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1942 and saw the end of the war then left the Foundation.

**\*Lineage**

Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_\_\_\_ Murakami Yasunobu \_\_\_\_\_ himself

Shortly after the war, he started making agricultural tools, but he has produced no swords since that time.

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## Kariya Naoharu

(Born 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1917 ---). Originally from Kochi Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in April 1937.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army on 17<sup>th</sup> of June 1944 and produced five gunto using railway material made in China.
- Discharged from the army on 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1942.
- Succeeded to Sugita Shogo's place and became a sakite of Kotani Yasunori in January 1943.
- Left the Foundation in September 1943.
- Appointed by the Department of the Manufacture of Ammunition in the Army and started making gunto at the Tosa Nihonto Tanren Kumiai (Association) in October 1943.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army on 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1944 and produced a gunto in Komatsushima Town of Tokushima Prefecture then saw the end of the war.
- Made a katana and 2 tanto of Kowa Kinen-to in 1952.
- Obtained a license to make art swords on 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 1971 and resumed sword forging.

### \*Awards

- 21 Nyusen at the Shinsaku Meito Ten.
- 20 Nyusen at the Exhibition of Kochi Prefecture.

### \*Lineage

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

### \*Signature

"Yasukuni Isshinshi Kariya Shiro Minamoto no Naohide"

"Tateibetsu Ju Yasukuni"

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\*Kowa Kinen-to : When the San Francisco Peace Treaty between Japan and the United States was concluded, Kurihara Hikosaburo tried to restore sword production that had been banned by the General Head Quarters of the Allied Forces after the war. He thought up a device to make swords celebrating the conclusion of the peace treaty and the swords made on this occasion are called 'Kowa Kinen-to'.



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## Osaki Yasuharu

(Born 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1915, died 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1997). Originally from Yamagata Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 24<sup>th</sup> of September 1937.
- Succeeded to Kajiyama Yasutoshi's place and became a sakite of Kajiyama Yasunori on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.
- Became a sakite of Shimazaki Yasuoki on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1940.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army then saw the end of the war in 1945 and left the Foundation.
- Given a smith name Yasumune by Shimazaki Yasuoki and Yakuwa Yasutake in May 1971.
- Obtained a license to make art swords and resumed sword forging on 26<sup>th</sup> of November 1971.
- Designated as Intangible Cultural Asset of Ota Ward in Tokyo on 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1992.

### \*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai :

15 swords substituted for Kajiyama Yasunori.

209 swords substituted for Shimazaki Yasuoki.

### \*Main works

- Donated a tachi to Sakekawa Village of Mogami County in Yamagata Prefecture on 8<sup>th</sup> of October 1982.
- Donated a tanto in commemorating the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Yasukuni Shrine on 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1989.
- Donated a tachi to Sumida Ward of Tokyo on 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1993.

### \*Awards

3 Doryoku-sho and 17 Nyusen at the Shinsaku Meito Ten.

### \*Lineage

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_\_ himself

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_\_ Shimazaki Yasuoki \_\_\_\_\_

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## Masuda Yasuaki

(Born 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1915, died 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1995). Given name : Kaname.

Originally from Tochigi Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1937.
- Became a sakite of Abe Yasushige on 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1939.
- Succeeded to Kikuzawa Kei's place and became a sakite of Murakami Yasunobu in February 1942.
- Given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasuaki' by the War Minister, Sugiyama Moto on 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1944.
- Moved to Zentsuji Town of Kagawa Prefecture in order to open a branch factory of the Foundation on 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1945.
- Saw the end of the war and left the Foundation on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.
- Installed as the chairman of the Kotohira Daily Necessities Research Laboratory in 1945.
- Obtained a license to make art swords on 9<sup>th</sup> of January 1954.
- Resumed sword forging in 1970.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai : Approx. 20 swords.**

**\*Main works**

Donated a sword to the Yasukuni Shrine in 1944.

**\*Awards**

2 Doryoku-sho at the Sakuto Gijutsu Happyo Kai.

A Yushu-sho (Shorei-sho), 5 Doryoku-sho and 9 Nyusen at the Shinsaku Meito Ten.

**\*Lineage**

Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_\_\_\_ Abe Yasushige \_\_\_\_\_ himself

Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_\_\_\_ Murakami Yasunobu \_\_\_\_\_

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## KANAZAKI GIICHI

(Born 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1918, died 24<sup>th</sup> of November 1978). Originally from Tottori Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in October 1937.
- Succeeded to Takeda Sadayoshi's place and became a sakite of Murakami Nobuyasu.

- Left the Foundation in the end of 1942.
- Resumed sword forging at the Torishiro Tanto Sha in 1943.
- Started sword forging at his own workshop in his house in January 1944.
- Became an appointed smith of the War Ministry in May 1944 and continued sword forging until the end of the war.
- Resumed sword forging in 1962.

#### \*Awards

- President Honour Award at the 8<sup>th</sup> Nihonto Tenran Kai held by the Dai-nippon Tosho Kyokai and sponsored by the Education Ministry in 1943.
- Chairman Award at the 1<sup>st</sup> Gunto Tenran Kai of the Army held by the Head Office of the Arms Administration of the War Ministry on 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1943.
- Two Doryoku-sho Awards and two Nyusen at the Sakuto Gijutsu Happyo Kai.
- Eight Nyusen at the Shinsaku Meito Ten.

#### \*Lineage

Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_\_\_ Murakami Yasunobu \_\_\_\_ himself

#### \*Signature

“Tenryushi Minamoto no Toshimitsu”, “Inari Kokaji Tendoshi Minamoto no Toshimitsu”

“Tenjitsusai Mimanoto no Suketoshi”

By orders of the military authority, he made 30 swords at the Fushimi Inari Shrine of Kyoto and donated the swords to the shrine in January 1945. The chief priest of the shrine, Suzuki Matsutaro, gave him the personal title of ‘Inari Kokaji’ on that occasion. He used this personal title after that, meanwhile he used another smith name of ‘Tenjitsusai Suketoshi’ since 1962.

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## Onuki Hisashi

(Former name, Nonaka)

(Born 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 1922 ---). Originally from Tochigi Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in 1938.
- Became a sakite of Kajiyama Yasutoshi on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.
- Became a sakite of Ajiki Yasuyoshi after Kajiyama Yasutoshi left the Foundation in April 1941.

- Moved to Zentsuji Town of Kagawa Prefecture in order to open a branch factory of the Foundation.
- Given a Yasukuni smith name 'Yasuhisa by Lieutenant General Yamaoka Juko in 1945 just before the end of the war.
- Obtained a license to make art swords on 9<sup>th</sup> of January 1954 and made two swords at the Kotohira Daily Necessities Research Laboratory located in Zentsuji Town of Kagawa Prefecture.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kajiyama Yasutoshi \_\_\_\_ himself  
 Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Ajiki Yasuyoshi \_\_\_\_

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## Sato Takayoshi

(Dates of birth and death are uncertain). Originally from Yamagata Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in 1938.
- Succeeded to Ajiki Yasuyoshi's place and became a sakite of Kotani Yasunori.
- Left the Foundation because of poor health condition around 1944.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

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## Uchiyama Kenzo

(Born 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1923 ---) Originally from Chiba Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 27<sup>th</sup> of January 1939.
- Became a sakite of Shimazaki Yasuoki on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1940.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army in October 1944 and saw the end of the war there then left the Foundation.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai :**

52 swords substituted for Shimazaki Yasuoki.

Quenched 2 swords that Shimazaki Yasuoki forged.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Shimazaki Yasuoki \_\_\_\_ himself

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**Yamakawa Hisashi**

(Born 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1923 ---) Originally from Tokyo

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai in April 1940.
- Succeeded to Nakajima Takashi's place and became a sakite of Ajiki Yasuyoshi in spring 1941.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1944 and saw the end of the war then left the Foundation.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Ajiki Yasuyoshi \_\_\_\_ himself

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**Sugita Shogo**

(Dates of birth and death are uncertain). Originally from Tokyo.

