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Contents

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P R E F A C E

This years issue of the society BULLETIN is hereby proudly presented to the membership. Although it was a difficult year for acquiring material for this issue, thanks to several of our stalwart members, a number of significant articles were brought forward and contributed to us.

An excellent definitive report on the 25th annual meeting of NBTHK was supplied by our recently elected Chairman, Mr. Robert Lewert. Such a report was the results of several requests by a number of our members and is intended to give all of us a good idea as to what really takes place at one of these unique gatherings.

A follow-up article on Jakushi kodōgu has been presented by Mike Quigley and should give us a new and more complete understanding of the workings of this school. The picture section is intended to also suppliment the article by Mike which was presented in the Token Taikai book of lectures (Token Taikai-1976, San Francisco).

Keith Evans has come forth with a most interesting article entitled TSUKUROI, or rather, alterations to swords. One will gain a more cautious eye towards examination of swords after reading this informative paper....a lesson for all of us.

The reprinted LECTURE ON THE SWORD, although taken from a past issue of the BULLETIN, is a most worthy article and hopefully will serve as a lesson to our more recent members and as a refresher for the old timers. Back in the early days of JSS/US, Albert Yamanaka and John Yumoto both gave numerous lectures to the membership (since both sensei lived on the coast and most members also resided there). All of these lectures appeared in society BULLETINS at the time but since most of these early issues are now unavailable, it is perhaps a good thing to reprint many of these past lectures. Future issues of the BULLETIN and also the NEWSLETTER will carry reprints of these lectures from time to time.

Enjoy your reading!

JAPANESE SWORD SOCIETY of the United States, Inc.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH NBTHK MEETING: SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS AND NOTES

by

Robert M. Lewert

I imagine that most of the non-Japanese members of the society have wondered, as I have, what the annual national meeting is like and for most of us, the chance of attending one is very unlikely or impossible for one reason or another. I have been exceptionally fortunate in being able to visit Japan on numerous occasions, on my way to or returning from my research program in the Philippines but this was the first time I was able to schedule my return so that I could attend the national meeting. I can't convey to you the thrill and excitement of being able to see and handle the many superb blades that were made available, so you will just have to let your imaginations run wild while I give you a "bare bones" report of the meeting and some of my impressions as I have been asked to do by several of the U.S. members of the society.

Although the meeting was held November 12, 13, 14, only on Saturday the 13th was there a fully structured, and organized program of activities. Most members, of course, had previously sent in their registration fees of ¥28,000 and had received in advance their copies of the catalog along with a ticket for admission for the special exhibition of Japanese arms and armor held at the Tokyo National Museum. Most of the members used Friday to go to this exhibit and I understand that it was crowded and there was some difficulty in spending as much time or seeing the exhibit in as leisurely a fashion as one might like. Here again, I was fortunate, and visited the exhibit a week earlier when I had the exhibit rooms almost to myself except for a half dozen young boys and two or three older connoisseurs so we could examine everything at leisure. This exhibit at the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno Park was exceptionally fine. One half of the spacious second floor of the museum was devoted to the display. There are 589 exhibits listed in the catalog. Several of these, of course, are multiple pieces and range from the very earliest stone and bronze archaic weapons to arms, armor, and kodogu of various types. You can get an index of the quality of this exhibit by the fact that there were almost eighty national treasures in the group and an assemblage of items never before gathered together for display. Many were from the National Museum itself but also there were outstanding exhibits from other institutional and private collections throughout the country. Armor, sword furniture, and swords excavated from tumuli were shown and a number of chokuto amazingly well preserved from the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries were unusual. Close together were the national treasures MIKAZUKI MUNECHIKA, two superbly preserved TOMONARI, MASATSUNE, the O-KANEHIRA, the DOJIKIRI YASUTSUNA and ODENTA of MITSUYO, just to give you the flavor of the excellence of this presentation.

Most of the swords exhibited were koto however, a selection of fine blades of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries were included, including SHINKAI, HANKEI, TADAYOSHI, YASUTSUGU, KOTETSU, KIYOMARO, and NAOTANE. I believe there must have been close to 200 tsuba on display with a large number of examples of YASUCHIKA from a private collection and some wonderful examples of tsuba and kozuka by NATSUO. Mere listing can't begin to convey the splendor of this display. One more note about the museum exhibit was that they had prepared labels in English with brief descriptions for each item, something that was unexpected to me but much appreciated when there is such an extensive amount of material to see. If you possibly can, get your hands on one of the catalogs of this exhibit. It is a great investment for ¥900 with an index and brief description of each item in English. There are also a number of pages of diagrams of armor with its terminology. The photographs cover almost every item in the exhibit including the armor and good illustrations of the swords give details of the nakago and of the blade itself. There are 16 color plates illustrating tsuba, lacquer work, various fittings, old tachi, mounts, and fine examples of armor. In addition to this fine catalog, the last three issues of "Museum", the art magazine edited by the Tokyo National Museum, issues no. 306, 307, and 308 for September, October, and November are special editions on Japanese arms and armor, particularly items in the current exhibit. They are well illustrated with, of course, extensive text in Japanese, but also have a table of contents and brief description of each illustration in English. The subjects covered include articles on ancient Japanese arms and armor which appeared in emaki, material on UMETADA MYOJU and on the SAMONJI school, an article on the emergence of Shinto, and one on forms of Japanese style saddles. At ¥300 each, these special editions of the magazine are well worth while.

In addition to visiting the Ueno Park Museum, the members attending the meeting in their free time, on Friday could visit the Sword Museum in Yoyogi which, as might be expected, had an exceptionally fine selection on display. The National Museum, I think, for this exhibit, went out of their way to try to give better than usual lighting to the exhibit, but even so, some were in rooms that had lighting that left much to be desired. The display at the sword museum is uniformly better in the method of display and on this occasion had 32 blades all worthy of detailed study if this were possible. They ranged from a series of excavated ancient blades which had been polished and showed surprisingly uniform jihada and even exhibited hamon, reminiscent of more modern pieces. There were 6 Kokuho, 16 Juyo Bunkasai and the rest were Juyo Bijutsuhin or other Juyo token with a spectrum of famous names. One of the most spectacular to me was the ICHIMONJI donated to the museum by Dr. Compton and which is now a Juyo Bunkasai. This easily held its own alongside of the YUKIHIRA, the MITSUTADA and the NAGAMITSU which were its neighbours in one display case.

The next day, Saturday, was really the one formal day of the meeting. This was held at the Hotel Okura, one of the very fine Tokyo hotels. Registration started at 8:00 in the morning, and according to my information, the exhibits started at 9:00. Fortunately for me, I registered early, went to the display room that I had been told was going to be used and found it empty, but saw some other registrants hustling down the corridor to another room. Luckily I followed and I found that I was only about tenth in line away from the door and only 20 or so were already inside looking at the sword display. At the registration, everyone was given an illustrated catalog and also white cotton gloves. The display and exhibits were arranged in such a way that each blade was placed about two feet from the next. Above each table incandescent low wattage bulbs were suspended about a foot above eye level (for me and most of the Japanese, but eye level for the Texans). This was done in such a way that in handling the blades, the hamon could be well delineated and easily seen. The characteristics of the hada were less well appreciated in this light but it was still well done and entirely adequate. There were 158 blades arranged in chronological order plus nine late arrivals at the end which did not get included in the catalog and also were not inserted in the chronological sequence of viewing the blades. In addition to this, there were in a separate room, 23 complete sword mountings and some 57 fittings of various types. You quickly run out of superlatives in trying to cope with any description of what it is like to be able to handle and examine such a fine collection. Undoubtedly this was the finest that NBTHK has been able to assemble or perhaps will be able to assemble, since it was made up of blades loaned by members and various owners. The bulk of these came from the Tokyo area where many fine collections exist. As was the case with the other exhibits at the National Sword Museum, by far the greater number of blades were koto but fine examples of shinto were also represented. To me it was particularly exciting to be able to examine in series a group of RAI blades and a group of SOSHU blades and, for example, to be able to compare a number of SADAMUNE adjacent to one another on the table. I believe there were seven SADAMUNE which followed six of the MASAMUNE. (One of the SADAMUNE to me was the best of the group, though I have seen so few SOSHU blades I can't feel that my opinion is of too much value.) Everything was, of course, in superb polish. As I said, I thought I was very fortunate to arrive early, since I hate standing in line for anything and one inside everyone progressed in an orderly fashion from blade to blade at a relatively leisurely rate early in the morning. I was able to spend almost three and a half hours just looking at the blades. Later in the afternoon, when the crowd of members were beginning to form long lines, I hear that they were asked to spend only 15 seconds per blade, which would have been, to me, very frustrating indeed. However, it was necessary since the exhibit had to end in the afternoon prior to the general open meeting.

The formal afternoon meeting was relatively short. It was opened by a speech by Dr. Junji Homma, the director of our society who welcomed all the participants and indicated that he thought this was the best annual meeting that had been held as interest in swords is at its highest in sword history. He also thought that the exhibits at the museum and at the hotel are unparalelled and that this is the first time and possibly the last time that we will have

the opportunity to gaze on and appreciate such a selection of swords. Dr. Homma also briefly discussed the society's project of building a tatara to duplicate the ancient smelting process of producing sand iron ingots as a source of metal for Japanese swords and discussed the need of financial support as well as expertise from the members in this undertaking. Following this, a message from Dr. Compton who was unable to attend the meeting, was read by Mr. R. B. Caldwell. This was then followed by awards, by Dr. Kenzan Sato for the kantei contest. I forgot to mention earlier that at the end of the viewing exhibits there were five blades available for those who wished to attempt a kantei. There were three awards made and the blades for the kantei were TADAYOSHI, KIYOMARO, TSUNAHIRO, HEIANJO NAGAYOSHI, and MOTOHIRA. A prize for achievement, the Kunzan Prize, was awarded to Mr. Kenji Numata by Dr. Homma. Just prior to awarding of the prizes on the stage of the ballroom where the meeting was being held, there was a short selection of a Noh play. This was Takasago performed by a human national treasure, Mr. Teigo Ninomiya, accompanied by a group of three musicians. The meeting lasted perhaps from 4:00 to 5:00 P.M. and this was followed by a break until the banquet, which was again a matter of superlatives. The banquet was really a buffet-style occasion with numerous tables of Japanese delicacies set up in the ballroom as well as in an adjacent room opening into the main room. In this room the hotel had set up series of booths, each specializing in a different food with sushi, yakitori, and many, many varieties of hors d'oeuvres and main dishes. Drinks of all sorts were available from the several bars and from the waiters circulating through the group and music was also provided by an excellent orchestra and singer on stage.

