

annual

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 Compiled and Edited by Ron Hartmann  
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PREFACE

The JSS/US once again proudly presents its annual publication, the Bulletin. Although the prospects for a successful issue did appear somewhat bleak as 1977 came to its end, a plea to the many knowledgeable members of the society brought forth an abundance of material. Obviously, judging from the size of this years Bulletin, this issue will be recognized as one of the more significant issues ever produced by the society.

Our thanks to the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword (NBTHK) for their allowing us to translate and print the article on generations of Hizen Masahiro, plus our thanks to the other publications granting us like permission, specifically, the Akihira Miyairi article, Tanto Monogatari and the Sword of Japan article.

The article by Roald Knutsen is the first of many, promised to us by this author, remembered for his book, Japanese Polearms. The lead article by Paul Allman is a most significant article and a topic which we hope to see more discussion on in future JSS publications. Long time members, Keith Evans and Albert Yamanaka once again came through with very noteworthy articles for which we are thankful for, and F. Karel Wiest, a relatively new member of the society, provided us with his Glossary of Sword Terms, in answer to the request of our many newer members. On behalf of the society membership, our sincere thanks to all of the contributors to this years Bulletin.

In order to get the Bulletin "in phase" once again (it has been running six months late for the past several years), this issue has been called 1977/1978 issue. This adjustment will put us back into phase with the times with the future 1979 issue being published in that year.

One last credit is due and that is to Ed Dobrzanski who was kind enough to offer his typing abilities to the Editor. Ed typed a large portion of this issue which greatly assisted in the printing of this years Bulletin at this not-so-late date.

Many thanks to everyone involved.....

RCH

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT THE NIHONTŌ IS A FINE ART?:  
CONNOISSEURSHIP, TASTE AND APPRAISAL.

by Paul Allman

For many reasons, some of which I have discussed elsewhere, the Nihontō is a fine art. It rises above a craft, because it permits (in fact, requires) that the artist express his own personality in the process of his creating a fine sword. It is this factor of the necessary expression of the artist's self in his work that differentiates the sign painter and commercial artist from the fine artist.

(This is, like most questions about art, a matter of degree. Thus we recognize that skill and craft are not enough when we judge the comparative excellence of two swords by the same maker. A smith of little repute occasionally made a truly fine sword, a personal masterpiece so to speak, while a very famous smith could turn out blades of only mediocre artistic value. Again, the nameless Kazu-uchi mono smiths of Bizen or Kuwano, like many of the better-rated Sukesada (who produced individually ordered swords of great artistic merit, as well as many, more-or-less, mass produced blades), were superb artisans whose very speed and efficiency speaks of their mastery as craftsmen..... and there exist some "kazu-uchi mono" which show levels of artistic craftsmanship of a very high order.)

The central points that we must consider when we approach the problem of what it means when we say something is a fine art are: connoisseurship, taste and the differences between an art market and a collectors market.

Connoisseurship is basically the result of knowledge. It is very close to what we study when we learn the rules of kantei, begin to recognize the different trends in sugata, hamon, hada, etc., and gain a factual knowledge of the materials, techniques and styles used by different smiths at different times.

Taste is something more; it is learning not just how to tell a good sword, but that different times and people like different things in a sword. Just as some people of great taste are wild about Holbein, others prefer Renoir or Picasso. In swords, most beginning collectors and casual collectors prefer Shinshintō because they are easy to see. It requires a far more sophisticated eye to fully see the subtle effects of a fine Koto suguha. That is not, by the way, to say that one is superior in every way; it only recognizes that such differences exist.

Some people seem to be born with better taste than others. However, anyone who spends a good deal of time around any art form will find their taste changing. Taste is thus a product of natural talent plus experience.

The differences between an art market and a collectors market are many. The basic difference, however, is simply that an art market is more effected by taste.

But taste changes with time. Alfred Kroeber, the great american Anthropologist, first came to public note with a paper on how women's clothing styles went through a cyclical swing; the out of fashion style of today coming back into style a few years later. The same thing happens in art.

All of these factors.....connoisseurship, taste and the nature of an art market...are important to American collectors of the Nihontō, because we are rapidly approaching the time when swords are going to be much harder to find. When this happens, those collectors and dealers who have been roughly estimating values in terms of lack of flaws, size, general level of activity in the hamon and, above all, names on the nakago will find themselves at a great disadvantage. Indeed, as we pass from a time when swords are abundant, and, if you make a mistake today, there are always more fish in the sea, we will pass into a time when artistic values will become increasingly important for all those who stay in the field. This will be a time when connoisseurship and taste will come into their own.

How does one develop connoisseurship? By scholarship and by looking. Just as experts like Bob Haynes look first at the artistic excellence of a tsuba, any art expert looks first to see if a work is pleasing and tasteful before going on to further appraisal.

Because art deals with a product that, unlike guns, coins stamps and even most furniture and furnishings, in not manufactured, its appreciation and appraisal is far more complex. With collector's items of a mass produced sort, the task of the appraiser is basically to establish what the object is (to identify it's time and place of manufacture, and any other facts which will allow it to be precisely identified); determine its rarity and desirability (many rare objects have not been researched, reported or otherwise come to notice, so that they are not particularly desirable); and analyze its condition. Given these facts, it is simply a matter of acquiring a knowledge of the market to set a price.

This is not, in any way, to dismiss the difficulty of kantei. The Japanese sword, like ceramics and antiquities of any kind, requires enormous scholarship almost as a way of life. The Nihontō, like all such art works, will always have most of its value based on the desire of we humans to have things that are rare and things that were made by the hands of famous men.

However, there is a strong tendency, in Japan as well as in the West, to establish value for the Nihontō solely in terms of who made it and how good its condition remains. Sooner than we think, this habit will have to give way, at least for leading connoisseurs, to an appreciation of more subtle artistic values.

Even in Japan, the emphasis upon expertise at Kantei usually exists with far greater strength than the lip service paid to artistic values which reflect the great range of work by the same men within the same school.

But this tendency is not restricted to the Nihontō. To all but those of a developed taste, all prints of the same size and condition, from the same portfolio or suite, should, by these standards, fetch the same price. Such is not the case. Prints from Picasso's "Vollard Suite", for instance, vary in value by several times. This is where taste comes directly into play.

For example, most people would assume that any Italian painting from the time of Michelangelo would be very expensive. But there are beautiful paintings by relatively little known painters of that time which can be acquired, at auction, for under \$5,000. This is where the large factor of fame enters the market.

But, there are also paintings by little known painters which have fetched quite high prices because of the outstanding artistic excellence of the particular work. There are also amazing variations in the prices of works by the same artist of repute, depending on the fame and estimated artistic value of the different pieces. This is the factor of connoisseurship at work in the market.

We have tended to value a Nihontō because it was in good condition, by a known maker or, perhaps, because the sword itself was known. (The Japanese, even more than most Western collectors, tend to value a work because of its history of ownership.)

Consider, however, that paintings by Claude Monet, of the same size, from the same period of his work and with equally prestigious records of ownership, can vary several times in value. This, again, is connoisseurship in action, but subject to the modifications of taste.

This is the essential difference between art and craft. While taste is certainly a factor in evaluating craft products, it is a much larger force in art.

In Japan the factor of taste is controlled, except for the most expert of collectors, by a system whereby each dealer develops a "stable" of loyal buyers. These buyers will rarely, if ever, buy a piece except from, or with the advice of, their "own" dealer. The same thing tends to be true in the West only for the very finest of works. Duveen, for example, had several "loyal" clients. The difference between East and West is in the degree to which the buyer depends upon and follows the taste of his dealer.