- Succeeded to Shinomura Yasutaro's place and became a sakite of Kotani Yasunori in April 1941.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army. Details of his life and death at the front are uncertain.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

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**TOKUDA MASAHIRO**

(Born 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1923 ---). Originally from Chiba Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in 1940.

- Succeeded to Masuda Kaname's place and became a sakite of Abe Yasushige in February 1942.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army in autumn 1944 and saw the end of the war there then left the Foundation.

**\*Lineage**

Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_\_\_ Abe Yasushige \_\_\_\_ himself

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## Ogawa Mitsuyoshi

(Born 26<sup>th</sup> of December 1924, died 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1963). Originally from Chiba Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in autumn 1940.
- Succeeded to Kanazaki Yoshikazu's place and became a sakite of Murakami Yasunobu late 1942.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army in autumn 1944 and saw the end of the war there then left the Foundation.

**\*Lineage**

Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_\_\_ Murakami Yasunobu \_\_\_\_ himself

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## Sudo Iwao

(Dates of birth and death are uncertain). Originally from Gunma Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in 1941.
- Succeeded to Tokuda Masahiro's place and became a sakite of Abe Yasushige in April 1943.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.

**\*Lineage**

Ikeda Yasumitsu \_\_\_\_ Abe Yasushige \_\_\_\_ himself

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## Takahashi Saburo

(Dates of birth and death are uncertain). Originally from Tokyo.

- Succeeded to Kariya Naoharu's place and became a sakite of Kotani Yasunori in September 1943.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army in autumn 1944 and saw the end of the war then left the Foundation.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

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## Ishibashi Shigeru

(Born 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1926 ---). Originally from Chiba Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1941.
- Succeeded to Osaki Shigeharu's place and became a sakite of Shimazaki Yasuoki on 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1943.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army on 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1945 and saw the end of the war there then left the Foundation.

**\*Number of swords produced at Nihonto Tanren Kai :**

Substituted a sword for Shimazaki Yasuoki.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Shimazaki Yasuoki \_\_\_\_ himself

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## Nakamori Kanehisa

(Dates and places of birth and death are uncertain).

- Succeeded to Sato Takayoshi's place and became a sakite of Kotani Yasunori in 1944.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army on 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1945 and saw the end of the war there then left the Foundation.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

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**Sakakibara Susumu**

(Born on 14th of November 1927 ---). Originally from Tokyo.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in June 1942.
- Succeeded to the place of Nakamori Kanehisa and Takahashi Saburo and became a sakite of Kotani Yasunori in autumn 1944.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.

**\*Lineage**

Kajiyama Yasunori \_\_\_\_ Kotani Yasunori \_\_\_\_ himself

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**Sword Polisher**

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**Ozaki Seiko**

(Born in 1915 or 1916 ---). Originally from Gifu Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as sword polisher early 1937.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army on 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1938 and saw the end of the war there then left the Foundation.

**\*Lineage**

Hirashima Shimazo \_\_\_\_ himself

He was engaging in sword polishing at the first workshop.

His teacher, Hirashima Shimazo was a contracted sword polisher of the Foundation.

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## Takayama Tatsumi

(Born 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1902, died 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1992). Originally from Gunma Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as sword polisher on 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1939.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan 's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.

(P.99)

### \*Lineage

Sumitomo Kunshu \_\_\_\_ Ide Ikutaro \_\_\_\_ himself

Sugimoto Kunshu \_\_\_\_\_ |  
Takeda Moritaro

He engaged in sword polishing and training polishers at the Foundation, meanwhile he also did sword polishing at his own workshop in Ichigaya, Tokyo.

He learnt sword-polishing techniques of the Ishikawa Shuhachi school from his friend, Takeda Moritaro and there was technical exchange between them.

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## Matsubara Toshio

(Born 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1922, died 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1944). Originally from Shizuoka Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as a trainee of sword polisher on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1939.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army in 1943 and died in battle.

### \*Lineage

Takayama Tatsumi \_\_\_\_ himself

He became an apprentice of Takayama Tatsumi in 1937.

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## Ida Masakatsu

(Dates of birth and death are uncertain). Originally from Tokyo.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as a trainee sword polisher on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1939.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army early 1945 and saw the end of the war there then left the Foundation.

**\*Lineage**

Takayama Tatsumi \_\_\_\_ himself

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## **Tabata Kenzo**

(Formerly 'Shinomura')

(Born 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1924 ---). Originally from Akita Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as a trainee of sword polisher on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1939.
- Drafted into the Imperial Army on 15<sup>th</sup> of November 1944 and saw the end of the war then left the Foundation.

**\*Lineage**

Takayama Tatsumi \_\_\_\_ himself

He is a real brother of Shinomura Yasutaro.

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## **Yamada Ei**

(Born 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1911, died 9<sup>th</sup> of February 1974). Originally from Saitama Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as sword polisher in 1944.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.

**\*Lineage**

Sugimoto Kunshu \_\_\_\_ himself

He was a part-time employee as a sword polisher for the Ministry of Royal Household Affairs and a member of the Chuo Token Kai Sword Club.

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Two trainee sword polishers, Kitazawa Tomisaburo and Kobayashi became members of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation in April 1941, though Kobayashi died of illness one year later.

Shortly after the two trainees' entry, Komatani Hidefumi became a member of the Foundation as a trainee sword polisher.

Oshita and Kanemura became members of the Foundation as trainee sword polishers in April 1943.

Two persons whose names are uncertain became members of the foundation as trainee sword polishers in 1945.

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## **Saya Maker**

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### **Sato Kiyoshi**

(Born 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1900, died 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1984). Originally from Yamagata Prefecture.

- Became a member of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation as saya (scabbard) maker in June 1939.
- Left the Foundation in the wake of Japan's defeat by the Allied Forces on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.

He was a part-time saya maker after the war but became a full-time saya maker later, with the increase of the demand for saya from 1968 to 1978.

(P.100)

## **DOCUMENTS**

### **The Articles of Nihonto Tanren Kai**

(Printed on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1932)

(Partly corrected on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1933)

(Partly corrected on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1933)

#### **Chapter 1 Name**

Article 1 : This organisation is named 'Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation'

#### **Chapter 2 Purpose and Activities**

Article 2 : The Foundation has swordsmiths forge traditional Japanese swords , mainly in order to supply them to officer-class servicemen for the purpose of fully equipping them with quality gunto.

Article 3 : The Foundation implements the following activities in order to realise the purpose mentioned in the above article:

Clause 1 : It manufactures Japanese swords and mainly supplies them to officer class servicemen.

Clause 2 : It patronises Japanese swords and swordsmiths, also helps them in improve their skill.

Clause 3 : It raises morale of the nation by enhancing a sword-loving mind and spreading it to the nation

#### **Chapter 3 Office**

Article 4 : The Foundation locates its office in the ground of the Yasukuni Shrine.  
The address is '3-6 Kudan, Koji-machi, Tokyo-shi'.

#### **Chapter 4 Assets and Finance**

Article 5 : The assets of the Foundation consists of the following;

Clause 1 : Properties donated from people who patronise the foundation.

Clause 2 : Income caused by its assets.

Clause 3 : Other incomes

The original assets, which were financed on the foundation, consists of donations of 70,000 yen from the Arts and Engineering Scholarship of the Imperial Army and 100,000 yen from the Harada Sekizen Kai Foundation.

Article 6 : Among the above assets, the ones mentioned below are to be the basic properties of the Foundation.

Clause 1 : The original assets and 130,000 yen donated from the Mitani family on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1932.