There were approximately 650 members attending the meeting, some with their wives. I saw about eight European members but I understand that there about 18 including members from Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and England. From the United States, there were six members, including myself. R. B. Caldwell and Mike Quigley were there with their wives, obviously enjoying everything very much. John Yumoto and two others from California, including Dr. Nathan Rosenblum, were also enjoying this as part of their Japanese excursion. It was for me a wonderful experience and one that I hope somehow, all of the members of this society will be able to enjoy sometime in the future. I have heard that the next annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 8,9,10, 1977 in Takarazuka City, Hyogo Prefecture.

Sunday was free day although listed as part of the meeting. It gave out-of-town members the option of sightseeing or returning to the National Museum. I believe that on this day there was also a formal meeting of the officers of the society.

My pleasure was compounded by the fact that I was able to bring back with me several blades that had been in Japan for polishing and shinsa. Two of these became Juyo, a happening that I don't expect to duplicate.

TSUKUROI

by

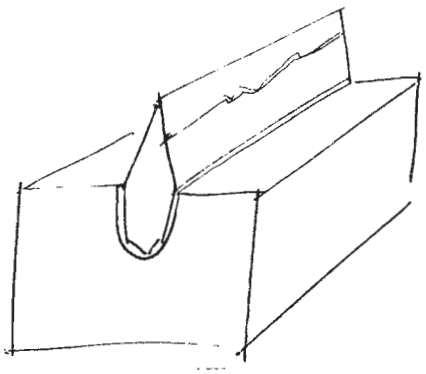
Dr. Keith Evans

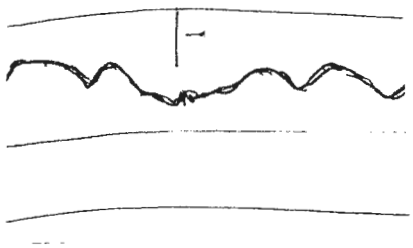
The content of this paper is the result of a lot of reading, listening, and thinking. I present it to the membership in hopes it has something of interest for everyone.

TSUKUROI means mending and as applied to the sword, can involve every part and surface. Beginning innocently enough, (repointing broken blades, shortening for style changes, retempering swords burnt in fires, etc.,) TSUKUROI has been extended to include those intentional deceits which make a sword seem like something which it really is not. As the types of TSUKUROI are enumerated, try to see each in it's individual perspective of honest repair or dishonest chicanery.

SURIAGE means to shorten the sword from the bottom end and is performed
(1) to conform to regulations and style
(2) to conform to the size of the user
(3) to repair a blade broken at the machi or mekugi-ana
(4) to cover marks left by retempering
(5) to cover lower blade defects and damage.

Changing the curve of a sword is called SUGATA TSUKUROI. To increase the SORI (SORITSUKE), a hot copper block is used to heat the appropriate area on the MUNE. As the sword cools off, it draws into a deeper curve in the heated area. Care must be exercised in order to not overheat the steel. Hard steel swords are very difficult to recurve without breakage, the most common accident being a crack in the HA. HIZEN blades often have this problem.





To decrease the SORI, careful light hammering on the SHINOGI JI will "uncurve" the blade. This is called SORIFUSE, and is useful in removing the large curve often induced during retemper quenching. Both SORITSUKE and SORIFUSE are done to swords to improve their appearance.

NAKAGO TSUKUROI is the "dark area" of alteration, as work on the tang nearly always involve deceit. One common mend is the welded tang, which may be done to restore a broken sword to usefulness, to introduce a tang with a different signature to a sword, or to lengthen a less desirable O-WAKIZASHI of one shaku nine sun to a more saleable DAITO of two shaku two sun. Other welding include inletting a signature plate and folding over the signature strip. These can be genuine or fake.

YASURIMEI (file marks) can be changed, removed, or added to. NAKAGO IRO (color) is fair game for anyone with a gas burner and browning solution (or a multitude of secret formulae). MEKUGI ANA (pegholes) can be filled in, added and/or relocated so as to infer the sword's original shape and size.

TSUBAZURE means the groove worn into the tang by the TSUBA. It is never deep or large if real, even on very old swords. If it is big, it has either been accentuated to imply great age or it may have been added to cover up a welded-on tang.

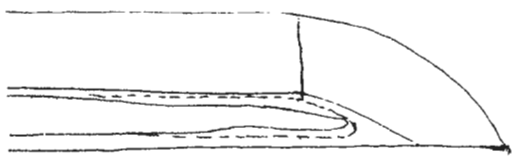
Another way to age tang is to heat it enough to make it "boil" FUTSUKASHI. This boiling brings up hard spots to the surface. Swords with this kind of NAKAGO are almost always SHINSHINTO, remade to look like KOTO. This FUTSUKASHI technique is often used when faking KANAYAMA and YAMAKICHIBEI TSUBA, both of which are supposed to show TEKKOTSU (hard iron bones) on their surface.

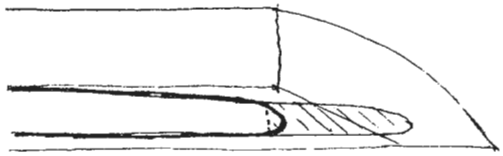
HORIMONO (carvings) include decorative motifs such as plum tree dragons, BONJI, and KANJI, as well as many groove (HI) patterns. ATOBORI means "aftercarving" and has been added to the sword at some time later. It may be added in order to beautify a plain sword, it may cover up defects (KIZU), certain styles of HORI make a sword seem older. It's location near the MACHI may make a shortened blade look UBU.

Several years ago, I sold a very nice newly-polished sword to a Tokyo dealer. The DAITO was signed TANGO no KAMI FUJIWARA HIROYUKI, it was about 2 shaku 1+ sun in length, SUKOSHI SURIAGE and MACHI OKURI (slightly shortened and the notches moved up). It had three open MEKUGI ANA. The next time I saw this sword, it was pictured in a Japanese publication. The most recent MEKUGI ANA had been filled, and a sqare-end groove ending at the MACHI (inferring original position) had been added. The sword was described as UBU (virgin)! Since the basic blade was unchanged, I assume this NAKAGO TSUKUROI was done to increase the value from a modified SHINTO to a more expensive UBU SHINTO.

At least 1/3 of all HORIMONO is ATOBORI. Perhaps 1/2 of that is done to deceive the prospective buyer. Let the buyer beware!

There are several ways to change the groove end in the point area. When the groove has been shallowed out from many polishes, it can be recut and deepened. This is called SUE HI NAOSHI. When the end of the groove is too close to the tip of the sword, the groove can be filled with an inlay of metal taken from the NAKAGO and then a new end recut. This is called HI SAKI NAOSHI.





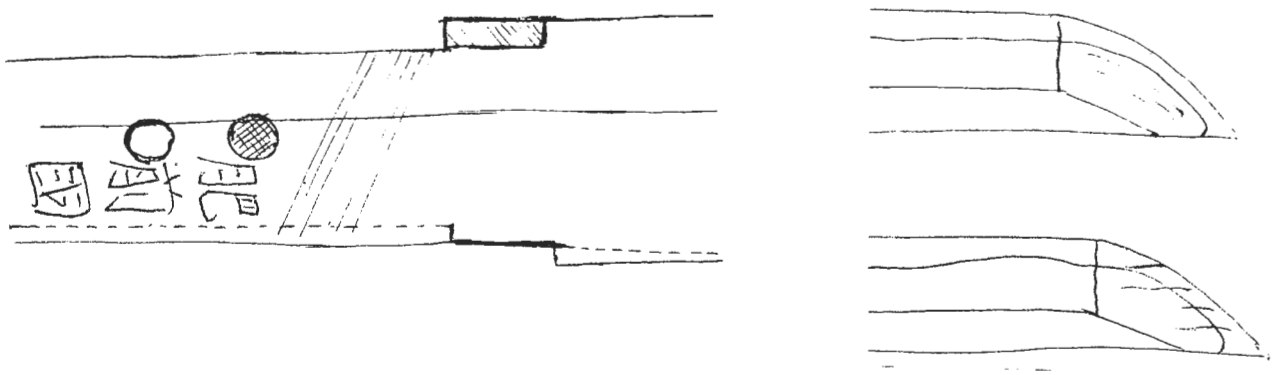
If there are defects on the surface of the sword such as blisters, pits, or cracks, there are several ways (other than incorporating them into HORIMONO) to repair the defects. KIZU YOSEI means to hammer down (peen) the edges of the defect until it closes up.

UMEGANE means inlaid metal. It is used to fill defects too large to hammer down or polish out. The donor metal should be from the sword to be repaired so that the steel is contemporary and of the same construction. UMEGANE is more easily done on swords with loose grained HADA than with tight or grainless HADA such as OSAKA HADA and SHINSHINTO MUJIHADA. When doing UMEGANE TSUKUROI, the patch must be over-sized to assure a good fill and it is especially important that the grain of the patch runs parallel with the grain of the sword and not in the direction of the defect.

When MUNESHINAE (cracks in the back ridge) occur from bad forging, tempering, or retempering, they are sometimes faked to look like battle scars (KIRIGOMI KIZU). The cuts are usually too regular to look realistic.

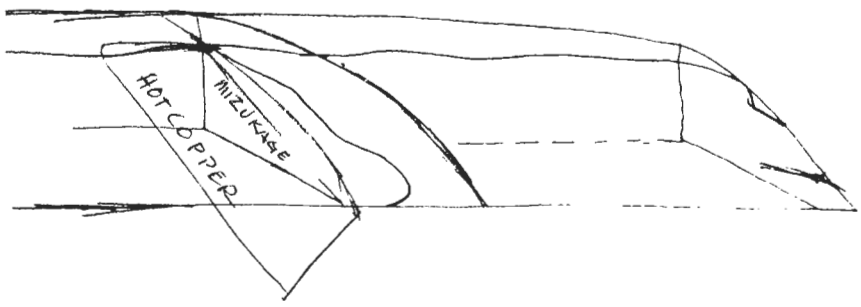
KIZUOSHI is a method of burnishing down a blister (FUKURE) or the rough edges of a KIZU with a hand burnisher. This is performed before polishing.

Increasing the length of a blade is called SUNPON NO BASHI. This is an involved procedure. First, the MUNE must be extended by adding UMEGANE to the NAKAGO MUNE. The NAKAGO must be lengthened by welding on additional metal. Arc-welding, by the way, since it does not burn the metal, makes a virtually undetectable weld. A new HA MACHI is established (this results in an inward curve and narrowing of the sword at the MACHI). The MEKUGI ANA may be filled and new MEKUGI ANA added. The extension is shaped to match the original tang and colored to match. Presto! - a newly-discovered DAITO appears on the market. These lengthened blades are usually SHINTO O-WAKIZASHI and can be spotted by the unusually high-to-the-MACHI placement of the signature.