What then is taste? It is, roughly, the result of an aptitude that can be tested, which has then been educated, experienced and refined. It is roughly correlated with intelligence, but only roughly. It is, finally, more a "feeling" or "sense" than a product of rational analysis.

Ideally, if one had the specimens to study, he would learn to kantei swords exactly the same way one learns to appraise, critique or appreciate paintings. First would come a great deal of exposure, over a considerable period of time, to actual works by the same school and by the same artists within the school. Along with that exposure would come a lot of study of the history of that kind of work, including a study of how past experts have described the style and techniques of the school or artist. After a while one begins to recognize, and make critical judgments about, a George Bellow or Robert Henri all the way across a museum....because it just "looks right". The art lover or expert will always confirm his opinion, if possible, but mostly to hone an already sharpened critical eye.

Not too strangely, such critical expertise is rare. It never is all-embracing in any field. No one knows it all or can ever know it all. But it is the nature of what happens to an art, and we are facing it in our field of the Nihontō.

Editor's note:

Paul Allman is author of the in depth paper entitled, Visions Within Visions: The Nature of Aesthetics and the Japanese Sword as a Fine Art, which appeared in the publication, Token Taikai, 1976. (This publication is available for purchase from the JSS/US Newsletter)

AKIHIRA MIYAIRI Swordsmith

Interview and Text  
by Barbara Adachi

Excerpt from The Living National Treasures of Japan, by Barbara C. Adachi, Copywrited Mobil Sekiyo Kabushiki Kaisha, Tokyo 1973. Reprinted with permission of MSKK.

Preface: This article is a timely one in that the swordsmith Miyairi died this past November at the age of 64. (ref: JSS/US NL Vol.10 No.1)

"I was brought up to the clang of the hammer and the wheeze of the bellows. The smell of metal in the forge is in my body. From the time I was a very small boy, I found that the smell of iron heating over the coals and the feel of steel in my hands comforted me. I cannot remember when I did not want to be a swordsmith."

At his smithy in the small village of Sakaki, 120 kilometers northwest of Tokyo, Akihira Miyairi forges swords in the tradition of the great Kamakura swordsmiths of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Since 1938, when as a twenty-five-year-old prodigy he won national acclaim and a prize for a short sword of exquisite beauty and strength, Miyairi has consistently produced blades that recapture the glory of the ancient Japanese sword and assure his place as Japan's leading contemporary swordsmith.

"My grandfather was a swordsmith who turned to making farmers' tools after the Meiji Restoration, and my father made only tools, but I went on to study sword making in Tokyo. The bellows, the forge, the tools, the fusing and tempering processes I use are almost exactly the same as those of seven or eight hundred years ago. I make some swords in the style of Heian period swordsmiths and I have made some twenty swords for the Grand Shrines of Ise in the archaic straight, double-edged style, but most of my models are swords of the Kamakura period. I work in the style of the Soshu-den, one of the five great disciplines of Japanese sword making. I can make swords inspired by various ancient styles and I copy historical swords of different shapes, sizes, tempers, and grains, but I still am not completely satisfied with my jigane (basic sword-making iron; forged into thick wafers). The whole secret of making fine swords lies in the jigane. How did the great Masamune (1264-1343) make jigane of such superb quality? What was the special technique of those Kamakura swordsmiths in producing such fine jigane from iron-rich river sand?" With a small puzzled look on his face, Miyairi sat warming his hands at a brazier in his crowded Japanese style living room. Outside the open sliding doors a handsome black rooster strutted through the sunlight followed by his hens; a white peony plant grew near the house. Miyairi spoke quickly and very colloquially. Whether chatting over tea or receiving visitors at his annual sword exhibition, Miyairi has a comfortable, slightly ruffled look about him,



his face unshaven and his hair mussed. His small, strong hands are calloused, scarred, irregular. Miyairi, disdainful of the formality and mystique in which Japanese swordsmiths have always revelled, chooses as his favorite headgear a cotton towel tied in a jaunty knot rather than the formal lacquered hat traditionally worn by swordsmiths.

"Oya-kata (a respectful term used by apprentices meaning literally, "father person," i.e., the boss) never wears the formal swordsmith's outfit except for photographs," Miyairi's senior assistant confided. "Oh, yes, the hat sometimes for special swords, but only occasionally, and none of those fancy brocades. After all, who can really work at the forge in an outfit like that? Oya-kata wears his tattered black cotton hakama (a kind of culotte) with lots of holes and patches, and a white cotton vest, just as we apprentices do."

Swordsmiths have always been the artistocrats of Japanese craftsmen, pursuing their art under the patronage of emperors, shoguns, and samurais. Although many swordsmiths were considered mere craftsmen, the most skilled were honored and revered as artists who, through mystical rituals of fire, water, and earth, produced not only beautiful weapons but also magical symbols of power. The cult of the samurai was based on the premise that the sword was the very soul of the warrior, who, without a sword, was not a samurai at all. Representing loyalty to one's overlord and contempt for death, the sword has historically been an important symbol around which Japanese political and social development has been built.

The sword has been central to the Japanese ethic ever since Susa-no-o, brother of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, slew an eight-headed dragon at one stroke. Because the killing blade was inferior, the dragon slayer was rewarded by the appearance from the dragon's tail of a superb sword, which he presented to his powerful sister. It is said that with the Three Sacred Treasures signifying imperial rule, the mirror of wisdom, the jewel of ability, and the sword of strength, the Emperor Jimmu established the line on earth from which the present emperor is descended. The sword of the Imperial Regalia at the Grand Shrines of Ise and its palace replica are still of great ceremonial significance.

Regarded not as a sign of aggression but rather as a symbol of peace, loyalty, and honor, a Japanese sword is usually given a name or a title and treated as an heirloom. Treasured for its historical or artistic worth, for its sentimental or intrinsic value, a sword represents purity and symbolizes life undefiled by evil as well as death with honor.

The hard, thin edge, the strong, resilient back, and its unique curve make the Japanese sword a cutting weapon unequalled in the history of the world, a product of the Japanese forging and tempering methods that reached their peak of development in the



Thirteenth century, one thousand years after iron swords were introduced to Japan from China. Great advances in swordmaking during the Heian period prepared the way for the golden era of the sword under the military dictatorship in Kamakura.

"The Heian period jigane was very good, but that of the Kamakura period was superb. The jigane used by the Awataguchi swordsmiths in Kyoto, the Yamashiro smiths, the Ko-Bizen smiths - that jigane was beautiful, the very best. They could temper it well and achieve fine blades. What we swordsmiths today want to know is how to make that wonderful steel. To be beautiful, a blade must be absolutely clear and the metal must be a pure white color. The fine old blades have an intense clarity, none of that hazy, murky color."

"If the jigane is bad, no matter how much effort is put into the forging and tempering, the tempered edge will not be good. I must continue to make better and better jigane. From now on, I want to concentrate more on jigane extracted from river sand because that is where I think the secret is," Miyairi stated.

I have been using various types of iron, hard and soft, coarse ore and lumps, scrap iron, and iron from smelters in Shimane Prefecture. Old iron is the best. Those hinges from the old Daitokuji gate in Kyoto that were melted down in June are fine sixteenth century iron, and that pile of old anchors in front of my smithy may yield some good iron once I discard those produced by modern smelting methods. These are excellent late sixteenth century nails from the White Heron Castle in Himeji. I acquired two tons of old iron when the castle was restored. The old architectural hardware was made of what was then considered inferior iron, as the best was used for swords and tools, but even that old Himeji iron is far superior to the iron of today.

"The old swordsmiths and metal workers knew where to go for good iron-rich river sand, but they did not keep records. True craftsmen don't like to write things down, you know - I don't myself - and any of the ones who did keep records never produced a decent sword. The only thing to do is to keep trying different methods."