Clause 2 : Properties inserted in the basic properties with the approval of more than half the members of the board of directors.

Article 7 : The previously stated basic properties are not consumable but the second property of the 5<sup>th</sup> article can be consumed when the majority of the board of directors agree on it.

Article 8 : The cash is to be deposited in banks or post office, otherwise it is to be invested to national bonds or sound securities.

The assets of the foundation can be left in trust with a trust company.

Article 9 : The expenses of the Foundation are to be paid with the income from the basic properties and the other properties.

Article 10 : Fiscal year of the Foundation starts from the 1<sup>st</sup> of every April and ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> of the next March.

Article 11 : Budget of the Foundation is approved with the majority of the board of directors every February. The settlement of the balance is to be done every April.

## **Chapter 5 Directors, Staffs and Advisers**

Article 12 : The directors of the Foundation are as follows;

Clause 1 : The chairman of the board of directors is recommended by the War Minister.

Clause 2 : In addition to the chairman, the members of the board of directors are entrusted by the chairman from the posts mentioned below.

- a. One or two adjutant of the War Ministry  
Director of the Personnel Bureau of the War Ministry  
Director of the Bureau for War Affairs of the War Ministry  
Director of the Bureau for Maintenance of the War Ministry  
Director of the Bureau for Arsenal of the War Ministry  
Director of the Bureau for Military Service of the War Ministry
- b. Chief Priest of the Yasukuni Shrine  
Curator of the Yushukan Museum
- c. The Army and Naval officers who live in Tokyo area and are recommended by the directors belong to the 'a.' group.
- d. Experts of the sword society who are recommended by the directors belong to the group.

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The chairman nominates less than three managing directors from the members of the board of directors.

Article 13 : The chairman presides the board of directors and represents the Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation.

Article 14 : The Foundation has a few auditors.

The auditors are entrusted by the chairman from active officers of the Accountant's Department of the War Ministry.

Article 15 : The directors and the auditors serve out their terms in two years. Though the directors who belong to the 'a.' and the 'b.' groups stay at the post as long as they are in the present posts of the War Ministry, the Yasukuni Shrine and the Yushukan Museum.

Article 16 : Substitute of the directors and the auditors serves for a remaining term of the predecessor.

The role of the predecessor is to be completed by himself until the successor takes up is post.

Article 17 : The Foundation employs a few of clerks and engineers.

They are committed by the chairman from staff, employees and non-regular employees of the War Ministry and the Yushukan Museum.

Article 18 : The directors and the auditors are honorary posts though a certain amount of wages are to be paid to the managing director, the clerks and the engineers with the approval of the majority of the board.

Article 19 : The foundation has a few of advisers.

The advisers are entrusted by the chairman with the recommendation of the majority of the board.

The advisers provide advice and suggestions on pending projects, as requested by the chairman.

### **Chapter 6 Supplementary Rules**

Article 20 : Necessary rules of the transfer of the swords manufactured in the Nihonto Tanren Kai and the implementation of the articles of the Foundation are to be made by the majority of the board of directors.

Article 21 : The articles of the Foundation should not be changed without the majority of the board of directors and the approval of the competent authorities.

### **Additional Rules**

Article 22 : The members of the board of directors as of the foundation day are as follows;

Chairman : Vice-minister of the War Ministry

Lieutenant General Yanagawa Heisuke

Director : Director of the Personnel Bureau of the War Ministry

Major General Matsuura Junrokuro

Director : Director of the Bureau for War Affairs of the War Ministry

Major General Yamaoka Juko

Director : Director of the Bureau for Maintenance of the War Ministry

Lieutenant General Hayashi Katsura

Director : Director of the Bureau for Arsenal of the War Ministry

Major General Uemura Haruhiko

Director : Adjutant of the War Ministry  
Cavalry Colonel Iida Sadamoto  
Director : Adjutant of the War Ministry  
Artillery Major Kawaguchi Kiyotake  
Director : Chief Priest of the Yasukuni Shrine  
Kamo Momoki  
Director : Curator of the Yushukan Museum  
Matsuda Tsuneta

#### **Inventory of the Assets**

- 381,000 yen

#### **Statement of Items**

- 100,000 yen : Fixed deposit at the Kojimachi Branch of the Sumitomo Bank.
- 70,000 yen : Donation from the Arts and Engineering Scholarship of the War Ministry.
- 130,000 yen : Donation from Mrs. Mitani Tei (the Mitani family).
- 1,000 yen : Donation from the Emperor Showa.
- 80,000 yen : Donation by Article 6, Clause 2.



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## **The Provisions of Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation**

**(Appendix) Rules of Sword Inspection, Sword Register & Account Books**

**(Appendix) Bylaws of the Wages for Sword Engineers**

**Rules of Sword engineers**

(Printed in June 1933)

(Partly corrected on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1933)

(Partly corrected on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1934)

(Partly corrected on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1935)

### **Chapter 1 General Rules**

Article 1 : The Provisions precisely rule the activities of the Nihonto Tanren Kai Foundation under the Article 20.

Article 2 : Other rules are applied to engineers.

### **Chapter 2 Activities**

Article 3 : The production and the transfer of the swords manufactured by Clause 1 of Article 3 in the Articles of the foundation are ruled as stated below.

Clause 1 : The Foundation manufactures gunto and tanken (dagger) for the Army and the Navy officers. Also surplus swords may be provided to administration offices, shrines, temples, organisations and individuals.

Clause 2 : Swords manufactured in the Foundation are registered and inspected, those which do not meet a practical standard are to be discarded.

Other rules are to be applied to the inventory and the inspection.

Clause 3 : Swords that pass the inspection are set transfer prices, depending on the quality and those which are due to be sold, are consigned to the Kaiko-sha Association.

Clause 4 : Every February the board of directors sets average transfer prices of the swords made between the 1<sup>st</sup> of April of year and the 31<sup>st</sup> of March of the next year.

Article 4 : The Foundation can conduct research into sword polishing and koshirae (mounting) by Clause 2 of Article 2 in the Articles of the Foundation.

Article 5 : The Foundation may hold lectures to enhance the sword-loving mind of the nation and take advantage of using magazines of the Kaiko-sha and others for its publicity.

### **Chapter 3 Division of System and Business**

Article 6 : The Foundation employs more than two clerks to operate the office and one of them is manager.

The manager is nominated by the chairman of the board of directors.

Article 7 : The Foundation employs a few of odd-jobbers.

Article 8 : The manager follows the managing director's instructions and directly commands and supervises the engineers and the odd-jobbers and implements daily routine of the Foundation.

Article 9 : Clerks of the Foundation support the manager and co-operate in the office work.

Article 10 : A few sword experts are added to the inspectors of the swords, besides the members of the board of directors. The inspectors are entrusted by the chairman of the board.

Article 11 : Engineers are nominated by the managing director and the inspectors.

Article 12 : Clerks appoint odd-jobbers and inform the managing director of the appointment.

### **Chapter 4 Assets, Finance and Wages**

Article 13 : Assets of the foundation are administered by the managing director, also deposits and investment trust are saved in the title of the managing director. The manager is in charge of the maintenance of the buildings (except tatara factory) and keeps the account book. The factory manager of the Yasuki Steel Company of the Kokusan Industrial Incorporate, is in charge of the tatara factory.

Article 14 : Surplus funds of the previous year are carried over to the next year's budget.

Every year's budget is divided into revenue and expenditures, they are then itemised in accordance with Clause 1 and 2 of the annexed paper.

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Article 15 : The manager makes up the budget by the 15<sup>th</sup> of every February and submits it to the board of the directors.

Article 16 : The manager balances the account every year and the auditors check the balance sheet, the managing director then submits it to the chairman in May.

Article 17

Clause 1 : Account book as stated below is required to adjust the finance.