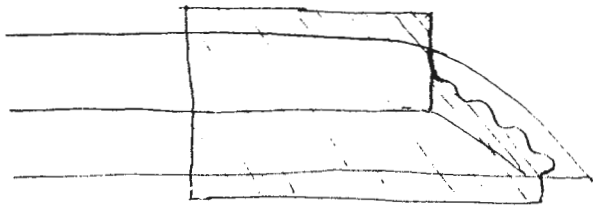
SAKIZUME means to make a new KISSAKI. The damaged or worn KISSAKI is cut back to sound metal and the end of the sword is reshaped to a new KISSAKI. It must then either be retempered to make a new BOSHI or a polished-on BOSHI is added. SAKIZUME is most easily done on OSAKA SHINTO, HIZEN SHINTO, and MUJINHADA TO because of their tight grain in the MONOUCHI. These are difficult to spot, but if any grain shows in the KISSAKI, it must always parallel the edge.

Firing in a new BOSHI is called YAKITSUKE. This always results in MIZUKAGE (water shadow) which must be drawn off with hot copper and then toned down by the polisher. The heat of the tempering process always sucks off the HAMON for an inch or so, and this area must be polished in. The BOSHI HADA tends to be open and does not run paralel with the edge.



Polishing in a new BOSHI is done in several ways. NIOITSUKE is a process of making a line of tiny holes with a steel needle. Light

reflects from the facets of the holes and it appears as a NIOI BOSHI after it has had KESHO polish. The polisher must know his BOSHI design for each school and be prepared to spend much time. It takes many hours of very tedious work to draw in a BOSHI so that it is not obviously faked. Many high-class old blades have such a BOSHI.



KATACHI TSUKE means to fake in a BOSHI by scratching it on. First a template is cut to the desired BOSHI pattern and then the design is scratched on by rubbing with a very light abrasive. This technique is also used to accentuate a very worn BOSHI or HAMON.

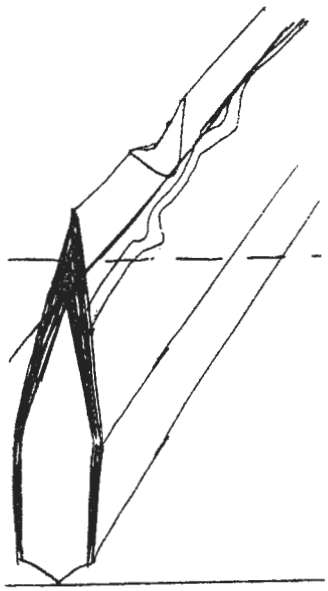
A worn-out temperline can be made brighter by using NITRIC ACID. This is called NIOI DATE. It is dangerous to use as it can roughen the HADA and also make an old blade look too young by bringing up the NIOI too much.

Here I'm reminded of an O-SURIAGE MUMEI DAITO I once owned, which was acid-etched when it was polished. Before it's polish, I had made a tentative KANTEI of ETCHU Province, late KAMAKURA period. The new polish certainly did not improve the sword for me and I sold it to another collector. He submitted it to SHINSA two or three times, each time receiving a white paper as SHINTO. He subsequently sold the sword it was properly repolished, and has recently been awarded JUYO TOKEN, attributed to TAMETSUGU, son of GO YOSHIHIRO. The sword now looks like it's proper age and can be admired for what it is instead of what an incompetent polisher made it look to be.

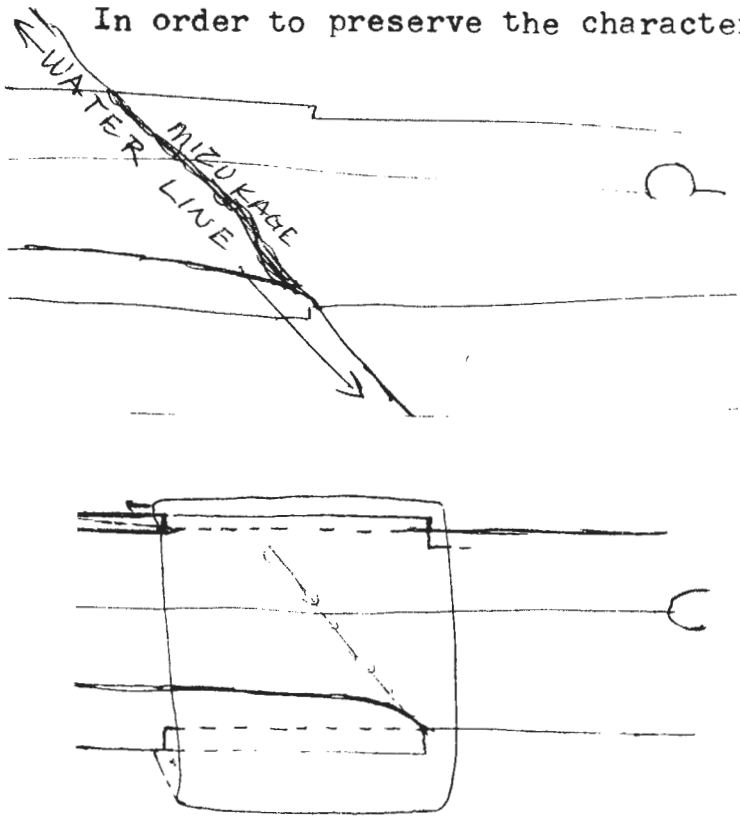
SHINSHINTO can be given an old look by using a chemical, AMMONIUM MAGNESIUM SULPHATE, added to the polishing water. This imparts blue color to the steel and makes the HADA stand up. Both the blue color and HADATATSU are KOTO characteristics. Add some skillful NAKAGO TSUKUROI and a super polish and a new KOTO is on the market! Rough HADA can be dropped back by using softer stones and light pressure with NUGUI stone.

YAKINAOSHI (retempering) was used a great deal in the MUROMACHI period, to recondition swords broken and worn in battle. During the

EDO period and on to present times, YAKINAOSHI was done mostly to remake swords for resale and for increasing their price. Famous old swords burned in their castle-homes were often retempered by competant swordsmiths and this work usually because of the smith's great skill, resulted in a good-looking sword. But most retempers made bad-looking swords, as they were done on broken, badly chipped, burned swords by smiths of only medium skill. First, the sword must be reshaped by grinding and pounding (HABIKI). When this is done, the sword loses it's shape and the HADA changes as SHINTETSU starts to show. The JIHADA becomes loose and the new HAMON enters this loose HADA and the HABUCHI "unravels" and mixes with the HADA. Hammering the sword also changes the grain structure, changing ITAME to MASAME. It also adds more curve to the blade. SHINTO with unconventionally deep sori may be suspect of YAKINAOSHI TSUKUROI, as the general style of early SHINTO was shallow SORI. Also, it is more difficult to keep the refractory clay on a sword which has been previously hardened, and this factor has much to do with the tempered spots (MUNEYAKI, TOBAYAKI) where the clay did not stick well during retemper.



In order to preserve the character of the NAKAGO color, the YASURIMEI, etc., the NAKAGO is covered to protect it from heat. The NAKAGO is not put into the water when the blade is quenched, and subsequently, a line called MIZUKAGE (water line) appears at the MACHI. This line can be removed by applying hot copper compresses around the MACHI area, which then erases the HAMON there. The HA MACHI and MUNEMACHI are then moved up to the end of the HAMON, the NAKAGO refiled and colored. No MIZUKAGE remains to be seen.



It has been suggested that O-SURIAGE KOTO whose HAMON stops at the MACHI instead of continuing into the NAKAGO need to be checked carefully for other signs of YAKINAOSHI. It has also been suggested that a SHINTO should be suspected of YAKINAOSHI when it has been shortened considerably, even if a little of the signature still remains. In order to hide the MIZUKAGE of YAKINAOSHI, it is always necessary to move up the MACHI.

If the sword has not been damaged in any way other than the temper having been drawn off by heat, it is then not necessary to do such heavy reshaping and the retemper can be accomplished by quenching the whole sword as is done ont he original tempering. In this way there is not a MIZUKAGE to contend with, and the NAKAGO can be so well colored that it is hard to tell a YAKINAOSHI done this way by a good smith. Modern smiths are very skillful at copying old work. But some experts may be able to tell the difference even then, as the original molecular structure has been re-arranged and can never be re-captured. It is that original hammer-work and arrangement of martinsite in the HAMON which is the swordsmith's original signature.

YAKIOTOSHI is a tempering technique in which the NAKAGO is not quenched. This results in YAKIOTOSHI UTSURI, which is different from YAKINAOSHI MIZUKAGE. Smiths who used this technique were BUNGO YUKIHIRA, OLD SATSUMA NAMINOHIRA, SUE SEKI, SUE SOSHU, HORIKAWA KUNIHIRO, and some TADAYOSHI. It is somewhat difficult to tell from MIZUKAGE, but knowledge of the schools and appearance of the HAMON and HADA should tell the difference.

A final NAKAGO TSUKUROI involves the signature on the tang. This is one problem we've all been through and we all know how difficult this can be. A GIMEI (fake signature) can be quite old and consequently, because of it's age, look very good. Good Japanese texts and "picture-books" are our best weapons here and one must constantly be aware that the signature is in the workmanship of the sword firstly and cut into the tang secondly.

There are many rescribed dates, which can make a sword into a first generation work instead of a third. Brushing the inscription with talcum and close examination with a glass can often reveal old scribed lines which were not quite removed.

Some of these TSUKUROI must have been well-intentioned, but it seems as if a gigantic conspiracy against the unsuspecting SAMURAI and the greedy collector was rampant among the sword merchants of OLD JAPAN.

JAKUSHI TSUBA

AN AMERICAN COLLECTORS VIEW

by

MICHAEL A. QUIGLEY

Five years ago I obtained my first JAKUSHI tsuba. The motif was that of a dragon entwined in what appeared to be a cloud. The cloud and dragon were heavily covered with fine gold wire inlay (nunome-zogan). The JAKUSHI school would be considered a type of Namban or Chinese style in regards to the choosen motif and type of nunome-zogan application of various colors of metal work. That is, they used many Chinese or foreign motif in their kodōgu.

Let me say at the offset that in the limited area I have studied on JAKUSHI, I have encountered much controversy as to the direct lineage of the school. So, rather than enter into the dispute, I will present one version of what I have found.