Outside the small smithy used by the apprentices were bales of charcoal, stacked high beneath a pomegranate tree heavy with fruit. Brought from Fukushima, the baled charcoal is used to supplement the charcoal that Miyairi and his assistants spend seven weeks each summer making themselves. Both types of charcoal are then cut by hand at the Miyairi smithy into sugar-cube-sized squares for the tempering process and squares half that size for the forging process. Apprentices start out doing yard work and general cleaning up and then spend much of the next five years cutting up charcoal. "It's not as easy as it looks," Miyairi explained, "as the pieces must be the right size, cleanly cut, without cracks or flaws. Charcoal must be cut in great quantities,

quickly and without too much dust. I use only pine charcoal, and since I judge the temperature of the fire by the color of the coals or the flame, good charcoal of uniform quality is essential."

In the large, earthen-floored wooden shed that serves as his smithy, Miyairi seated himself on a round straw mat in front of the forge. Assembling flat bits of iron of two varieties, which had been forged and refined in the Miyairi smithy, he wrapped the square pile of jigane in a sheet of wet, white washi (mulberry bark paper) and then placed the small parcel on a narrow, flat spade made of the same metal; he ladled a watery clay mixture over it, sprinkled it with rice-straw ashes and placed it in the forge. Holding the long spade handle in his right hand, with his left he pumped the wooden bellows box next to the forge. The flames rose as the air blew through the single hole in the heavy stone connecting the forge and the bellows. After heating the iron for about thirty minutes, he withdrew the spade from the forge, placed it with its contents on a small anvil, and pounded the entire mass with a small hammer. At a hammered signal from Miyairi two assistants hurried into the smithy and each picked up a large sledge hammer; at another signal they started pounding the soft metal with big, graceful swings of the hammer, working together in an easy rhythm. The clear tones of the blows rang through the mountain air. At another signal from Miyairi, the assistants put down their sledge hammers and left without a word. Miyairi put the small block of metal back into the forge after sprinkling it with rice-straw ashes piled in front of him and ladling on some more clay water. After about twenty minutes, the assistants were summoned again; this heating and hammering process was repeated seven or eight times before the oya-kata was satisfied that the metal had been fused and refined enough to start the folding process.

Miyairi held a large chisel on the glowing metal block while an assistant struck it and then sliced the block almost in two. The metal was then folded with tongs, and returned to the forge. It was soon withdrawn to be hammered thin by the two assistants, the oya-kata moving the hot metal a fraction of an inch or sweeping off carbon with a dampened rice-straw whisk. As soon as the metal seemed to have fused sufficiently in the forge, another fold was made. Sometimes folded lengthwise, sometimes across, the process was repeated fifteen or twenty times to make the kawagane (metal for the skin of the blade). It is this folding process that serves to purify and to strengthen the metal, and the layers (1,048,576 layers with twenty foldings) produce the interesting grain in the jihada, the area between yakiba (tempered edge area) and shinogi (ridge).

Miyairi always makes the kawagane himself, since this very crucial process of forging the steel for the outside of the blade determines the entire character and artistic value of the finished blade. The shingane, the softer iron that will serve as the core or backbone of the sword, is often forged by his senior assistant

under the master's general supervision and instructions. The shingane is forged just as the kawagane is, starting with small bits of iron of several types, which are heated, hammered, and eventually folded five to eight times. The folding of the kawagane over the shingane and the forging of the skin to the core is a delicate process handled only by the master.

The block of layered iron is then hammered by Miyairi into a strip of metal of the required length for the finished blade, varying from less than twenty-five centimeters for a small tantō (straight bladed dagger) to some 1.2 meters for the tachi style of long curved sword. Once the proper length is achieved, Miyairi gives the steel strip shape and the hint of a curve, before meticulously shaping it by using a traditional sen (two-handled scraping knife with a curved blade). This is followed by filing with large, straight metal files. Careful hammering and filing produces a sword of the desired shape, and the swordsmith is then ready to attend to the quality of the edge. After grinding together by hand a special mixture of charcoal, clay, and whetstone powder, and adding water, Miyairi coats the blade with the paste-like mixture. The wet paste, applied with a variety of metal spatulas, is spread thickly on the back, ridge, and jihada area of the sword, but thinly on the yakiba, in order to ensure that the quenching of the heated blade will harden the cutting edge while leaving the main part of the blade as flexible as before tempering. The pattern Miyairi marks into the thin clay coating along the yakiba will show up in the design, color, and grain of the tempered edge. Once the clay mixture has dried, the sword is ready for the crucial tempering. In the dark of night, with black curtains over the windows to keep out any stray moonlight, Miyairi supervises the heating of the forge, using cubes of charcoal prepared by the swordsmith himself. Adjusting the draft, raking the coals for the perfect temperature, moving the blade back and forth over the heat to distribute it correctly from the thin tip to the heavy ridge, Miyairi determines by color the exact temperature of the steel and plunges the white hot blade into a wooden trough of water. This climactic quenching takes less than a minute. The cooled blade is then immediately inspected for flaws, since even a minute flaw renders the blade imperfect and acceptable only as a piece of steel to be remelted. If the application of the clay and the temperature of the water are absolutely suited to the type of steel forged and the particular temperature to which it has been brought, the thin edge of the blade harden quickly without cracking, the thicker rib slowly. Final adjustments to the curve of the sword are made by hammering it against a block of hot copper. Next follows a preliminary sharpening and polishing on a whetstone, and if the blade is satisfactory, Miyairi adds file marks and peg holes to the tang and carves his name, date, and other appropriate information on it. The sword is then sent to a professional sword polisher, whose painstaking work using various stones and powders, brings out the beauty of the forged steel and sharpens the hard edge to keenness, once measured by such grim terms as "through three bodies in a single stroke."

"Essential qualities for a swordsmith? Stamina and intuition. Our work is the type of work that is learned by the body. Using a hammer with the proper rhythm and strength cannot be taught. It must be learned. I can tell within the first year of an apprentice's stay with me whether his body has grasped the correct posture, the speed, and the changes in strength required. If he is slow to comprehend this with his body, he has no hope of becoming a good swordsmith. It takes a year to figure out whether a chap can do the work. If I find I'm muttering and nagging at him all year, it's no good. Remember, our work is not done by measuring and talking. The hammering, the forging all the processes are performed by intuition. It's the split-second intuitive decisions to remove the iron from the fire, when and how to bring up the flame, to immerse the blade in the water now - it is these acts of intuition that produce a sword. The swordsmith and his assistants must work together with the same intuition. I don't tell the assistant to hammer harder; he must know it at the same time I know it. One mistaken move and the sword is ruined, whether it is in the location of the fold, the angle of the hammer, or hesitation at the forge. I judge the temperature of the metal by eye and I must know that this steel needs water of a certain degree of coolness. This is all intuition. Experience, yes, repetition, trial and error; but it's kan (intuition), it's basically all kan. The flame, the color of the steel, the thickness of the clay - I adjust these by kan. People say swordsmiths have secret formulas. I think it is kan, and this sort of thing can never be explained."

### AN OLD SONG

by Solomon Bloomgarden

In the blossom-land Japan  
Somewhere thus an old song ran.  
Said a warrior to a smith,  
"Hammer me a sword forwith.  
Make the blade  
Light as wind on water laid.  
Make it long  
As the wheat at harvest song.  
Supple, swift  
As a snake without rift,  
Full of lightnings, thousand-eyed!  
Smooth as silken cloth and thin  
As the web that spiders spin.  
And merciless as pain, and cold."

"On the hilt what shall be told?"

"On the sword's hilt, my good man,"  
Said the warrior of Japan,  
"Trace for me  
A running lake, a flock of sheep,  
And one who sings her child to sleep."