A supplementary book can be prepared if it is needed.

Fixed assets book - The manager keeps it and registers the buildings.

The estimation of the fixed assets is to decrease in accordance with their age.

Budget book - The manager keeps it and always makes the balance of the budget clear.

Adjustment book - The managing director keeps it and adjusts the balance sheet of the funds.

Account book - The manager keeps it and must make revenue and expenditures clear.

Price for purchase is to be put in the book, but an item with no concrete price is to given a price according to general estimation.

The account book must be divided and kept in several volumes.

Clause 2 : The manager has items allocated and repaired within the budget except items which are specially appointed. Though the manager needs approval of the managing director in the case of items, the purpose of which are uncertain, even though they are within the budget.

The allocation must be implemented with contractors, but the purchases of inexpensive items which are needed in routine work, can be done with purchase book in the form of Clause 3 of the annexed paper.

Clause 3 : Approval of the managing director is needed when unneeded items are disposed of. Though the manager can dispose of inexpensive and quickly consumed items by his own decision.

Clause 4 : Regular workers (except managing director) and odd-jobbers are paid bonus at the ends of year and the fiscal year in accordance with the standard of the War Ministry

every year.

Clause 5 : Train and ship fares equivalent to those of secretary of the War Ministry are paid when the directors and the manager travel on an assignment or task of the Foundation, and the fares equivalent to the ones for non-commissioned officers are paid when the clerks travel.

Clause 6 : In the cases of discharge, dismissal and death of regular workers (except managing director) and odd-jobbers, they are paid half the amount of monthly wages (or daily wages for 30 days) at that time in addition to an equivalent allowance to their working years. The details are ruled in the manner described in the bylaws of the allowance of the War Ministry and an additional allowance within 100 percent of the bylaws can be paid depending on the reason of their retirement.

Clause 7 : The manager fills up necessary items in invoices from the contractors by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month and sends it to the managing director.

The managing director completes the payment according to the invoices.

Clause 8 : The calculation of all the wages starts from the next day of the date of the written order and the wages are to be paid by the day of discharge though full amount of wages for the last month is to be paid in the case of death.

Clause 9 : The payment of daily labourers is done in the manner of the engineers.

The daily calculation of the wages depends on the days of each month though fractions less than 'sen' (one sen is a 100<sup>th</sup> yen) are discarded.

Clause 10 : All the wages are normally paid on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month.

Clause 11 : Items for common use are maintained by clerks and the present number of the items must be made clear in each office room.

Clause 12 : Swordsmiths request necessary items for the sword forging factory to the manager.

Clause 13 : The fares of stamps and train tickets are written in the account book according to the receipts.

Clause 14 : Approval of the board of directors is required when new construction, construction and considerable repairs of buildings are needed.

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Clause 15 : Swords passed the inspection are consigned to the Kaiko-sha Association with a remittance, meanwhile a warehouse receipt is to be given from the association.

Clause 16 : When sword which has no appointment is transferred to the Association, the registration number of the sword must be checked and the social status of the owner be investigated swiftly.

Clause 17 : The registration numbers of the swords consigned to the Association and the date of the consignment are to be informed by the association within a month from the 20<sup>th</sup>

of each month. Then the Foundation sends an invoice of the monthly consignment to the Association and sends back the warehouse receipt to the Association with a receipt as soon as the payment is completed.

Clause 18 : Account book and the documents of register concerning the finance of the Foundation are to be kept for ten years from the end of fiscal year.

Clause 19 : Introduction of new wages and change of wages for the directors and the employees are decided by the chairman with approval of the board of directors.

(From right to left in upper row)

Form 1 : Revenue

Form 2 : Expenditures

(Bottom row)

Form 3 : Purchase book

## **Chapter 5 Councils**

Article 20 : The foundation holds following councils;

Council of the board of directors

Council for sword inspection

Council of research and study

Article 21 : The council of the board of directors is convened by the chairman and normally held on February and September though, the chairman can convene an extraordinary council when it is needed.

Article 22 : The council for sword inspection inspects the swords manufactured in the sword forging factory and also conducts examinations for engineers.  
The sword inspection is held at the end of each month and the examination for engineers is conducted with approval of the chairman , when it is needed.

Article 23 : The council of research and study is convened by the chairman in order to improve and develop sword forging technique, when it is needed.

## **Chapter 6 Other Rules**

Article 24 : The manager trains engineers and odd-jobbers to prevent fire, etc..

Article 25 : The observation of the sword forging factory is not allowed without permission.

Article 26 : Corporate and individual donators who donate over 10,000 yen to the basic property are invited to 'Fuigo Matsuri (Festival of swordsmiths)' every year.

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## **Annex of the Provisions of Nihonto Tanren Kai**

### **Provisions of Sword Inspection, Sword Original Register and Account Book**

1. Sword original register (Form 1) consists of two volumes of formal and sub books.  
The formal book is kept by the managing director and the sub book is kept by the manager.
2. The manager writes down necessary items on the sword original register then hands it over to the inspectors on the inspection day.
3. The inspectors classify the swords into four grades of 'Ko', 'Otsu', 'Hei' (first, second and third grades) or disqualification, then set transfer prices.
4. The manager records the result of the inspection on the sword original register and the inspectors seal on it.
5. The manager submits the formal book of the sword original register to the chairman through the managing director after the inspection.
6. The manager is to have sword account book (Form 2).

(Upper row)

- Sword account book

(From right to left in bottom row)

- The sword original register of Form 1. It was partially altered in 1937.
- Sword inspection form

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**Annex of the Articles  
Of  
The Nihonto tanren Kai Foundation**

**Bylaws of Sword Engineer's Wages**

1. Daily wages :  
The initial wages of swordsmith is not beyond four yen and that of sakite not beyond two yen, they are raised as their skill improves.
2. Payment for night duty :  
25 sen (1/4 yen) for a night duty is paid.
3. Diligence reward :  
Ten times as much as daily wages.
4. Special allowance :  
Bonus is paid when swordsmith makes an excellent sword.
5. Year end bonus, fiscal year end bonus :  
Bonuses are paid in accordance with the regulation of year end and fiscal year end bonuses of the Imperial Army.

**Remarks**

1. The initial wages of an engineer is not beyond third-grade salary (of the army).
2. An engineer, who has been promoted to first-grade and worked over five years and also has a distinguished skill, can be paid a special allowance with the approval of the board of directors.
- At the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the board of directors, held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1934, it was decided that swordsmiths should be paid a monthly salary (equal amount to daily wages for 30 days) one year after they were employed, when the board of directors admitted their character and skill were appropriate.
3. Special allowance :  
Special allowance is paid each time when they make an excellent sword.  
Total amount of the special allowance (from January of the previous fiscal year to December of the fiscal year) is paid at the end of fiscal year.

- At the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the board of directors , the bill of special allowance was resolved.  
On the pay day of the special allowance, swordsmiths and sakite in formal wear, visited the War Ministry in company with the manager of the Foundation and were directly paid the special allowance by Vice-minister of the ministry.  
This system was suspended in March 1941, but each workshop came to submit an average price of their swords, after they were inspected every month, extra payment in a regulated proportion was added to their salary the following month.