The area of Japan in which JAKUSHI work started was in the port city of Nagasaki on Kyushu Island, which is the furthest West area of Japan. Nagasaki, from the middle of the 17th century to the middle of the 19th century, was the only port open to Japan for foreign entry. This port was limited to trade with only Holland and China during the age of Japan's isolation.

In 1645 a Buddhist priest, ITSUZEN, arrived in Nagasaki from China. ITSUZEN became a priest of the temple of Kojukuji and taught painting of the Northern Sung style, Hokuso-Chinese painting. Among his students was a man named JAKUSHI KAWAMURA (RANKEI). It is believed KAWAMURA learned about the making of tsuba but, may have never actually made any pieces. KAWAMURA, painter-priest, is credited with the start of the JAKUSHI style of tsuba. The first man believed to actually make JAKUSHI tsuba was a student of Rankei, JAKUSHI KIZAEMON IPPYO. Rankei gave him lessons in painting and aided him with the new and complex method of etching iron. A younger brother of KIZAEMON, HEISABURO TANIGUCHI, followed. Then the son of Kizaemon, SHIRAKI CHOUEMON came. These men were the early school of JAKUSHI. There was then a lapse of time before the school was revived; possibly 40 years or so. FUUNSHI NAGMAI TATSUJIRO KOREYUKI started the later work followed by KOREMITSU, KORECHIKA, and KORETAKA.

The following geneology shows this progression:

Early School of JAKUSHI

(URAGAMI-SHIRAKI family)

Founder: JAKUSHI Kawamura (Rankei)
Influenced by teachings of painting by
Chinese priest ITSUZEN

JAKUSHI Kizaemon IPPYO
born 1687 died February 3, 1755

Taniguchi Heisburo
younger brother of
Kizaemon.
born 1715 died 1747

Shiraki Chouemon
son of JAKUSHI Kizaemon
born 1749 died June 22, 1799

Latter School of JAKUSHI

(NAGAMI family)

- The revivers of the school-

Fuunshi NAGAMI TATSUJIRO Koreyuki
born February 10, 1839 died ?

Futokusai
Nagami Unosuke
KOREMITSU
born ? died ?

Fuseisai
Nagami Michitaro
KORECHIKA
born ? died ?

Ryuunken
Nagami Wasaburo
KORETAKA
born ?
died Sept.2, 1878

All of the tsuba made by the JAKUSHI school were of iron; shaped in round or rounded square. The motif were mainly of Chinese style landscape, with human figures. Also popular are the design of bamboo and dragon in clouds. Believed to be learned from the Dutch, the tsuba were made by the corrosion method (metal etching). Later JAKUSHI school tsuba were carved and some open-cut works. The application of various colors of gold, copper, and silver inlay (nunome-zogan) are applied to the motifs used on JAKUSHI kodōgu. This method was highly developed in the JAKUSHI school. It is the multi-color variations and the graceful blending of same which has appealed to this U.S. collector.

JAKUSHI Kawamura, priest-painter, was the man who developed, through his study of Chinese style paintings, the ground work for the making of JAKUSHI tsuba design. JAKUSHI Kizaemon was the first to execute the teachings of Kawamura. He was able to transform the Sung style of painting to the art of metal work in making tsuba of the same motif (Sensui design).

The JAKUSHI tsuba smiths that followed developed the Sung style in thier own tsuba design. Each making some changes in style or method of design, adding new motifs such as Bamboo, and Dragon variations, etc. I do not have at my hand all the correct dates of birth and death for the JAKUSHI smiths. The chart on the previous page does show the school worked from about 1687 to 1878.

My collection of JAKUSHI kodōgu is varied in items. Most items I have obtained are tsuba although I do have a few fuchi-kashira, kogai, wari-bashi, and kodzuka. I find a ratio of about 60% signed pieces to 40% mumei. The quality of work is about the same ratio; 60% good to 40% fair to poor. I hope to bring to you in the form of photos, the degree of excellance in work which I find difficult to describe in written form. My taste in JAKUSHI have centered now on the Chinese landscape and bamboo designs. I find these to be the best executed examples found in some quantity. However, this is not to say other designs are not equally as good.

So the, let me close with this comment of JAKUSHI tsuba words. JAKUSHI Kawamura instructed the making of tsuba in the Sung painting style to JAKUSHI Kizaemon, who mastered the making of a new style of tsuba. These men were the founders of a school that has bequethed to us today a fine array of tsuba; known as "JAKUSHI".

Editor's note: The following pages of pictures showing Jakushi kodōgu are arranged starting with "early works" and progressing up through "later works", and well reflect the changing styles. The original color photographs used in this article have been placed in the society library and are available for loan to members.

Anyone wishing to assist Mike in his collecting of Jakushi works can do so by contacting him at 2414 Via Del Oro, Carrollton, Texas 75006 (214) 245-1262.