A STUDY ON THE DIFFERENCES OF THE VARIOUS  
GENERATIONS OF HIZEN (PROVINCE) MASAHIRO

by Y. Fukae

A translation of an article originally published in the December 1975 issue of the NBTHK Journal, Token Bijutsu. Translation by Albert Yamanaka. Reprinted with the permission of NBTHK.

MASAHIRO, among the Hizen blades along with TADAKUNI, is seen most in numbers of all the affiliated lineages. Of the various MASAHIRO, the 1st KAWACHI DAIJO MASAHIRO and the 2nd KAWACHI (no) KAMI MASAHIRO has the greatest weight in so far as the abilities and of all the succeeding generations, their works stand out the most. The 4th generation received the title of KAWACHI DAIJO and the 5th received the title of KAWACHI (no) KAMI. As the studies into this lineage have not been made too deeply or seriously, when the works of these two smiths were first confronted, they were most often mistaken for those of the 1st and the 2nd generation and no one ever seems to have questioned the matter deeply. However, as the study into this group came to be made numerous facts came to light and we wish to relate here some of these findings, however it is requested that the reader will please forgive us for not giving details as to the workmanship of these smiths.

On January 25th of Meiji 17 (1883) Daizai Zenhichi, the town elder of Nagase Village compiled a report on the works of TADAYOSHI, MASAHIRO and YUKIHIRO which was then given to the Saga Prefectural Assistant Governor, Chief Secretary Kanai Toshiyuki, who in turn turned these documents over to the Ministry of the Imperial Household. From this report, we list here only the sections which are of interest to us at this time, that is on MASAHIRO, which is as follows.

<u>GENERATION</u>	<u>GIVEN NAME</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>SMITH NAME</u>	<u>DATES</u>
1st	Sadenjiro	Kawachi Daijo	Masahiro	Died February 5th, Kanbun 5 (1665) age 59
2nd	Sadenji	Kawachi (no) Kami	Masahiro	Died August 6th Genroku 12 (1699) age 73
3rd	Denbei	Bitchu Daijo	Masahiro	Died December Hoei 1st (1704) age 60
4th	Tonoshin	Kawachi Daijo	Masahiro	Died April 27, Kyoho 18 (1733) age 61

5th	Sadenji	Kawachi (no) Kami	Masahiro	Died May 26, Meiwa 5 (1768) Age 55
6th	Daisuke	(none)	Masahiro	Died November 28, Bunka 10 (1813) Age ?
7th	Sadenji	(none)	Masahiro	Died April 26 Bunka 11 (1814) Age ?
8th	Sadenji	(none)	Masahiro	Died February 30, Meiji 2 (1869) Age 51
9th	(no information)			
10th	-	-	Masahiro	Born April 27 Koka 4 (1847)

In the Masahiro family, there was a paper titled "Kosenan" (probably family record) which presently is preserved in the Saga Prefectural Museum. To give a brief outline of this record, it is as follows.

October 19, Manji 2 (1659) appointed Musashi Daijo (2nd).

September 28, Kanbun 1 (1661) appointed Musashi (no) Kami (2nd).

April 13, Kanbun 5 (1665) appointed Kawachi (no) Kami (2nd).

April 13, Kanbun 5 (1665) appointed Bitchu Daijo (3rd).

April 27, Hoei 5 (1708) appointed Kawachi Daijo (4th).

January 10, Kanen 3 (1750) appointed Kawachi (no) Kami (5th).



The dates for the death of the 6th and 7th are known, however now old they were when they died is not recorded. Those that received titles are only from the 1st to the 5th generation. Since nothing is recorded regarding the 1st in the "Kosenan", the dates when he received the title is also unknown.

Kamata Gyomyo in his "Shinto Gengi" states that, it was on Kanei 18th (1641) that the 1st received his title. Since it is known that Kamata talked directly with the various swordsmen of his time and wrote about them, it probably is that he also talked with the 6th Masahiro and got the information from him directly, therefore what he wrote on the 1st he probably got from the 6th Masahiro. There are some of Masahiro's works that are signed with his title which are dated February, Kanei 6 (1644) and I have seen those that are signed with his title, the oldest being dated Kanei 21 (1644) or Shoho 1st.






## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 1ST MASAHIRO (Oshigata 1 and 2)




MASAHIRO during the period when he was still working under his father worked under the name of MASANAGA, but whether he made swords under some other name or whether he did not sign MASANAGA is unknown as we have never seen his works signed with this name.

Before he received his title, he signed his works as HIZEN (no) KUNI JU SAGA MASAHIRO and the chisel marks are quite large and broad.

The character MASA is made , however from February of Kanei 14 (1637) through August of Kanei 15 (1638) it became .


During the Kanei Era (1624 - 1644) the width of the nakago becomes narrow and the nakago tip is made in Iriyama (kengyo) (see Oshigata 1).



After he received his title, the chisel marks become narrow and in comparison to his previous works, the signature as a whole becomes quite small. Of the character KUNI  (1), the vertical line within the box, the bottom end is made slightly to the right at an angle. The top radical of the character FUJI, the grass radical is made , however in rare cases, they are made thus . The character HARA , the bottom radical is made so .

In the character HIRO (広)  under the radical 广 the first radical is made either  or . (Oshigata 2)


## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 2ND MASAHIRO (Oshigata 3 and 4)



The "belly" of the nakago is made slightly wide. Those signed MASANAGA will have the title added. We have yet to see works signed simply as MASANAGA.

The biggest point and characteristics to be noted in the signature of the 2nd MASAHIRO is that the side stroke and its end is made in an abrupt halt with the chisel, . The moon radical in the character HI, ZEN and FUJI is not made in a halt, but will be made in an upward curved motion.

Of the character KUNI , refer to oshigata 3 and 4, in the case of oshigata 4 it is made as .

The grass radical of the character FUJI, there is a slight space between this radical and the bottom part of the character.

The character HARA in the bottom radical SHO  is made as illustrated, but in rare cases it is made the same as that of the 1st generation.

In the character HIRO , the grass radical  under the radical 广 is made slightly parted unlike that of the 1st and the bottom part from this is made in two cross bars. Depending on what generation, this stroke is made in one or two strokes and Fujishiro has noted this in his writings and we are in agreement with this opinion.



MASANAGA 3RD (Oshigata 5)

Masanaga 3rd received the title of BITCHU DAIJO on Kanbun 5th (1665) and until his death on Hoei 1st (1704) at age 60, for some 40 odd years he was active in sword making. However, when the 2nd MASAHIRO died on Genroku 12th (1699), when MASAAGA was 55 years old, he still was "heya zumi" (meaning that he still had not become independent or was permitted to go on his own and that he still worked under his father-teacher), therefore it can be assumed that he made many of the swords for 2nd MASAHIRO.

Thereafter until his death at age 60, his own swordmaking was only for a six year period and this was the period in which demands for swords were very low and as such, there are very few of his works to be seen from this time. Also, the fact that he had the title BITCHU DAIJO, his own works can be distinguished or identified readily. Prior to receiving his title at age 21, even if there are to be his works, they are very rare. We have never seen a work of the 3rd prior to his receiving his title.

MASAHIRO 4TH (Oshigata 6 and 7)

The 4th KAWACHI DAIJO until quite recently, was quite often mistaken or mixed as that of the 1st, however as can be seen in the oshigata 6 and 7, the various characters ZEN, KAWA, FUJI, WARA, MASA, HIRO the horizontal strokes are made the same as that of the 2nd, that is, in abrupt halt. 一

The moon 月 radical of the character ZEN 前 and FUJI 藤, in the last stroke, is made in an slightly upwards motion and this is the same in the last stroke of the character UCHI 内.