(Table)

- Wages of sword engineers

	Special wages	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	6 <sup>th</sup> grade
Smith	6.00	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.50
Sakite		2.50	2.25	2.00	1.80	1.65	1.50

(Monetary unit : yen)



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## **Regulations of Sword Engineers**

### **Chapter 1 General Rules**

- Article 1 : Sword engineers consist of swordsmith, sakite (assistant) and sword polisher.
- Article 2 : Sword engineers are distinguished from ordinary craftsmen as they forge and polish the "soul of the warrior", therefore, they are required to be a man of good conduct and to develop a respected personality.
- Article 3 : Sword engineers must concentrate on sword forging and polishing and not be moved solely by self-interest, as they forge and polish sacred swords.
- Article 4 : Sword engineers should not stick to their family traditions and must take advantage of modern science and technology with an open-minded view and must make the utmost effort to improve and develop their skills.
- Article 5 : Sakite must have respect for the swordsmith as master and the swordsmith must love the sakite as a disciple and co-operate in sword forging, as it was done in olden days.
- Article 6 : All sword engineers worship at the Yasukuni Shrine, under the control of swordsmiths every morning as well as sword polishers.
- Article 7 : The Foundation has a list of sword engineers' names (Type 1) and necessary information must be written on it and it must be kept at least five years after the death or the discharge of the sword engineers.

### **Chapter 2 Employment and Discharge**

- Article 8 : The Foundation employs sword engineers who have the following qualifications.
- Clause 1 : Swordsmith and sword polisher must be under sixty years old, pass a technical examination and have unquestioned identity and origin, also they must be in good health physically and mentally.
- Clause 2 : Sakite must be under forty-five years old, pass a technical examination and have unquestioned identity and origin, also they must be in good health physically and

mentally.

Article 9 : Person who meets the conditions mentioned below is not allowed to be employed as sword engineer.

Clause 1 : Person who has a history of imprisonment.

Clause 2 : Person who has inappropriate ideology and sexual activity.

Clause 3 : Person who it is recognised is inappropriate as a sword engineer, is not allowed to be employed in addition to the above two clauses.

Article 10 : Person who would like to apply as a sword engineer must submit the following documents.

Clause 1 : Application form

Clause 2 : Personal history

Clause 3 : Extract of his family register, identification card issued by his local mayor and other necessary documents.

Article 11 : A sword engineer is to be discharged when he falls under the following clauses.

Clause 1 : When he falls under Clause 1 of Article 9.

Clause 2 : When he has not engaged in his duty over 14 days without proper reason.

Clause 3 : When he is neglectful of his duty.

Clause 4 : When he has been out of duty over three months because of injury or illness, which is not caused during performance of his duty  
Though they may gain time-off when the reason of their absence is accepted by the managing director and the clerks.

Clause 5 : When his injury or illness makes it impossible for him to continue his duty and when a doctor agrees to this.

Clause 6 : When it is needed sanitarily.

Clause 7 : When he does not satisfy the standard of the skill of a sword engineer.

Clause 8 : When he requests his retirement.

Clause 9 : When the foundation admits his discharge is needed.

Clause 10 : When he reaches 60 years old (swordsmith) or 45 years old (sakite), though his retirement is put off when the managing director and the clerks admit his capability to perform his duty after that age.

Article 12 : When a sword engineer is discharged with the reason of Clause 5, 7, 9 and 10 of Article 11, he is informed of the discharge 14 days before and paid the amount of

daily wages for over 14 days.

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When a sword engineer is discharged for the reasons of Clause 4 of Article 11, the above regulation is applied too.

When a sword engineer is informed of his discharge in advance, he is not allowed to be off duty until the day of discharge.

### Chapter 3 Commencement and Suspension of Work

Article 13 : The working hours of a sword engineer per day, are regulated as follows.

March 1 - November 30 : 9 hours per day

December 1 - the end of February : 8 hours per day

Sakite must come to the workshop half an hour before swordsmith starts working and prepare for the day's work, and put down the furnace and clean the workshop after the end of the workday. Meanwhile, working hours may change depending on the situation.

Article 14 : A sword engineer is allowed to have 50 minute lunch time and 15 minute tea times every morning and afternoon.

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The working hours of sword engineers was regulated by the revised edition of the regulations of sword engineers issued on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1935, but they employed the working hours shown in Table A in practice, as the original one forced them into too hard labour.

High ranking officers from the War Ministry in the summer of 1933 visited their workshops and realised what harsh condition that sword engineers worked under. As they were heating steel at extremely high temperatures, which considerably consumed their physical strength, the manager decided to curtail their working hours to half a day between July and September (Table B). However, the working hours of sword polishers, saya makers and trainees was kept to the normal time table (Table A) throughout the year.

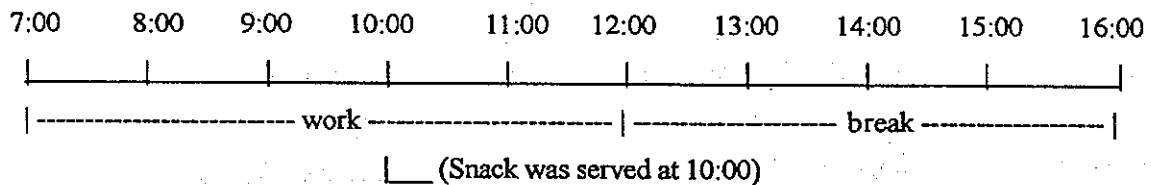
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● Table A : Normal working hours

8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00
	-----	work	-----	lunch	---	-----	work	-----

\* Swordsmiths and sakite customarily took a bath and purified themselves every morning before they started working.

● Table B : Working hours for summer time (half a day work)



Article 15 : Holidays of sword engineers are regulated as follows.

- Clause 1 : Every second and fourth Sunday
- Clause 2 : Term during their military service
- Clause 3 : When they are called up by the military authorities in the wake of the change of war situation and attached to a corps.
- Clause 4 : When it is indispensable and necessary for the Foundation.

Article 16 : The following absences are paid, but the payment is in accordance with the regulation of Article 23.

- Clause 1 : Within three months military service after the examination of conscription or days spent for the summon and inspection of troops.
- Clause 2 : When they are called up by court as witness or appraiser for a case which involves their duty.

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- Clause 3 : Days spent for implementing their duty when they are elected as a member of Imperial Diet, prefectural assembly or local council.
- Clause 4 : Days spent for campaign for the elections mentioned in the above clause.
- Clause 5 : Days for absences and holidays mentioned each clause of Article 15.
- Clause 6 : Days off mentioned in Annexed Table 2.
- Clause 7 : Days falling on celebrations of their parents and spouse.
- Clause 8 : Days for nursing their grandparents, parents, spouse and family members who live together, holding their funerals and absence with a compelling reason, but the manager's permission is needed and it must be kept within ten days in a year.

Article 17 : Working hours are extended or holidays (Clause 1 of Article 15) suspended temporarily if necessary.

Article 18 : Sword engineers must demonstrate traditional ceremonies on the commencing day of work in January and on the finishing day in December every year.

Article 19 : Sword engineers must wear white clothes with hakama (a traditional Japanese skirt for men) while they work.

Article 20 : Swordsmiths must wear eboshi (a traditional cap for men) when quenching blades.

Article 21 : Sakite keep night watch in rotation and the manager decides how many people are needed for night-duty, depending on the number of sakite.

#### Chapter 4 Wages

Article 22 : Sword engineers are paid on daily wages base and the wages are estimated by taking into account their type of occupation, age and skill.

Article 23 : Holidays and absences mentioned in Annexed Table 2 are fully or partially paid.

Article 24 : Night-duty allowance is paid when sakite and odd-jobbers keep night watch.

Article 25 : Wages are paid in cash once a month. But it is relevantly paid in the case of death, discharge, coming back home and staying there more than a month, ceremonial occasions and absence with compelling reason without being bound to the previous way of the payment.

Article 26 : Rise of salary is in accordance with the provision of the Foundation.

Article 27 : Travelling expenses for the cases of Clause 1 and 2 are paid in accordance with the regulation of the War Ministry when sword engineers travel and the amount is in proportionate to that of the employees of the ministry.

Clause 1 : When they are employed outside Tokyo.

Clause 2 : When they come back home in consequence of discharge.