JAKUSHI KODŌGU
QUIGLEY COLLECTION

FIG. 1

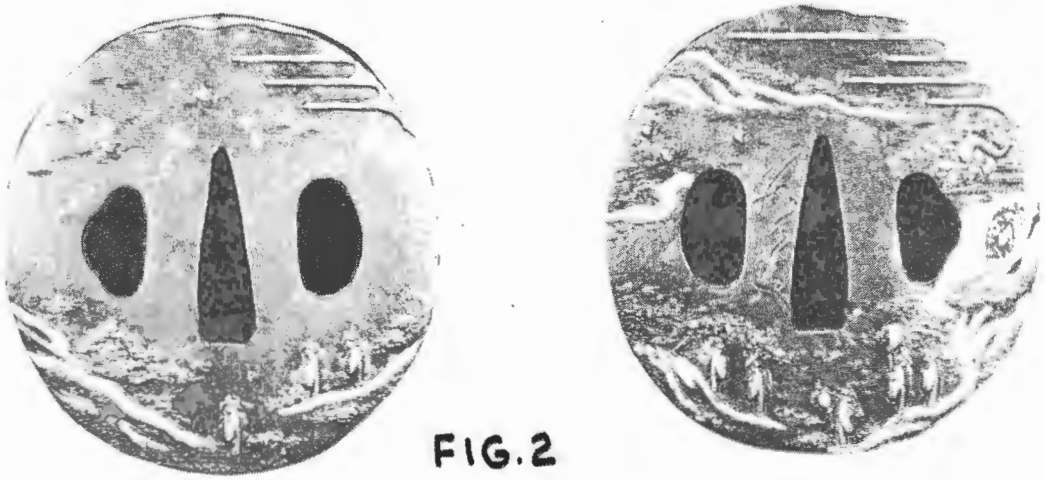


FIG. 2

FIG. 3

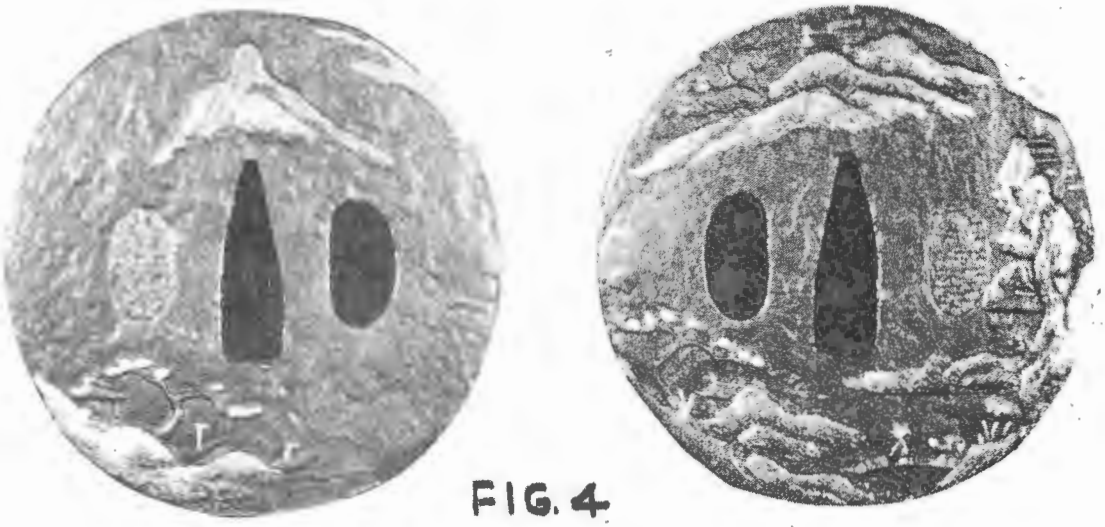


FIG. 4

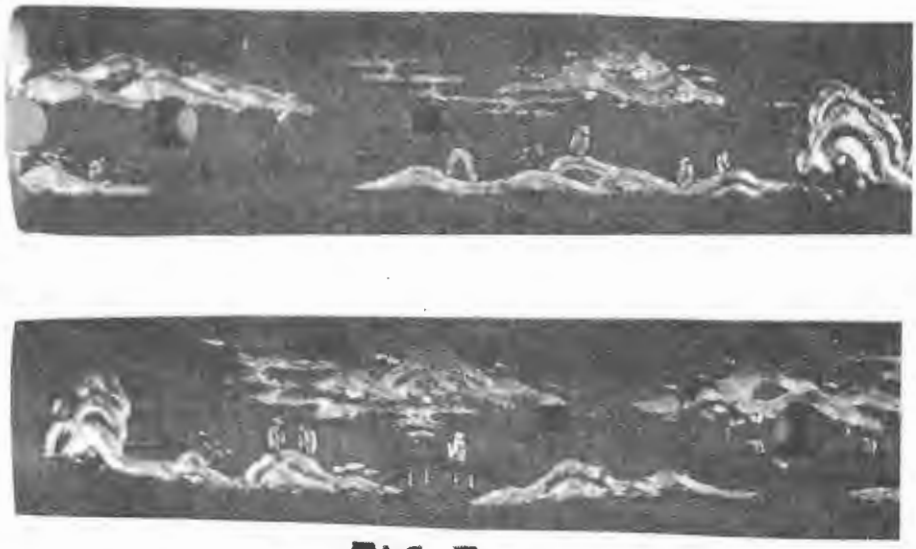


FIG. 5

FIG. 6

FIG. 7

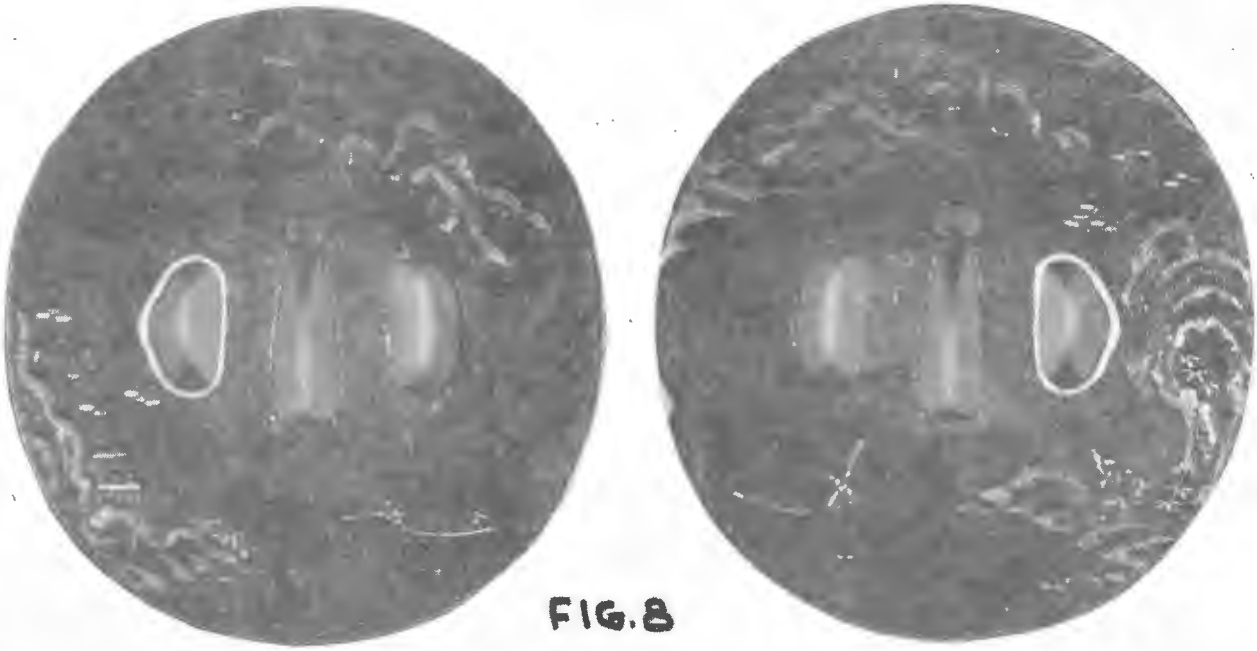


FIG. 8

FIG. 9

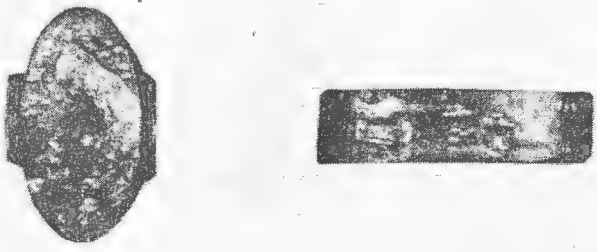


FIG. 10

FIG. 11

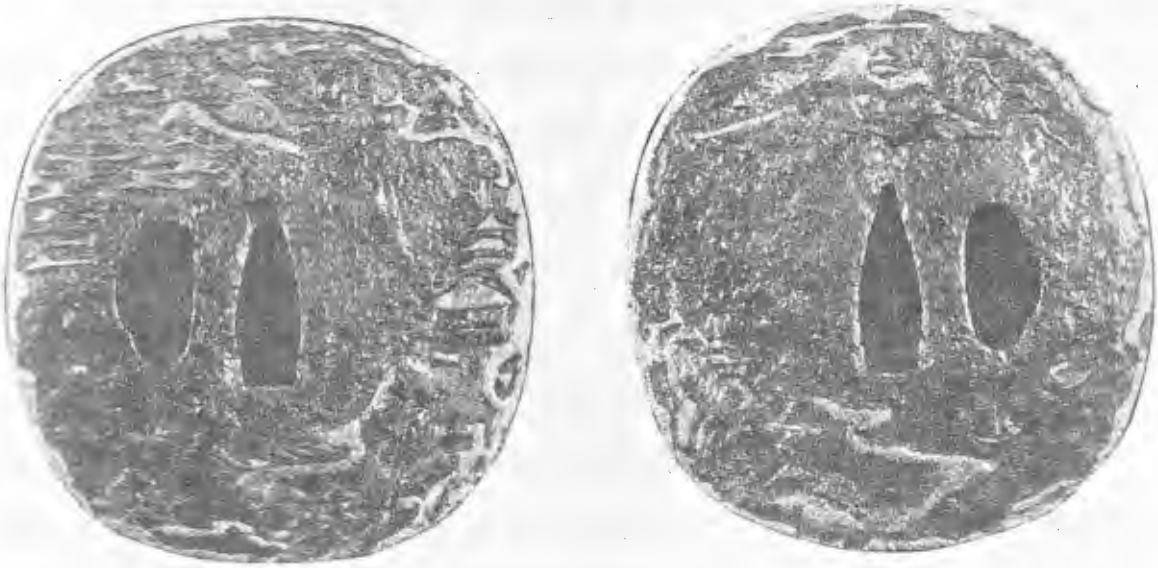


FIG. 12

FIG. 13

FIG. 14

FIG. 15

FIG. 16

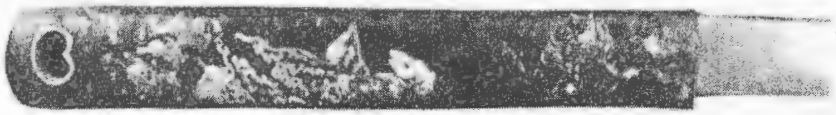


FIG. 17

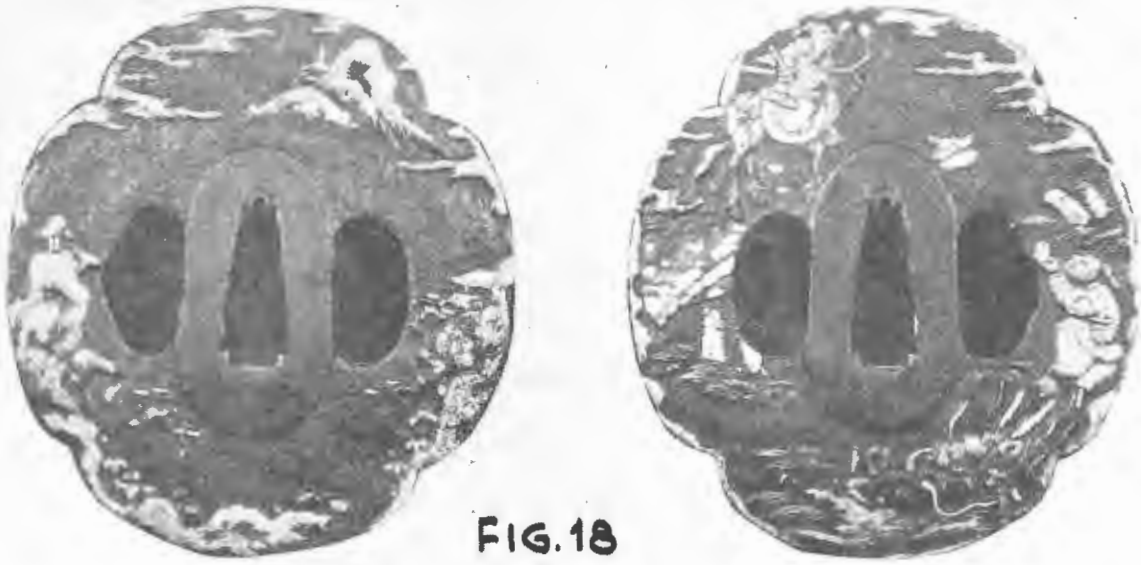


FIG. 18

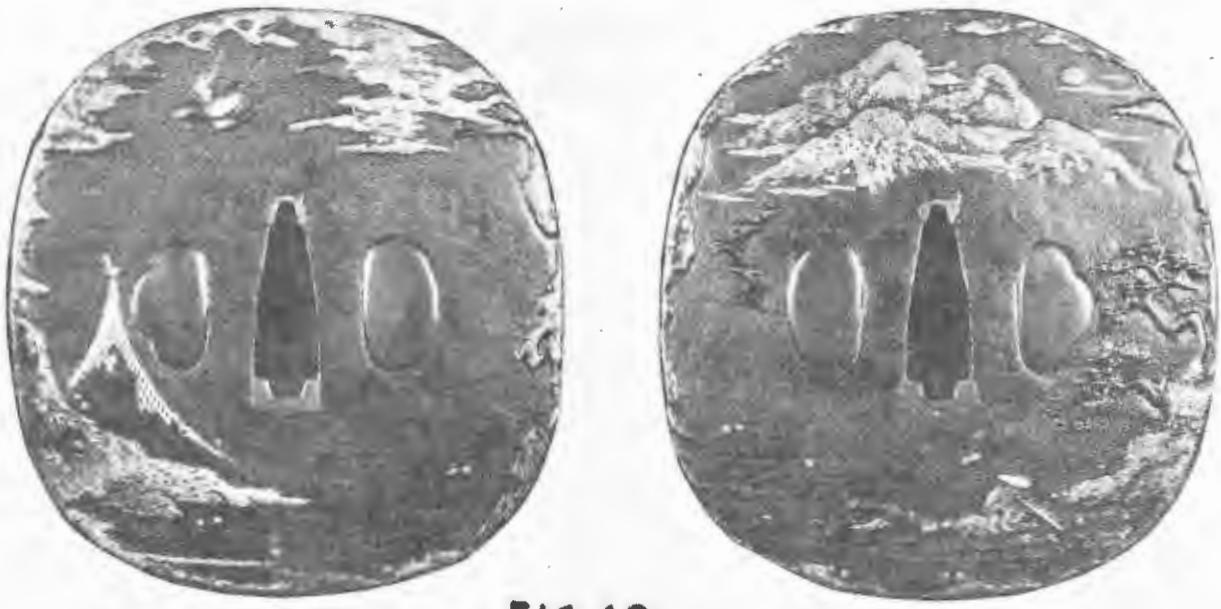


FIG. 19

FIG.20

FIG.21

FIG.22

Editor's note:

The following article is a reprint in part of a series of lectures presented by Mr. Albert Yamanaka and which originally appeared in the society BULLETIN, Vol.3 No.1, Autumn issue, 1961. It is once again being presented in the hopes that it will serve as fresh material to our many newer members and also as a refresher to our many old time members.

LECTURES ON THE SWORD

by Albert Yamanaka

A SHORT INTRODUCTORY HISTORY OF THE SWORD

Regardless of what school or tradition the smith followed, generally those forged with the narrow yakiba are mostly--I wouldn't go so far as to say all--ko-hada. When the yakiba in kotō becomes wide, they usually become ō-hada. This is a very important point to remember. I have never seen a sword with real hoso-suguha and ō-hada.