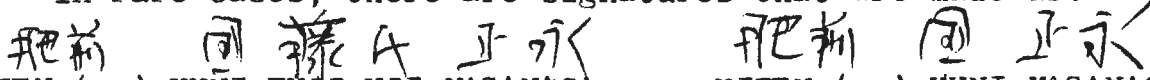
The grass radical within the HIRO 廣 character under the radical 厂 it is made thus 一, and the next stroke underneath is made in two strokes whereas the 1st made his in single stroke, though there are some works of the 4th that are made in single stroke.

The character KUNI 國 is made slightly different from that of the 1st. FUJI UJI (2) is seen on many works of the 2nd, but we have never seen this in the works of the 1st. On the 2nd stroke of the character MASA 藤, the right tip is made in slight downward motion, then turns up. (Oshigata 7)

All in all the signature closely resembles those of the 2nd and it is often thought that he signed those of the 2nd or some have even said that the 4th could have done this, but there is no evidence to back this theory up and it can only be surmised that this is only a theory. Those that are dated Hoei 6 (1709) and Shotoku 5 (1715) and in looking at the signatures of these two examples these are definitely the works of the 4th MASAHIRO.



MASAHIRO 5TH (Oshigata 8,9 and 10)



In rare cases, there are signatures that are made as:



HIZEN (no) KUNI FUJI UJI MASANAGA or HIZEN (no) KUNI MASANAGA and these were thought to be the works of later generations (oshigata 8) but these have been proven otherwise.


There are very few works of the 5th MASAHIRO, and the only lead is that he had the title KAWACHI (no) KAMI. Those signed KAWACHI (no) KAMI if compared to those of the 2nd, there are slight differences in cases and this is noted in the very thin chisel marks as seen in oshigata 10, and the overall signature is made rather "sloppy".

The moon radical 冂 of the character ZEN 前 in the works of the 2nd is made , but those of the 5th becomes .

The Ritto radical (3) , the last stroke end is not made in the upwards motions as other works, or that of the 2nd. The TA radical of the character HIRO, the bottom end is made thus .

The 5th MASAHIRO is the only one who used the title of KAWACHI (no) KAMI after the 2nd. There are no works of the 5th that are dated, so far as we have seen and as such, those with these characteristics can be considered as the works of the 5th. In looking at oshigata nos. 8, 9 and 10, these can be seen as the works of the same smith.

MASAHIRO 6TH (Oshigata 11 and 12)

Works of the 6th MASAHIRO which can be considered a true works are rarely seen, and there is only one blade with date of Meiwa 9 (1772). The 5th died on Meiwa 5th (1768), so this blade is the work of the 6th. The grass radical under the radical 艹 of the character HIRO 廣 is made .

According to the records left in the MASAHIRO Family, the 6th died on Bunka 6 (1313) but his age at his death is not known, so it is difficult to say when he made this blade (at what age.).

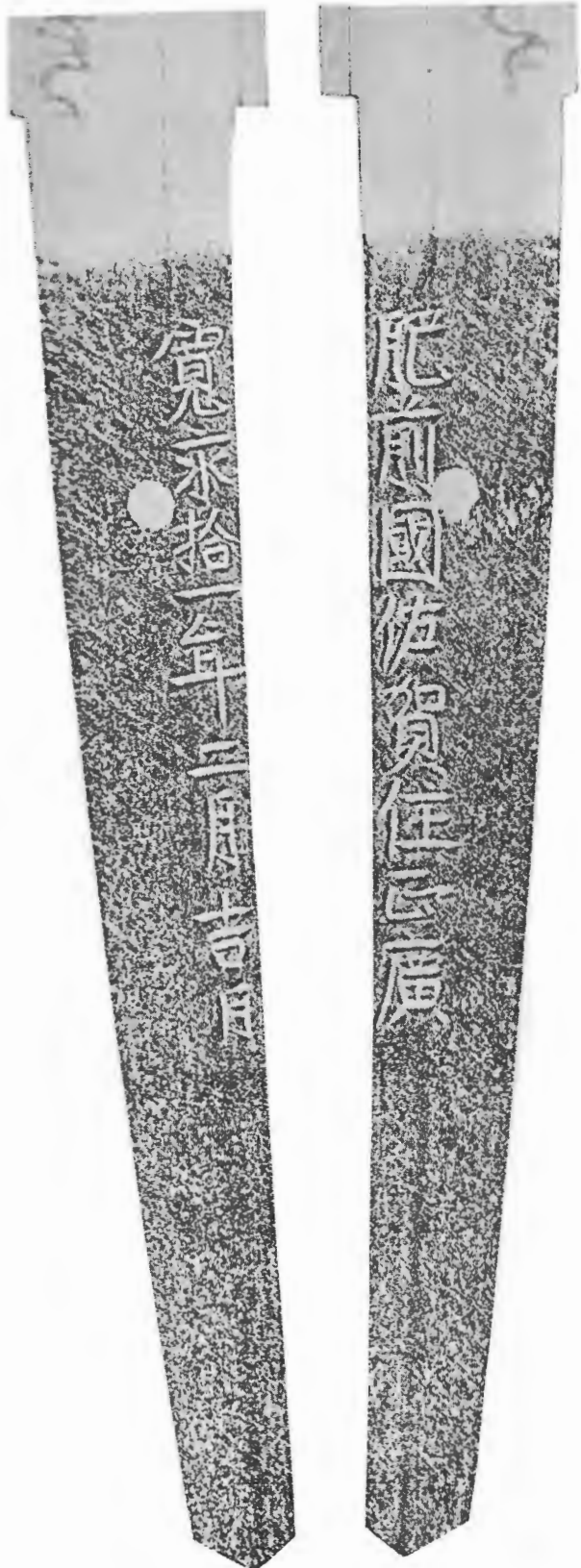
In the character KUNI, in the works of the 1st, 2nd and the 5th, the radical KUCHI 口 within the character KUNI is made in the conventional style as well as in the broken up style, therefore if this same tendency is to be found in the works of the 6th, it would not be odd as to the way in which the signature is made, they are by and large the same. Oshigata 12 can be considered to be the work of the 6th, but in signature signed in this manner, there are none that are dated, so it is difficult to say that this is the work of the 6th.

MASAHIRO 7TH, 8TH AND 9TH (Oshigata 13 and 14)

The 7th died the following year after the 6th on Bunka 11 (1815). In the book previously mentioned, the age is not recorded. Since it is recorded that the 7th MASAHIRO (missing text), it can be assumed that he took the head of the family position even though it was for a short time, although there are no works of this smith that we have seen which can be considered as the 7th's works or works that are signed as the 7th in MASANAGA signature.