Article 28 : Ceremonial dress and work suits mentioned in Article 18, 19 and 20 are loaned by the Foundation .

## **Chapter 5 Sanitation and First Aid**

Article 29 : Detergent is to be prepared in all necessary places inside and outside the workshop and sword engineers must rinse out once a day.

Article 30 : First aid kit must be prepared in the office room.

Article 31 : When sword engineer gets an injury, illness or dies, and when the accidents are caused by his work, a clerk must bear witness and make a testimony as soon as possible. If is impossible, the clerk must investigate the incident and inquire of people who witnessed the incident, in order to make the testimony which is kept in the Foundation.

Article 32 : Doctor's fee for injury or illness, caused by sword forging, may be paid fully or partially. The Foundation may send a donation of condolence when a sword engineer dies.

## **Chapter 6 Bonus and Disciplinary Action**

Article 33 : The chairman of the Foundation estimates bonuses and sets disciplinary measures.

Article 34 : Five kinds of bonuses and allowances for sword engineers are prepared as follows.

(Photo in bottom row))

Notice of monthly salary for sakite, Osaki Shigeharu.

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Clause 1 : Bonus for good attendance - Sword engineers who have a record of no absence all the year, have demonstrated distinguished work and conducted themselves well, are paid the bonus.

The beneficiaries of the bonus are selected from sword engineers who are working at the factory at the end of every November.

Clause 2 : Long-service allowance – A sword engineer who has continued to work diligently at the factory over twelve years and realised a good result, is paid the allowance.

The allowance is paid in accordance with Annexed Table 2 at the end of every

November.

Clause 3 : Special bonus - Special bonus is paid when a sword engineer makes excellent sword. The bonus is paid at the end of fiscal year, examining all the swords produced from January of the previous fiscal year to December of the current fiscal year.

Clause 4 : Discharge allowance - When sword engineer who has worked over a year at the factory, is seriously ill or discharged by Clause 5,6,9 and 10 of Article 11, the bonus is paid.

Though Clause 4 and 8 of Article 11 apply to the case of a sword engineer who has worked over five years.

The amount of the bonus is in accordance with Annexed Table 3 and it is paid within 100 percent of the wages, depending on the grade of his work and the reason for his retirement.

Clause 5 : Year end bonus and fiscal year end bonus - These bonuses are paid in accordance with a separate regulation.

Article 35 : Sword engineers are punished by the following three clauses.

Clause 1 : Reprimand - Sword engineers receive an official reprimand for their wrong behaviour and violation of the regulations.

Clause 2 : Wage cut - When a sword engineer does not amend his conduct after the punishment of reprimand, or his offence is worse than the status of reprimand, his wages are reduced.

The amount of a wage cut is excluded from his wages when they are paid.

A wage cut must not be beyond the amount of daily wages for five days.

Clause 3 : Dismissal - When a sword engineer does not amend his conduct after the wage cut punishment, he is to be dismissed.

## Chapter 7 Other Rules

Article 36 : Sword engineers must not bring unnecessary personal effects into their workshops.

Article 37 : Sword engineers are not allow to meet visitors during their duty without the clerk's permission.

Sword engineers must meet visitors at the resting room.

(Photo in bottom row)

Taken by an unknown cameraman in 1941 and owned by Shimazaki Tomi.

(From left in front row) (From left in second row) (From left in third row)

Sato Kokichi	Ajiki Yasuyoshi	Yakuwa Takeshi	Onuki Hisashi
Ishibashi Shigeru	Abe Yasushige	Osaki Yasuharu	Ida Maskatsu
Tokuda Masahiro	Murakami Yasunobu	Isomura Yasutaro	Office boy
Ogawa Mitsuyoshi	Kotani Yasunori	Yamakawa Hisashi	
Kitazawa Tomisaburo	Kurata Shichiro	Masuda Kaname	
Matsubara Toshio	Takayama Tatsumi	Sugita Shogo	
Komatani Hidefumi	Clerk	Kikusawa Kei	
Kobayashi ?	Clerk	Kanazaki Yoshikazu	
Tabata Kenzo	Shimazaki Yasuoki	Takahashi Saburo	
	Sato Kiyoshi	Uchiyama Kenzo	



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Annexed Table 1

TABLE OF DAILY WAGES FOR PAID LEAVES		
Paid Leave	Amount	Summary
January 1, Kigen-setsu, Tencho-setsu, Meiji-setsu (National Holidays)	Fully paid	
Memorial Day of the Imperial Army	Fully paid	
Religious festivals of the Yasukuni Shrine	Fully paid	Half paid for morning duty for Seihatsu and Chokkai days.
Year end holiday (from December 29 to 31) New year holiday (from January 2 to 3)	Half paid	
Funeral for parents or spouse	Fully paid for three days	
Funeral for grand parents or children living together	Fully paid for a day	
Days spent for attending court as witness or appraiser for the case which involves their duty	Half paid	
Days spent for military service within 30 days	Fully paid	The amount of wages and allowance of military service are reduced.
Days spent for military training	Fully paid for hours	Military training over 120 hours in a year is needed managing director's permission.
Days spent for the examination of conscription or the summon and inspection of troops.	Fully paid	
Days spent for isolation to protect from epidemic or absence caused by blocking up the street	Fully paid	No wages is paid when sword engineer himself is infected but infection inside the factory is not the case.
Absence caused by injury or illness from his duty	Fully paid	Doctor's diagnosis is required.
Absence caused by fire	Fully paid within 7 days	The paid leave is calculated depending on the damage.
Absence caused by natural disaster or extra holiday on a special mission	Fully paid	Extra holiday for sword engineer himself is not the case.
Days of indulgence until discharge	Fully paid	
Remarks : Days before and after the paid leave mentioned above, can be paid in accordance with the Regulation of this table too.		

Annexed Table 2

TABLE OF LONG-SERVICE ALLOWANCE	
Years	Amount
From 12 to 20 years	Daily wages for 5 days
From 20 to 25 years	Daily wages for 10 days
From 25 to 30 year	Daily wages for 15 days
From 30 to 35 years	Daily wages for 20 days
Over 35 years	Daily wages for 30 days

Annexed Table 3

TABLE OF DISCHARGE ALLOWANCE	
Years	Amount
From 1 to 2 years	Daily wages for 15 days
From 2 to 3 years	Daily wages for 20 days
From 3 to 4 years	Daily wages for 35 days
From 4 to 5 years	Daily wages for 50 days
From 5 to 6 years	Daily wages for 65 days
From 6 to 7 years	Daily wages for 80 days
From 7 to 8 years	Daily wages for 95 days
From 8 to 9 years	Daily wages for 110 days
From 9 to 10 years	Daily wages for 125 days
From 10 to 11 years	Daily wages for 145 days
Over 11 years	The amount multiplication of daily wages for 15 days by his years of service

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## Wages List of Sword Engineers