However, it is well to remember that there were many smiths in the "districts" or countryside away from the centers of the five schools. These country smiths were usually founded by a smith from one of the Gokkaden, but, by the third or fourth generation, errors and the natural tendency to deviate a little and simplify important steps practically destroyed the original concept. Then the shape becomes a little wrong, the thickness is not right and the nioi and the nie no longer follow the rules of the Gokkaden.

This is where a great deal of the difficulty comes from in judging swords. If anyone becomes familiar with the work of a famous smith like, say Nagamitsu, he can tell another Nagamitsu at a glance, but all swords are not Nagamitsu's. There are so many blades like the Sue Seki when swords were turned out on a mass production scale by whole towns. These are very hard to tell apart because the careful, individual workmanship just isn't there. They did not follow all the rules that should be followed to make a good sword. This was because the demand for swords was so great to meet the needs of the continuing wars of that time.

This deterioration could not really be helped, but it means that when we try to judge, the sword, the failure to follow the traditional methods makes our task of trying to determine the tradition under which the sword was made very difficult. If you see a blade and can grasp some small point, you can usually go on if you know what to look for, but, in these "district" or inaka blades of which we have so many in this country, the points just aren't there the way they should be and so the job of judging them is very difficult.

In another situation the sword may be polished down so far that the original appearance is destroyed. That is, the shape may be radically changed, the outer "skin" may be literally all gone or the brilliance of the nioi may be gone even though the hamon is still visible. (Contrary to the general belief, a sword may be completely "worn out" even though the yakiba is still visible.)

What all this means is that if you have a good blade, the rules will apply and that if you don't they won't. Any rule has its exceptions, but in most cases, these exceptions occur in poor work.

The Tantō of the Yamashiro Tradition

Tantō were started during the early Kamakura Period in Yamashiro Province. They were mainly done by the Awataguchi smiths, who made them from the early to the late Kamakura and then stopped. The Rai school of Yamashiro also made tantō. Others who made tantō in the Yamashiro style were Bungo Yukihira, Shintogo Kunimitsu of Sōshū and Enju of Higo in Kyushu, also the Tegai School of Yamato and the Hosho and Shikkake Schools. You must remember, however, that these three schools in Yamato, like all Yamato blades of this period, have Masame hada.

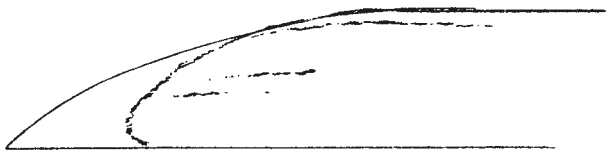
The characteristics of the Yamashiro tradition tantō are (1) the regulation length which is 8 sun, 7 to 8 bu and (2) takenoko sori. (This means bamboo shoot.) It means that the blade has no sori. Either it is straight or toward the tip the sori is the reverse of usual. Most of those you see are made in this style in the Awataguchi and the Rai Schools; however, in the Yamato, you see the straight back. Thus, if you look at it with the blade pointing away from you, you can make out this uchizori, that is the curve going toward the inside. There is a slight sori there that, if looked at it in the usual manner, can hardly be seen, but if you look at it at a flat angle, you can make it out.

The hamon is in hoso suguha with very fine nie throughout. The kayeri of the bōshi is very shallow. It gives the impression of "class," especially if you compare a blade like this to a blade of a later period like the Oei Bizen tantō with sori and the kayeri almost halfway down the back or sometimes all the way down to the machi. These look very awkward, but the early Kamakura Period style such as the Awataguchi and the Rai blades have this very classic feeling. Sometimes I've used the word graceful but that doesn't quite do it. I don't think it is translatable to English. It has class, elegance, gracefulness, all these words combined, I think.

The hada is ko-mokume, and if you see a tantō shaped like that with a carving of a ken on the front and a gomabashi on the reverse--this is found quite often, not in this country, but in Japan--then without question the first one to come to mind should be Rai Kunitoshi. [(Question) Was not this combination used later? (Answer) No. You may see one or the other in combination with other horimono, but not together.]

However, if you should see a ken on the front and the back or gomabashi with some other carvings, ken included, then it would be Awataguchi. Now one thing about Awataguchi in comparison with Rai, is that Awataguchi steel is very finely tempered and jinie is just like nashiji. This is one of the main characteristics of Awataguchi. Also sometimes the length might be a little shorter or longer. If you should find a blade with a small carving above the habaki and yakiotoshi it is Bungo Yukihira. He usually made these long very high sori blades, but he also made a number of tantō.

If you see a blade like this at the boshi you have these nie just like the Awataguchi, but right at the fukura the hamon



just about comes to the touching point of the habuchi, and then you have very thin lines of nie dropping down, two, sometimes three. This is called the okina no hige (old man's beard), this would be Shintogo Kunimitsu whom I mentioned earlier. The fukura in the case of Shintogo is the so-called fukura kareru. Kareru means withered. This is with fukura, but the fukura is straighter.

This would be the famous Toshiro Yoshimitsu of Awataguchi. This man is supposed to have made almost solely tantō throughout his life. His carvings are ken on both sides, and he has something like Shintogo's okina no hige, but the difference between Kunimitsu's hige and Yoshimitsu's is that Kunimitsu's comes down in separate lines whereas in Yoshimitsu's case, it comes down in one line and splits into two, and also he has, this is in hoso suguha, but at the yakidashi, he has about five mokume in the suguha. Very well covered with ko-nie throughout. There won't be any good forgeries of this man's work because no other smith could do this.

Then from the late Kamakura period, just as in the katana or tachi, changes begin to occur. One is that the length becomes a little longer, 9 sun to one shaku or sometimes a little longer. If you look at one of those photograph albums of great swords, a good example is Sōshū Sadamune's tantō. They are sun nobi. I think of one in particular, the Toku Zen-In Sadamune, if I remember rightly, is about one shaku, two sun, although it might be a little shorter.

Also, from this period on, the width of the yakihaba becomes much greater. Also the sori becomes more apparent, as in the so-called saki sori. Not too exaggerated, but there is a certain amount of sori toward the tip. The smiths who made this new style are: in

Sōshū, Masamune, Sadamune, Yukimitsu; in Yamashiro, Rai Kunimitsu and Kunitsugu; in Yamato, Tayema Kuniyuki, Etchu, Go Yoshihiro and Norishige. Koson mentions here Yoshihiro, but I have never seen a Yoshihiro tantō although there must be some or he wouldn't have him listed. There are many tantō by Norishige; also by Sa of Chikuzen in Kyushū.

From this change, you go to the Third or Yoshino Period where you find changes galore. So we'll take that up another time.

[This ended the lecture. What follows is an analysis of a blade belonging to Walter M. Lissey of Portland, which Mr. Kiyoshi Yamashita of Oakland had polished.]

Let's try to take this thing apart. First of all, we look at it from a distance and try to figure out what length this is. I think it's a little over a shaku. Also, it has a great deal of sori. The width of the blade is very narrow in comparison to the length. There is no balance between the sori, the length and the width. It gives you a feeling of being very awkward. [(Question) Has it been polished down so the width is much less than it was originally? (Answer) One good way to tell that is to look at the hamachi. This has been polished down quite a bit but even figuring on the original width of the blade as shown at the hamachi and comparing this with the width and wear at the munemachi, this blade was badly out of balance.]

The carving, as you see, is two long hi with a short hi in between, and then you have a koshibi accompanying the large hi which only goes about two thirds the length of the blade. This type of carving is never found in the Gokkaden. In almost all cases the Gokkaden had rules of aesthetics which they followed because the culture forced them to do so. Going back to this blade, you have all these weird-looking things, the shape, the width, the horimono, the sori. Nothing is right on this blade. So the only thing you do is to go to the so-called Inaka smiths. Since we can't see the hamon very well because this blade is so far gone, we can't really tell what the smith did because the nie and nioi do not appear to go all the way through the blade. That means that this smith did not follow the rules for either the nie or the nioi. Looking at the skin of the blade you see that it is itame. Let us go back to the hamon and try to figure out what this thing had. Itame is used by the Sōshū School and the Bizen School. Now, did any smith connected with Bizen, Bitchū or Mino make any blade like this? Thinking of the off-shoots of them, I do not find anyone. Going back to Sōshū, there is a little resemblance to the type of blade that the early Yoshino smiths made, not in the strict sense of Sōshū Province, but an off-shoot of Sōshū, which would mean a student of Masamune or Sadamune, etc. But you can not take it back that far, so you have to go to one of the descendants of the students of these men. Now then, you have 13 men to take up, Masamune had ten students and Sadamune had three students. Taking these one by one, Go Yoshihiro is out, Norishige is out, Rai Kunimitsu has a chance, Kanemitsu,

Chōgi, Sa are all out, Naotsuna is out, Kunishige is out, that leaves three. Now why did I leave Kunimitsu in there and Mino Kaneuji and Kaneshige? Because of its shape this blade, well, "smells" of Mino. Also regarding Kunimitsu, I don't say that this is directly connected with him, but Kunimitsu and Nobukuni are related, indirectly, because Ryokai was a student of the Rai and Nobunkuni is an offshoot of Ryokai. Now Nobunkuni had students who went to Kyushu and started the Kyushū Nobukuni.

Going to the students of Sadamune, we can eliminate Hojōji Kunimitsu and Bizen Motoshige because this does not show the Hojōji School or Bizen influence. Then we can just about eliminate Kaneuji and Kaneshige of Mino, too.

We go, then, to Nobukuni. As you know, his followers were very good carvers and carved all kind of things, which is the reason I eliminated Kaneuji and Kaneshige. I said that Rai is connected with Nobukuni, so we know we can eliminate Kunimitsu and we are at Nobukuni. Now, somewhere in the so-called dai sagari Nobukuni would be a good guess for this blade. Perhaps a line coming from one of the students of Nobukuni. One thing you have to remember is that when you look at a tantō with a lot of fancy carvings and the period is after Kamakura, a good guess is Nobukuni. Nobukuni's main family went down to the 11th generation so there are a lot of Nobukuni around in tantō and katana. Aside from these there were many Nobukuni migrating to other provinces so there are a great many Nobukunis. This is probably one of the last Nobukuni in Kyushu because I doubt if this shape or horimono could be from Kyoto. They wouldn't have bought this and so they wouldn't have made it.