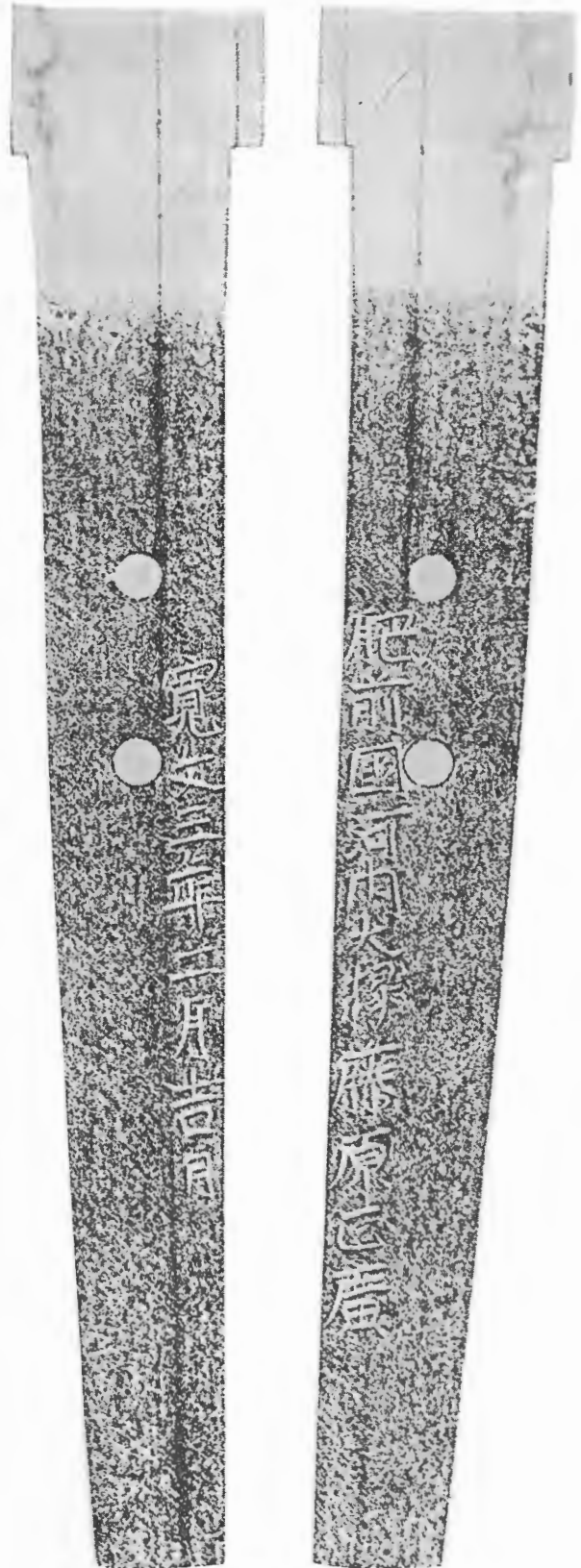
A work which can be that of either the 8th or 9th, which measures 2 Shaku 2-3 sun with the hamon in suguha and signed HIZEN (no) KUNI MASAHIRO in large chisel marks is often seen. Oshigata 14 blade is dated Keio 2 (1866) so this is the work of the 9th. But oshigata 13, whether this is the work of the 9th in his early period or that of the 8th, is questionable. The only solution is to wait until such time that a blade of 8th which is dated, comes to light.

In reviewing the works from the 1st through the 9th, those that have the title are from the 1st to the 5th, and all have their own characteristics in the way they signed their works. Those signed in MASANAGA are the works of the 1st, 2nd and 5th. Those signed in five character HIZEN (no) KUNI MASAHIRO are seen in the works of the later generations. In tantō, we have only one example of the 1st and the rest are those by the 5th, 6th and the 9th.



押形(一) 初代

Oshigata 1  
Masahiro 1st Generation



押形(二) 初代

Oshigata 2  
Masahiro 1st Generation



押形四 二代

Oshigata 3  
Masahiro II



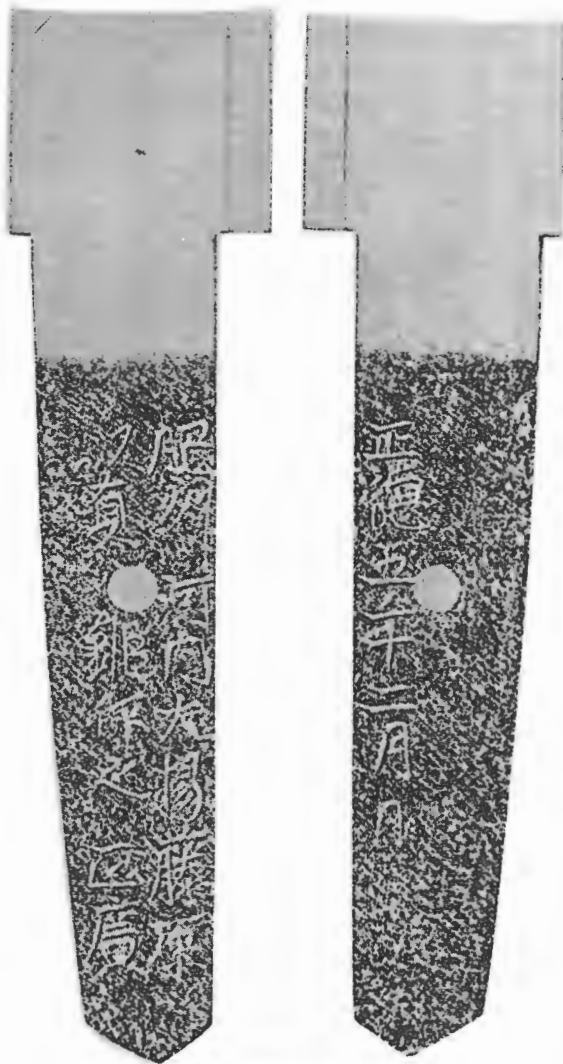
押形四 二代

Oshigata 4  
Masahiro II  
w/cutting test  
18.