1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
(Entry date) 08/07		01/07	01/07	01/07		
Miyaguchi Yasuhiro (smith)	Daily pay, 4 yen	Salary, 120 yen	Salary, 130 yen	Withdrawal, 26 <sup>th</sup> Dec 1936		
Kajiyama Yasunori (smith)	Daily pay, 4 yen	Salary, 120 yen	Salary, 130 yen	Uncertain		
Umezawa Chikara (sakite)	Daily pay, 2 yen	Daily pay, 2.15 yen	Withdrawal, 1935			
Sakai Hiroshi (sakite)	Daily pay, 2 yen	Daily pay, 2.15 yen	Daily pay, 2.30 yen	Withdrawal, 26 <sup>th</sup> December 1936		
Kotani Kenzo (sakite)	Daily pay, 2 yen	Daily pay, 2.15 yen	Promoted to smith. Daily pay, 3 yen	Salary, 90 yen	Uncertain	
Kajiyama Toshimichi (sakite)	Daily pay, 2 yen	Daily pay, 2.15 yen	Daily pay, 2.30 yen	Uncertain		
(Entry date) 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec						
	15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	
Ikeda Yasumitsu (smith)	Daily pay, 4 yen	Salary, 120 yen	Salary, 130 yen	Salary, 130 yen	Salary 140 yen	
Murakami Ensaku (sakite)	Daily pay, 2 yen	Daily pay, 2.15 yen	Daily pay, 2.30 yen	Daily pay, 2.30 yen	Daily pay, 2.45 yen	
Abe Shigeo (sakite)	Daily pay, 2 yen	Daily pay, 2.15 yen	Daily pay, 2.30 yen	Daily pay, 2.30 yen	Daily pay, 2.45 yen	
(Entry date) 8 <sup>th</sup> Aug						
	1 <sup>st</sup> Jul		1 <sup>st</sup> Jul		1 <sup>st</sup> Jul	
Ajiki Haruyoshi (office boy)	Uncertain		Promoted to sakite. Daily pay, 1.70 yen	Daily pay, 1.85 yen	Uncertain	
Shinomura Yasutaro (charcoal cutter)	Uncertain		Promoted to sakite. Daily pay, 1.30 yen	Daily pay, 1.45 yen	Uncertain	
Shimazaki Nao-oki (charcoal cutter)	Uncertain		Promoted to sakite. Daily pay, 1.50 yen	Daily pay, 1.65 yen	Uncertain	
(Entry date) June						
	1 <sup>st</sup> Jul		25 <sup>th</sup> Jan	1 <sup>st</sup> Feb		

Nakajima Takashi (charcoal cutter)	Uncertain	Daily pay 1.35 yen	Promoted to sakite. Daily pay, 1.50 yen	Daily pay, 1.65 yen
(Entry date) 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 24 <sup>th</sup> Sep 24 <sup>th</sup> Sep				
Kikuzawa Kei (charcoal cutter)		Daily pay, 120 yen	Daily pay 1.30 yen	Uncertain
Osaki Shigeharu (charcoal cutter)		(Entry date) 24 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Daily pay, 1.30 yen	Uncertain
(Entry date) 6 <sup>th</sup> Oct 6 <sup>th</sup> Oct				
Masuda Kaname (charcoal cutter)			Daily pay, 1.30 yen	Uncertain
(Entry date) March 5 <sup>th</sup> Mar 6 <sup>th</sup> Aug				
Ozeki Seiko (polisher)		Daily pay, 2 yen		Drafted into the Army.

### Special Bonus

- 95 –110 swords / 10 yen for smith and 5 yen for sakite.
- Over 110 swords / 15 yen for smith and 7 yen for sakite)

MIYAGUCHI YASUNORI						
		Jul 33 – Jan 34	Feb 34 – Jan 35	Feb 35 – Jan 36	Feb 36 – Jan 37	Jan 37 – Dec 37
Number	Katana	39	Uncertain	117	106	
	Wakizashi	1		0	3	
	Tanto	11		20	0	
Yushu-nyusho awarded works		Uncertain	1	1	1	
Total point		Uncertain	90 points	110 points	100 points	
Special bonus	Miyaguchi	Uncertain	0	10 yen	10 yen	Three smiths left on 26 <sup>th</sup> December 1936.
	Umezawa		0	Left in autumn 1935.		
	Sakai		0	5 yen	5 yen	
	Takeda			5 yen	5 yen	

KAJIYAMA YASUNORI						
		Jul 33 – Jan 34	Feb 34 – Jan 35	Feb 35 – Jan 36	Feb 36 – Jan 37	Jan 37 – Dec 37
Number	Katana	57	Uncertain	125	125	158
	Wakizashi	57		0	1	0
	Tanto	57		6	7	7
Yushu-nyusho awarded works		Uncertain	10	10	8	8
Total point		Uncertain	1030 points	1075 points	860 points	865 points
Special bonus	Kaijiyama Y.	Uncertain	85 yen	110 yen	90 yen	90 yen
	Kotani		42 yen	Promoted to smith on 1 <sup>st</sup> of July 1935.		
	Kaijiyama T.		42 yen	54 yen	44 yen	44 yen
	Shimazaki			32 yen (6 swords)	44 yen	44 yen

IKEDA YASUMITSU						
		Dec 33 – Jan 34	Feb 34 – Jan 35	Feb 35 – Jan 36	Feb 36 – Jan 37	Jan 37 – Dec 37
Number	Katana	3	Uncertain	119	110	138
	Wakizashi	1		1	0	0
	Tanto	0		10	9	0
Yushu-sho awarded works		Uncertain	5	5	8	8
Total point		Uncertain	495 points	505 points	895 points	870 points
Special bonus	Ikeda		30 yen	50 yen	100 yen	95 yen
	Murakami		15 yen	25 yen	48 yen	46 yen
	Abe		15 yen	25 yen	48 yen	46 yen
	Nakajima					46 yen

KOTANI YASUNORI						
		Jul 33 - Jan 34	Feb 34 - Jan 35	Feb 35 - Jan 36	Feb 36 - Jan 37	Jan 37 - Dec 37
Number	Katana			67	123	155
	Wakizashi			0	0	0
	Tanto			0	6	0
Yushu-sho awarded works				4	9	10
Total point				480 points	1020 points	1125 points
Special bonus	Kotani	55 yen + 22 yen.		77 yen	110 yen	125 yen
	Ajiki	22 yen was given when Yasunori was a sakite. (by the end of June)		26 yen	53 yen	60 yen
	Shinomura			26 yen	53 yen	60 yen

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### Balance sheet of costs for sword production

		Jul 1933 Jan 1934	Feb 1934 Jan 1945	Feb 1945 Jan 1946	Feb 1946 Jan 1947	Feb 1947 Dec 1947
	Wages for engineers	4189.68 yen	12882.74 yen	10464.15 yen	10956.74 yen	9490.39 yen
	Materials, miscellaneous			8103.98 yen	7488.61 yen	7524.47 yen
	Polishing, shirasaya	2087.00 yen	8168.00 yen	9594.00 yen	10683.00 yen	10322.61 yen
	Total	6276.68 yen	21050.74 yen	28162.13 yen	29128.35 yen	27337.47 yen
	Number	104.5 swords	379.0 swords	444.0 swords	469.5 swords	458.0 swords
	Unit price	60.06 yen	55.542 yen	63.428 yen	62.041 yen	59.688 yen
Transfer	Income	5916.06 yen	27205.00 yen	32921.50 yen	36199.00 yen	36031.00 yen
	Number of transfer	95.5 swords	375.5 swords	438.0 swords	465.0 swords	451.5 swords
	Unit price	61.95 yen	72.45 yen	75.163 yen	77.847 yen	79.802 yen
Income and expenditure	Income	5916.06 yen	27250.00 yen	32921.50 yen	36199.00 yen	36031.00 yen
	Expenditure	6276.68 yen	21050.26 yen	28162.13 yen	29128.35 yen	27337.47 yen
	Balance	- 360.62 yen	+6154.26 yen	+4759.37 yen	+7070.65 yen	+8693.53 yen

### Award List

of

### Sakuto Gijutsu Happyo Kai, Shinsaku Meito Ten and Shinsakuto Tenran Kai

	Sakuto Gijutsu Happyo Kai						Shinsaku Meito Ten						Shisakuto Tenran Kai	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	F	E	F
Miyaguchi Yasuhiro						3								
Sakai Hiroshi				5		2				3	5	2		
Kotani Yasunori												5		
Ajiki Yasuyoshi				1										
Shimazaki Yasuoki				1							2	8		
Yakuwa				2	1	3	1	2	1	6	4	3		

Yasutake														
Kariya Yasukuni												19		5
Osaki Yasumune											3	17	1	1
Masuda Yasuaki					2					1	6	9		
Kanazaki Yoshikazu					2	2						8		

A : Masamune Award

B : Honorary Chairman Award

C : Kanzan Award

D : Superior Award (Yushu-sho), Encouraging Award (Shorei-sho)

E : Endeavour Award (Doryoku-sho)

F : Accepted (Nyusen)

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Seventeen years ago I noticed an article in the bulletin published by Fuchu City, that there was a swordsmith who was still engaged in sword making. I tried to make an appointment in order to take his pictures in his workshop, as I had been interested in Japanese swords since I was a child. My request was politely declined and he said that he was not engaged in sword making any more. During the telephone conversation with him, I heard a strange that sounded something like a hammer pounding in the background. Eventually I decided to visit him without an appointment. When I arrived at his house, I heard the strange sound yet again and the sound was drawing me to his workshop.