An Introduction to the Swords of Bizen

Bizen Blades

As I discussed last time, the smiths of Yamashiro, Yamato, and Sōshū had their own select clientele for whom they made their swords. In Mino and Bizen, however, the smith made blades for sale on the open market to whoever needed a sword. One reason was that in the early Heian Period Bizen was one of the commercial centers of Japan which later moved to Osaka and finally to Edo. Another reason was that Bizen was rich in the raw materials necessary for sword smithing. The fact that the Bizen smith made blades for the open market resulted in the blades being--there is a word they use for this in Japan--"koroai" (頃合) "just right." That is to say,

nothing is overemphasized. For example, in Yamato blades, you find that the shinogi is high and the width of the shinogi is narrow. Yamashiro blades are very elegant, not the kind of blade you would want to use in actual combat. The Sōshū blades were made for the Kamakura Bakufu and their vassals after the Minamoto established their capital there. However, the Bizen smiths made blades that were utilitarian and suited everybody.

If you look at the width of a Bizen blade, it is not too wide, nor too narrow; the yakihaba is not too wide, or too narrow; the sori is not overly emphasized. Now, when I say this I mean for the period in which the sword was made. You have to keep that in mind.

In the Heian Period, they made blades which were suited to the taste of that period; that is, the tachi style with high sori and the two rather narrow mihaba. There are exceptions, there are exceptions to any of these rules. However, in general this holds true.

In the early Kamakura Period, you still have the trend carrying over from the Heian Period. Then from the mid-Kamakura the blade becomes a little wider and the shape a little stronger. Then in the late Kamakura the width becomes even greater and the kissaki becomes very long.

Also, from the very late Kamakura into the early Yoshino Period, a number of smiths made blades in the Heian style. This gets a little confusing, I know. Why they did that has never been satisfactorily explained to me, but the fact remains that they did.

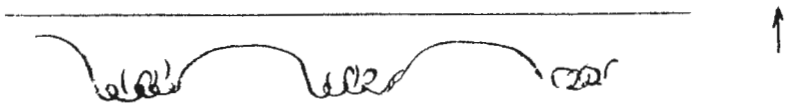
The Yoshino Period style is a carry-over from the Late Kamakura. Then, in the Late Yoshino, comes the change-over from the tachi style to the katana style. Also, in the Ashikaga Period, right after the katana developed, the wakizashi came into being.

Then, in the Sengoku Period, the length of the blade becomes a little shorter in katana. I think I mentioned before that in the change-over from the tachi, the katana length is 2 shaku, 3-to-4 sun. In the Sengoku Period the katana length becomes about 2 shaku, 1-to-2 sun. We speak here, of course, about the lengths in the periods when these swords were made. Later on many of these blades were shortened. Many have even become wakizashi.

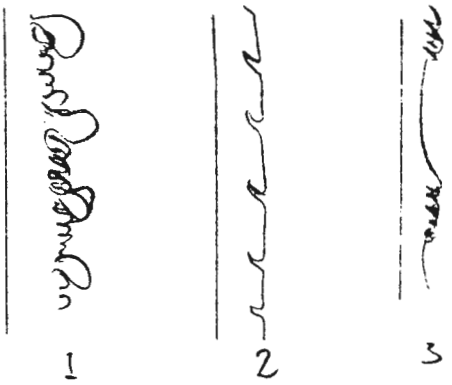
Another thing to remember about Bizen blades is that they were made in nioi style. Nioi is the result of the firing of the blade at a lower temperature. Nioi is the same as nie but the pebble is so small it cannot be seen with the naked eye and so looks like a bright cloud formation, whereas, in the nie, the pebbles are a little more distinct and can be seen readily.

The hamon is typically chōji midare. There are various forms of the chōji. You have the Ko-chōji and then, if it gets too violent, it becomes Ō-chōji. Then later on in the kotō period the Oei Bizen have this koshi-biraki with the valley becoming wide,

which you do not find in the earlier kotō blades.



Other characteristics of the hamon are: 1. Kawadzuko chōji or tadpole chōji. 2. Kataotoshi gunnome chōji. 3. Notare midare. These three are the primary hamon designs of Bizen. Any



others are abbreviations or combinations of these. No. 1 would be in the early and mid-Kamakura. No. 2 would be in the late Kamakura. No. 3 would be in the Muromachi or Sengoku Periods in the late kotō period.

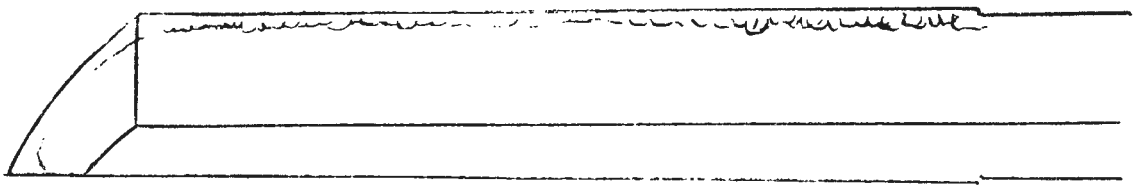
This (1) is a typical Sukesada hamon. This (3) you see in Kanemitsu, Kagemitsu, Tomomitsu--around that area. No. 1 is Nagamitsu, Mitsutada, Hatakeda Moriie. (Anytime you see a tadpole chōji, grab it!)

In Bizen blades, all blade prior to Kamakura, that is the Heian blades, are called Ko-Bizen or old Bizen--such smiths as Tomonari, Masatsune, the three hira's--Kanehira, Sukehira, Takehira; and also you have the Ko-ichi-monji or Old Ichimonji. You had so many smiths in Ichi-monji. Another thing is that in old Bizen, provided the blade is in its original length--ubu--it generally had koshiba. You don't see too many of these. Generally if you have O-koshiba, the upper part of the blade becomes ko-chōji, but on the other hand, smiths like Masatsune did exactly the reverse. You have this ko-chōji carried on into the very early Kamakura, but then in the mid-Kamakura when this Fukuoka Ichimonji comes in you get the ō-chōji, where this chōji is carried on throughout the length of the blade. Sometimes, like in Sukemune, the chōji is so violent it reaches as far as the shinogi. At the same time, even though his chōji is so hade, it does not look out of place--it looks very natural--which shows you the skill of the man. Then you have the Fukuoka Ichimonji who did the ō-chōji and the Katayama Ichimonji who did the saka-chōji, and then there is a very large variation in the width of the yakihaba, not exactly a notare, but something like that, which was done by Ichimonji Sukezane. He is

one of the men who was called to Kamakura to start the Sōshū School. Sometimes he is called Kamakura Ichimonji.

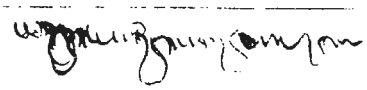
Also, though I said that Bizen blades were primarily nioi, when you go back to the early Kamakura and Heian Period blades even the Bizen blades are a combination of nie and nioi. Therefore, up until about mid-Kamakura you find such things as kinsuji, inazuma, chikei, but nevertheless, at the same time they still maintained this nioi which is the primary characteristic of Bizen.

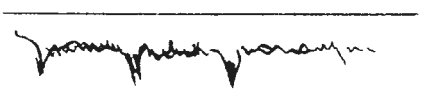
Also you have Kunimune or Bizen Saburo who went to Kamakura, I think, in his blades. The yakiba is very harrow. But, contrary



to other blades of his time, you find ashi or the so-called rat's feet at the yakidashi but not in the upper half of the blade. Ko-chōji midare with no ashi on the upper half.

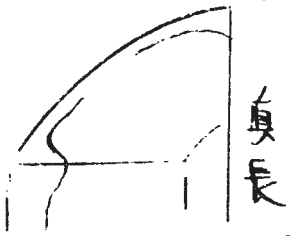
Then you have the Unju School. 雲 This character is always used as the first character in the name of the members of this school. This is the school that did the saka-chōji and they had a lot of ashi. At the same time they had a lot of nie. A little while ago I said that on the tadpole you have Mitsutada, Moriiye and Nagamitsu. Shodai Nagamitsu's other name is Junkei Nagamitsu.

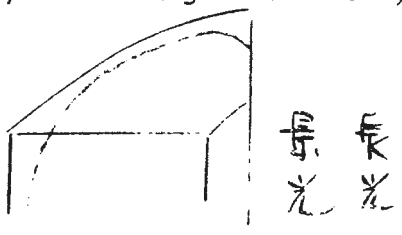
順慶長光 一代 

左近將監長光 二代 

Then you have Sakon Shogen as the second Nagamitsu. The first Nagamitsu has this tadpole midare, but the second Nagamitsu has the peaks of the nie in the hamon becoming a little togaro.

The sansaku bōshi was done by Nagamitsu, his son Kagemitsu, and Sanenaga. These are called Sansaku. The important points are that the hamon goes into the bōshi in komaru. Sanenaga gets a little different in this part. Then you have Kagemitsu's son, Kanemitsu,



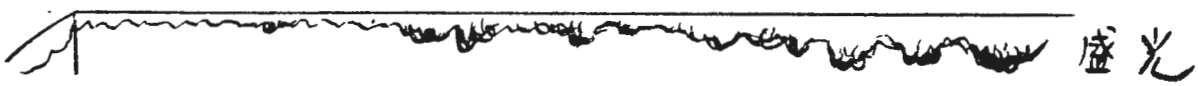


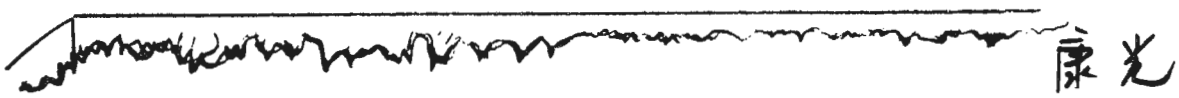
who was a student of Masamune. He was the one that did this kataotoshi gunnome. But that was not his only style, he did many other types of hamon, too.

Then you have Motoshige, student of Sadamune but somewhere along his blade is a small cluster; this gunnome will be uniform and then it changes abruptly. Also you have to remember Kanemitsu; since he did study under Masamune, you have the Sōshū trend coming into Bizen.

Chōgi is another one of Masamune's students. His hamon is very violent and he has more nie than any other Bizen blade. His style probably most closely resembles that of Sōshū.

Going into the Ashikaga Period, we come to the first of the Oei smiths, Yasumitsu and Morimitsu. That is the difference between





Yasumitsu and Morimitsu. In Morimitsu, toward the yakidashi the width of the yakiba is wide and then towards the tip, it gets narrower. Yasumitsu is exactly the opposite. Also, in Yasumitsu you tend to get more togariba. Of course, in both of these you have a number of dai sagari. Then later on, you have the Sukesada which we discussed before. You have a number of Sukesada. I think there are nearly seventy Sukesadas. Nearly all of these worked within a relatively short period, about a hundred years. Among the numerous Sukesada, Yozosaemon, Genbēi, and Hikobei are prominent. There were a number of other smiths who used these names Genbēi and Hikobei, too, but their work is very inferior. From then on you have a number of such and such mitsu. From the later Oei to the end of the koto period, Bizen smiths used this mitsu in their names as the second character. It's pretty hard to tell these apart except in details which are characteristic of the various smiths which we will go into some other time.