押形四 三代

Oshigata 5  
Masanaga or  
Masahiro III



押形 四代

Oshigata 6  
Masahiro IV



FUJIUJI

押形 四代

Oshigata 7  
Masahiro IV





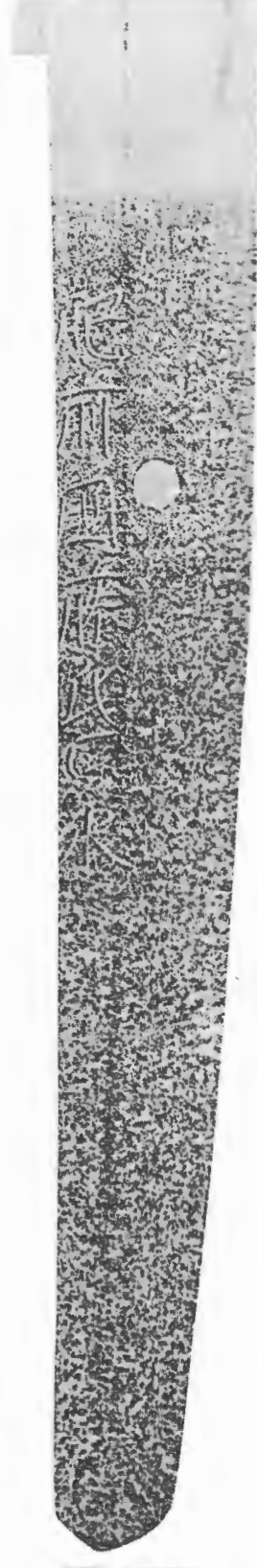
押形印 五代

Oshigata 10  
Masahiro 5th



押形印 五代

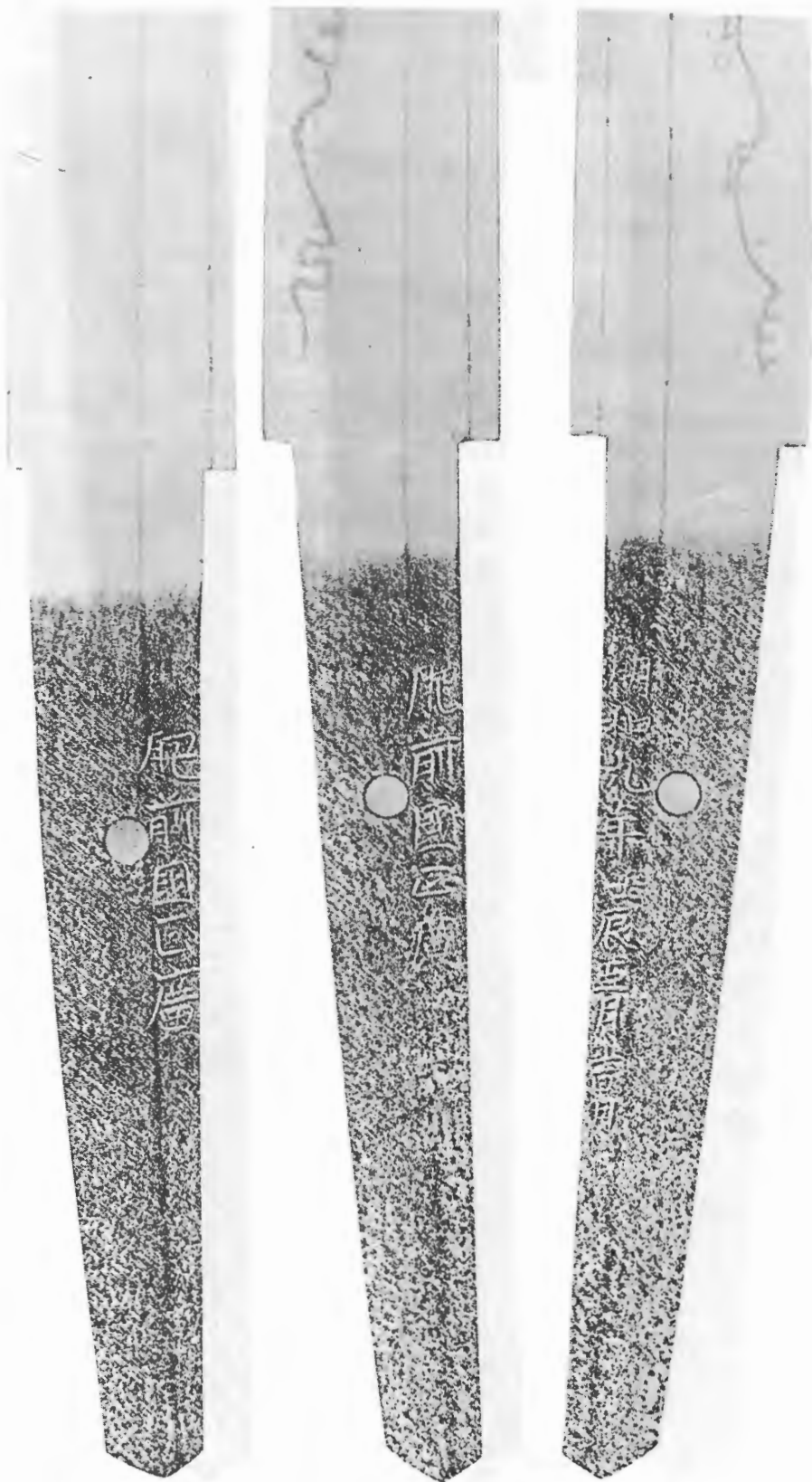
Oshigata 9  
Masahiro 5th



押形印 五代

Oshigata 8  
Masahiro 5th  
(Masanaga)



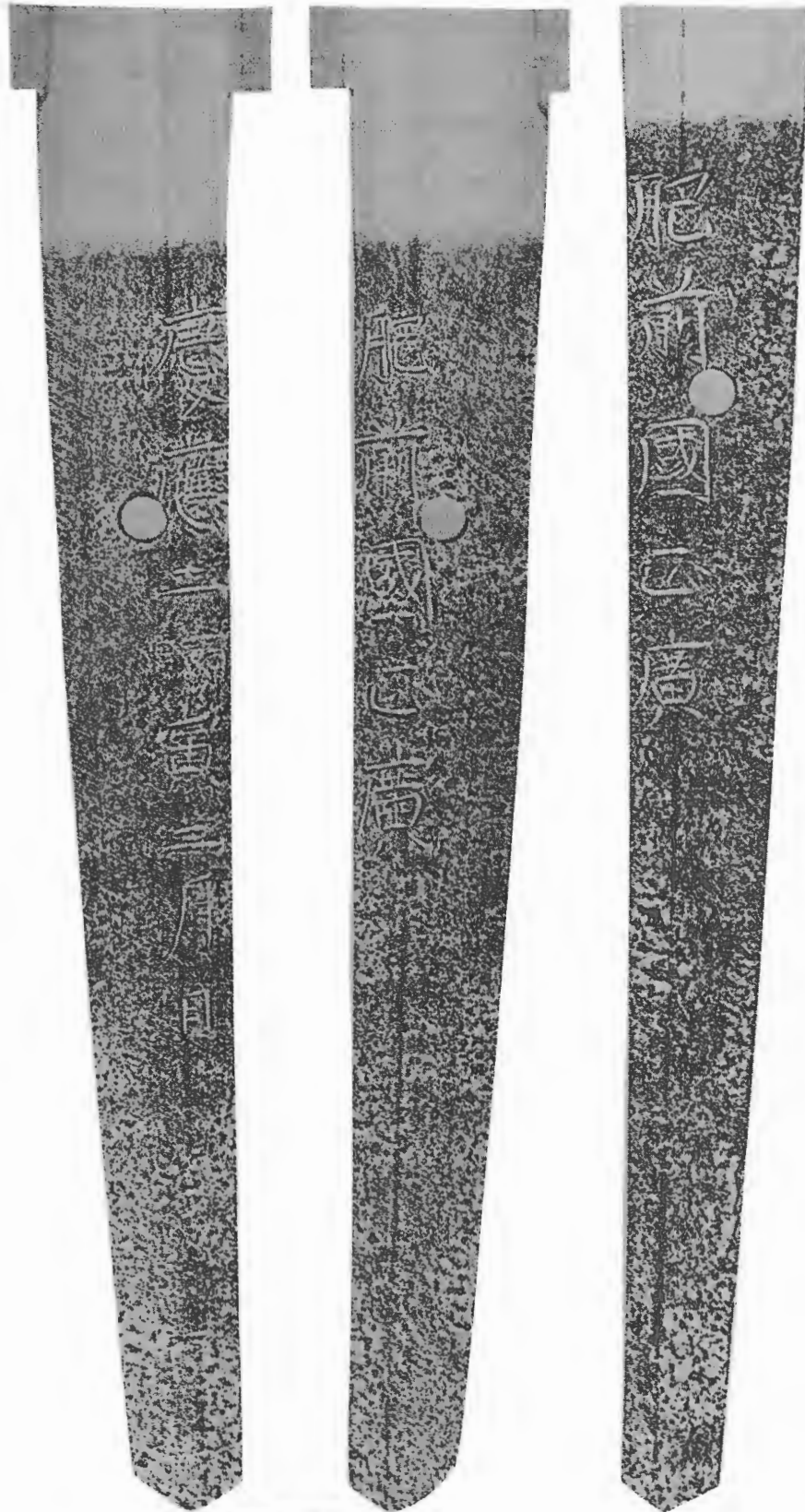


押形出

押形出 六代

Oshigata 12  
Masahiro VI  
(assumed)

Oshigata 11  
Masahiro VI



御形 九代

Oshigata 14  
Masahiro 9th

御形 八代

Oshigata 13  
Masahiro 8th or 9th

## POLEARMS

by Roald M. Knutsen

### Introduction

It is now fifteen years since my book "Japanese Polearms" was published, sixteen years since I wrote the test. In the intervening period of time I have often wished for the opportunity to correct errors and fill omissions in that work. I suppose it is like all subjects with which one is deeply involved the more one studies the more there is to know. In the past sixteen years I have continued to train seriously in Kendō and Iai-jutsu and have, through great good fortune, been able to extend my studies to the oldest classical forms of Bujutsu with particular reference to Kenjutsu and the use of polearms.