I found a man in the workshop and said, "I am Tom Kishida and the photographer who called you a short while ago". He looked upset with my sudden visit and said, "I am Shimazaki Yasuoki".

After my self-introduction, I tried to persuade him to allow me to take photos of his work until it began to get dark. He did not accept my request and told me that he was not able to concentrate on his work under such circumstances. At the end of the day, he gave me an ambiguous answer and said that he would contact me when the time came. Thus I had to leave his workshop harbouring ill feeling at that time.

At last, the time had come. It was 30th April 1981, one year after my first visit to Mr. Shimazaki.

Sixteen years have passed since I started taking photos of Yasukuni Tosho (smiths). Since then Yakuwa Yasutake, Shimazaki Yasuoki, Ajiki Yasuyoshi, Masuda Yasuaki and Abe Yasushige have passed away, one after another in these sixteen years. Osaki Yasumune performed the role of mediator for Yasukuni smiths, who dispersed to various places in the wake of Japan's defeat in the war. Also he played an important role as manager in donating an o-dachi (large tachi) to the Yasukuni Shrine, that was collaboration by the smiths involved in Nihonto Tanren Kai and commemorated the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Nihonto Tanren Kai. Nevertheless Osaki Yasumune finally died in 1997 and was buried with a tanto with which he won the Endeavour Award at the Sword Making Competition of the NBTHK in that year.

During this period, Fuchu City Council gave Shimazaki Yasuoki the Diligent Labour Award on the 7th April 1981. Yakuwa Yasutake won the supreme award of the Sword Making Competition of the NBTHK, Masamune Award on the 16th April in the same year. Osaki Yasumune was designated as Intangible Cultural Asset of Sumida Ward of Tokyo on the 6th August 1993 then dedicated a tanto that celebrated the 120th anniversary of the Foundation of the Yasukuni Shrine, on the 30th September 1989. It was a very impressive scene as his wife Shizuko was firmly clutching the tanto to her chest, while Yasumune was presenting a list of the donation to the shrine.

The following inscription was chiselled on the nakago of the tanto;

"HEISEI GANNEN 10 GATSU KICHI JITSU OSAKI YASUMUNE KINSAKU

HOKEN YASUKUNI JINJA ONSORITSU 120 NEN KINEN TAISAI"

(Osaki Yasumune elaborately made this tanto on a lucky day of October 1989 and dedicated to the Yasukuni Shrine in celebration of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the shrine)

Mr. Fujishiro Okisato, who is a sword polisher, and I were planning an exhibition of Yasukuni swords for a long time and the exhibition became to be realised at the Yushukan Museum of the Yasukuni Shrine, with the title of 'Yasukuni-to and Tradition of Spirit of Japan'. The exhibition was held from the 13th November 1994 to the 26th February 1995. Then fifteen masterpieces of Yasukuni swords, made between 1933 and 1943 as well as five other swords owned by the shrine were on display and many important documents of the Nihonto Tanren Kai were also on view. Many members of the Nihonto Tanren Kai and people concerned attended a celebration of the exhibition that was held just before it was opened to the public.

(Photo in the right)

'Yasukuni-to and Tradition of Spirit of Japan' Exhibition

(Photo in the left)

'Tatara and Yasukuni Toshō' Exhibition

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Following the exhibition at the Yasukuni Shrine, another exhibition was held, entitled 'Tatara and Yasukuni Toshō' at the Sword Museum of the NBTHK, from the 4th to the 30 July 1995, with the support of the Tokyo Metropolitan Branch of the NBTHK. On this occasion twenty-nine masterpieces of Yasukuni-to were displayed.

I am convinced that many people have come to understand the meaning and the historical background of Yasukuni-to and also recognised its value as one of traditional arts and crafts through these two exhibitions.

On this occasion, the Nihonto Tanren Kai Kenshō Kai was set up in order to honour the role that was performed by Yasukuni smiths in the history of Gendai-to and hand it down to the future. A ceremony of dedicating a memorial plate, on which Kotani Yasunori chiselled a note honouring Yasukuni smiths was held on the 3rd July 1995 at the Yasukuni Shrine. Mr. Suzuki Kajo, who represents the Nihonto Tanren Kai Kenshō Kai and is director general of the NBTHK, presented a list of the dedication to the shrine.

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A memorial photo of fifty attendants was taken after the ceremony and then the memorial plate, hung on the entrance of Gyountei teahouse (originally the building of Nihonto Tanren Kai) was purified and the note on it was read aloud. Kotani Yasunori and Osaki Yasumune lit a fire in the furnace of a temporary workshop that was made in the place where the workshops of the Nihonto Tanren Kai were originally located, for the first time in fifty years. The two smiths dedicated the demonstration of tama-tsubushi (forming of material broken into pieces) and Yamakawa Hisashi and Ishibashi Shigeru assisted them as sakite. Finally Osaki Yasumune quenched the tanto that was due to be dedicated to the shrine.

It was a moving scene I witnessed through my camera finder. The sound of pounding, revived after fifty years echoed in the grounds of the shrine. Then I felt that the souls of Yasukuni smiths, who had passed away, were watching the demonstration.

After the tanto was finished, it became clear that the jihada was itame-hada and utsuri appeared in the bottom area and the hamon was elegant sugu-ha. The Nihonto Tanren Kai Kenshō Kai finally

dedicated the tanto to the shrine on the 12th October 1995.

Here I would like to thank Mr. Suzuki Kajo, who is director general of the NBTHK, for his tremendous effort at realising the exhibition of 'Tatara and Yasukuni-to' at the Sword Museum, setting up the Nihonto Tanren Kai Kensho Kai and the dedications of the memorial plate and the tanto to the shrine. Also I thank Mr. Tsuchiko Tamio for editing this book and Mr. Mishina Kenji, who is a sword polisher and kindly translated this book for sword lovers in foreign countries, as well as all people who helped me in publishing the book, from the bottom of my heart.

I believe that the spirits of Yasukuni Toshio, who worked through the Showa Era, will never die and the glory of Yasukuni-to will be immortalised.

(Photo)

3rd July 1995 Demonstration of tama-tsubushi dedicated to the Yasukuni Shrine

Front : Osaki Yasumune

Second row from right : Kotani Yasunori, Ishibashi Shigeru (sakite), Yamakawa Hisashi  
(sakite)

## Introduction to the Author

**Tom Kishida** : Born in Negishi of Taito Ward in Tokyo on the 23rd of June 1948 and graduated Nihon University.

Professional photographer and studied photographing under Kenzo

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Wrote and published 'Yasukuni Toshio' in November 1994.

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## Introduction to the Translator

**Kenji Mishina** : Born in Yanagawa Town of Date County of Fukushima Prefecture on the 2nd of July 1951 and graduated Kanagawa University.

Japanese sword polisher and a student of Living National Treasure



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