Swords of the Fifth and Sixth Periods

I'd like to talk a little bit about the difference between swords of the Fifth and the Sixth Periods which are the Sengoku and the Early Shinto. These two periods are the source of the greater part of the swords in this area and, I believe, in Japan, too.

Primarily the shape of general structure of the sword is about the same in both these periods except that during the Sengoku (Sengoku meaning the Warring Period) Period the swords were made mainly for practical use; whereas after the start of the Shintō Era when Tokugawa Ieyasu ruled the whole country there was no more war. Therefore the swords of the Shintō Era have more esthetic or artistic inspiration compared with the Sengoku Period swords. As an example, take the late Mino swords, we dismiss them like we

dismiss a gentai-tō, they are that bad. At least this is true of the majority of late Seki blades.

But, entering the Shintō Period, we have a number of very good smiths like Kunihiro, Umetada Myoju, Bizen Tadayoshi, etc. We can start with Horikawa Kunihiro. He had a number of excellent students who migrated to all parts of Japan and started their own schools. Kunihiro was something like the Masamune of his time. In the late Kamakura Period, Masamune had many students who came to study under him and then returned to their respective provinces and started their own schools. It was almost exactly the same in Kunihiro's case.

Going back, there is a resemblance of the early Shintō sword to the early Sōshū school. That is, the yakiba is very wide, and the blades are primarily nie. However, the difference is that the skin of the blade is komokume hada in the Shintō and itame in Sōshū. Also, in the hamon, you do not find the nie-sake. (This is a split line of nie that is not exactly kinsugji; in a sense it is more distinct. When we talk of kinsugi we are speaking of extremely fine workmanship. In this case nie sake is the result of pretty rough forging. This you do not find in the Shintō, but you do find it in the early Kotō of Sōshū.)

Now, let's assume that number two is the old Sōshū. I do not mean Yukimitsu, Masamune, or Sadamune here, but I refer to

the general term Sōshū, including the later Sōshū with smiths like Akihiro, Hiromitsu, Hiroaki and so forth, and number one is the Shintō blade.

Further back, I said that the early Shintō has a great resemblance to the early Sōshū School. The most famous smith of the Shintō Era, who did very good Sōshū style work is Horikawa Kunihiro, and his school, the Horikawa School. Other than him, these four are the most famous of the Shintō smiths who worked in the Sōshū tradition combined with the early Shintō revised form of forging. The Horikawa School, as I said, forged swords in the style of the Sōshū School of the early Yoshino Period, which is the third period. Now if you see a sword which you think is a Shintō, but it has some characteristics like those we have been discussing, that is, the early Sōshū type, then you must go to one of the three following: Yamashiro Province, the Osaka School, or the Edo School.

Going back to review a little. The smith after he forges, comes up with the shape of a finished blade. He then coats that with a mixture of clay and ash, (which is usually supposed to be some kind of family secret). On the blade pattern portion, he thins the

clay so there is only a thin layer remaining. Now the thickness of that remaining coating also varies with the various schools. After that he puts this in fire and heats it to a certain temperature which is also a family secret or tradition and is judged by the color of fire. When he attains the right temperature by the color and his judgment of the fire he takes that blade and dips it in the water to quench it. Now during the heating the edge would get hotter and when the blade was quenched the edge would cool faster and therefore be harder. If the temperature was very high and the quenching rapid the blade would be nie and if the temperature were less high, it would be nioi. As we have said before, the nie can be seen as individual shiny spots in the blade while the crystal aggregations of harder steel that make up the nioi are too small to see except as they reflect the light in a bright haze pattern. Nie can be seen by inspecting the blade with the light behind you and nioi can be seen by reflecting he light from a source in front of you on the sword. These structures are basically the same thing but for the size of the crystal formations.

Now we have to go back to some dates. The history of the Japanese sword goes back to the ninth century. That is the sword as we know it today. In the first year of Daido, 806 A.D. there was a man in Yamato Province known as Amakuni. This man is supposed to have originated the shape of the sword as we know it today. Originally the bronze dagger which was imported from the mainland of China and Korea was a symmetrical double-edged blade. I don't know about how the Japanese developed the way of making steel. This seems to be clouded in history. Anyway, a little earlier than this time, the Japanese found that they could get much better weapons by melting down meteorites and meteoritic ores and smelting swords from the iron.

At the same time, the imported sword was for stabbing and the Japanese seemed never to have developed a style of fighting based on thrusting. For this reason, they found the straight, pointed double-edged blade not to their liking, so they split the sword and made a single-edged weapon more suited for cutting. This kind of blade was used early in the eighth and ninth centuries in the wars to subdue the Ainu who controlled much of northern Japan at that time. At that time there came a desire for a different type of sword, better suited to the style of fighting current then. So this man, Amakuni, is supposed to have developed the curved blade which has been handed down to the present day.

Now Kōson's version of the question about this Amakuni is that "Amakuni" was an honorary title given as a personal name to a smith who had attained certain skill. One reason for this theory is that of the several swords still in existence which are attributed to Amakuni, the style of forging is all different, even though they are of the Early Yamato School. Thus, Amakuni is a title like Master in one version. Another historical version is that this was one man whose name was handed down for several generations. Of course, you have to remember that this is the ninth century we are talking about. Very little written history survives from this time.

So much for how the sword came into being. Now for the Periods. I have been talking about the periods First Period, Second Period, and so on:

Periods in Japanese Sword History

First, or Heian Period (start of Nihon Tō)
from 1st year of Daido - 806 A.D.
to the last year of Juei Era - 1183.

Second, or Kamakura Period (divided into three parts)
Early Kamakura from 1st year of Genreki Era - 1184
to 6th year of Kempō - 1218,
Middle Kamakura from 1st year of Shōkyū - 1219
to 3rd year of Kenji - 1277,
Late Kamakura from 1st year of Kōan - 1278
to 3rd year of Genkō - 1333.

Third, or Yoshino Period
from 1st year of Kenbu Era - 1334
to 1st year of Meitoku - 1393.

Fourth, or Muromachi Period
from 1st year of Ōei - 1394
to 1st year of Bunshō - 1466.

Fifth, or Sengoku Period
from 1st year of Ōnin - 1467
to 4th year of Bunroku - 1595.

End of Kotō Period of Sword-making.

And Beginning of the Shintō Period:

Sixth, or Edo (or Tokugawa) Period
from 1st year of Keichō - 1596
to 9th year of Anei - 1780.

Seventh, or Shinshintō (or Kinkotō) Period
from 1st year of Tenmei Era - 1781
to 3rd year of Keiō - 1867.

After that, we have the

Meiji to Taishō Period
from 1st year of Meiji - 1868
to 14th year of Taishō - 1925.

Gendaitō Period
from 1st year of Shōwa to the present time.

The reason the 2nd Period or Kamakura Period is divided into three is because this is the so-called Renaissance of the Japanese Sword. In this period, 1184 to 1433, name any sword, every sword, there are no junk swords, they are all good.

Was this because of wars or lack of wars? (Question from the audience.) Well, yes and no. The Heian Period was relatively peaceful and then, in the early Kamakura Period, continuing from the Late Heian, you have the great Taira Minamoto Wars or the Genpei Wars. Around the Middle Period of the Kamakura, Minamoto took over the country and established the shogunate.

Now swords of the Heian Period are very graceful in accordance with the aristocratic feeling of the time. However, since all smiths worked in much the same style and this style was a simpler, less hade style than what we see later, the elegance was not a fancy style. The two styles current then were the Yamato and the Yamashiro styles. The Yamato style was the first and the oldest which is natural since Yamato was the traditional capital and the center of culture. The Yamashiro style developed when the capital was moved to Kyoto during the Heian Period.

Now a sword will always tell of its time. A sword made in this period will show it in its shape. For example, in the Late Kamakura Period: the blade is very wide, kissaki is very long, no ha-niku. In Sengoku, the blade becomes straighter, shorter, hirazukori, kissaki little longer than in Muromachi, width at hamachi and yokote same, kasane thick, generally appearance is very sturdy.

This is a very good example of this period...no sori or curvature. It more or less goes back to the very early sword. However, in this period, wars went on for years and years. The smiths, therefore, because of the great demand for weapons, could not take the time to forge swords of great caliber. This is the kind of thing that was turned out in great number. (Question) What was the function of the long kissaki if the sword was not used for stabbing? Why did they change the shape of the kissaki? (Answer) Toward the Late Kamakura, strife became great again and so they found that the earlier sword did not suit their method of fighting. I'm not really sure why they changed the shape of the kissaki. Perhaps this is something for the historian; I'm just a specialist in the styles and schools.

So then the width became great and the blade became very long. This gives you the impression of a blade for use in cavalry warfare. When I say cavalry warfare, of course, I am referring to the upper classes the common soldier still walked, in this period they still wore their blades suspended with the edge down in tachi style and the blades were still long. However, in the next period they found that this style was not so good and again they started changing. They started wearing the sword in their belt or sash. Now when they took the long sword and thrust it into their sash, they found it was too long, so they started shortening the older blades and most of the blades up to this period all suffered. Also, when they put the sword in

their belt, they started wearing two blades, the long one and the short one. The ideal length for the lone one is supposed to be about two shaku, three sun and five bu. The ideal length for the wakizashi is supposed to be about one shaku, eight or nine sun. Other than that, you have the tantō, which comes in all sizes and lengths.

(Question) When they started wearing the two swords, what was the function of the wakizashi? Was that for close fighting? (Answer) That is another one of the whys that I am not really sure about. In the old days, when they carried a tachi, they always carried a tantō, too. They wore a dagger in their belt or robes. Now when they started wearing the daisho, the dai was usually removed upon entering a house. The dai was left at the front door and only the short was worn. They said this was because they felt naked without a weapon. Of course, when they called at a castle of a shogun, etc., the daisho were both removed and they were only allowed to wear a dagger. You may remember from the tale of the Forty Seven Ronin that Asano was ordered to commit seppuku because he attacked his enemy with his dagger, which was the only weapon he was permitted to wear in the presence of the shōgun or in the castle. And, as the story tells, they were forbidden to draw the weapon on pain of death.

In one school of fencing they used both the long and the short at the same time, one in each hand. However, the katana was usually the weapon used. In case the katana became useless or was dropped the wakizashi was always there, of course.