According to many authorities on Kobudo history the four pillars of the true martial arts - and I emphatically do not include the modern sport systems of Judo, Aikido, and Karate in that term - were archery, horsemanship, swordsmanship, and the use of the spear. These arts were the corner stones for military theory and practice of the bushi. Unfortunately research into weapons since Meiji times has been weighted far too heavily toward the art aspect as to almost totally obscure the reasons why such weapons and their special forms existed at all. I have met many keen sword collectors whose technical knowledge of Japanese swords is extensive but who have very little idea at all about how their prizes were actually used. Nor is this surprising since the classical tradition of Bujutsu has always remained firmly behind locked doors and even modern Kendō is far from true swordsmanship.

When we come to the study of yari and naginata, using the terms in the broadest way, the questions are much more difficult to answer. One basic reason is that the use of the spear has never developed from its battlefield or jutsu concept, to a dō or "way", as did Kenjutsu to Kendō. There has been no line of descent as it were, from sō-jutsu to yari-dō in the true tradition. The spear, ever a weapon of opportunity, a "sharp key to hell", went out of fashion so far as its use was concerned once the echoes of the great battles of the early 17th century died away.

### The Tradition

Naginata and Nagamaki were in vogue all over Japan from as early as the ninth century (a pure guess on my part) to the end of the Muromachi - jidai. The Naginata remained popular throughout the Edo-Jidai both as a parade weapon, a symbol of a high ranking officer's position, and in widespread use as a weapon of defence in a samurai's home. It is claimed by naginata authorities in Japan that the systematic teaching of naginata technique can be traced back to 1160, which fact taken on face value is two hundred

years before the first postulated ryū of kenjutsu (c.1350)<sup>1</sup>. But the greatest caution has to be exercised with any claims of authentic ryū-ha before about 1500 when true records began to be preserved, although the strongest traditions exist in many areas and doubtless these are based firmly on the truth. In the cold light of academic research we must have written evidence to substantiate oral tradition.

However there is a very close link between really old naginata technique and military theory in some of the oldest bujutsu styles that date to the close of the fifteen century and whose traditions (not written history) claim with some power to be much older. For example, the naginata of the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto-ryū has a number of most distinctive features, and that of the Kashima Shinto-ryū whose origins may be very ancient but whose naginata techniques now only just survive. In the latter ryū the kata-naginata, made of very hard oak, exhibit a strongly curved blade form and this is of great interest since the majority of later Sengoku and Edo-jidai naginata that I have seen are mostly of moderate or "normal" shape. I have long suspected that the shape of the wooden weapons of bujutsu have close links with early steel weapons but have not yet accumulated enough evidence to put theory to the test. Here is an area for rewarding research.

With yari in all shapes we have a far shorter "active" period and this raises the question of why so long a gap between the late Nara-jidai and the Onin war of 1467-1477? The yari was one of the principal weapons of the battlefield during the whole of the Sengoku-jidai and hardly became obsolete even with the widespread use of tanegashima-teppo towards the end of the period. Even so, it would seem that the naginata and nagamaki were in almost exclusive use as polearms on the battlefields from the tenth century right up to Onin-no-ran. But there are a few tantalising references to yari in bujutsu traditions that place regular teaching at least to the first half of the fifteenth century and maybe earlier. Some pre-Onin examples of blades also postulate a wider use of yari than most experts will admit. It is my own opinion that the use of the very ancient straight-bladed spear, and particularly the hoko or hooked forms, along with the Ōmi-yari - those straight blades over 12 inches in length - goes back in the bujutsu ryū-ha certainly to the fourteenth century.

According to Japanese sword historians the reason that only a comparative few spear blades have survived from the Muromachi-jidai is that the spear went out of active use after Ōsaka-no-ran in 1612 and subsequently only special spear blades and "garrison" spears were made during the Edo-jidai until the threat of war during Bakumatsu. Swords were always required and it seems quite logical that we should find many swords of all periods and only a few yari.

<sup>1</sup>The Nen-ryū, said to be created by the priest Jion whose tomb is at Kamakura.

Going back to the bujutsu tradition the naginata was often termed chōtō especially during the Sengoku-jidai and yet the word chōtō is frequently used in contexts that refer to long swords as much as naginata or nagamaki. The old term for nagamaki is sometimes nagatsuka-no-katana or long-handled sword. Modern dictionaries define chōtō as a long sword. In the tradition there is a record of the great swordsman, Tsukahara Bokuden, defeating and killing a man armed with a chōtō (here specifically a short-shafted naginata) in a shinken-shobu, real sword match, that must have taken place between 1530 and 1550. The account is quite specific that this man, Kajiwara Nagato, was expert in the use of this type of naginata and could even cut down birds in flight.<sup>1</sup>

Reference to early war scrolls and war screens, emakimono, dating from the Kamakura and early Muromachi-jidai show that a large proportion of the naginata and nagamaki of these periods were furnished with shafts less than four feet in length. Perhaps the later elongation of the shaft was the result of the increased use of the formidable yari on the battlefield? Developments in tactics are frequently reflected in changes in weapon shapes. The oldest naginata technique that I have seen in classical ryū-ha is that of the Kashima Shinto-ryū where the naginata shaft is grasped very well down towards the top collar in a manner reminiscent of old sword postures. This may also reflect the early shorter length shafts since these techniques were current from the beginning of the Sengoku-jidai.

### Yari Forms

Like European polearms, the Japanese tradition exhibits many varieties of shape with clear evidence of specialised use. The problem remains that while we have surviving examples of spear forms from the Muromachi-jidai and we know that practical considerations influenced their design, we do not precisely know how they were employed in the field. This is an area that badly needs scientific research while vestiges of the tradition yet remain. In the past fifty years almost all the sō-jutsu ryū have been lost and those that remain may have suffered from the long period of peace since the beginning of the Tokugawa Shogunate. There must always be a clear distinction between original technique that has been transmitted without a break in the classical ryū-ha and those ryū-ha that have tried to reconstruct technique after a gap.

The commonest yari are the straight bladed types and by and large we can say that the war blades were those whose effective length was more than twelve inches. These blades were heavy, well formed, and termed Oni-no-yari. In the Muromachi period the long bladed su-yari were popular and not without reason since they combined the virtues of two edges for cutting and a sharp point for the thrust, making sō-jutsu the most formidable system in the

<sup>1</sup> Nihon Kendō-shi Yamada Jirokichi. (Japan, 1919) ref: Kashima-Shinto-ryū.

entire bujutsu repertoire, guns excepted. Many excellent yari survive from the Ashikaga period and many of these are linked with famous warriors and known to have been used in particular battles.

The magari-yari, or jumonji-yari, are of some significance in evaluating and rationalising blade forms in relation to period. There is the strongest tradition that the cross shaped blade was the inspiration of Matsumoto Bizen-no-Kami Naokatsu, one of the chief kerai of the Kashima-han in Hitachi province (present day south east Ibaraki-ken). Matsumoto Bizen was a great swordsman and expert spearman who died at the age of 56 in 1525 as the result of a spear wound to the stomach received during a night attack attempting to recapture the Kashima Yashiki.<sup>1</sup> (I have walked this area and examined the site of this mansion while training at Kashima). If this tradition is correct then we can look at the structural form of the earliest magari-yari and compare with the yari shapes thereby having some basis for argument.

It is also said that kikuchi-yari, with their sword-like blade (I defined them as "straight naginata" in my original book but this is not strictly correct)<sup>2</sup>, were a development in the north Kyushu area by the Manju swordsmiths at the behest of Kikuchi Takemitsu during the Namboku-jidai (1334-1392). Kikuchi Takemitsu fought for the Southern Court against Shōri Yoriyasa at a battle beside the Chikugo river. Takemitsu's son, Takemasa, defeated Shōri with a spear made of a short sword attached to a long shaft<sup>3</sup>. In my own collection I have an early wakizashi blade mounted as a spear, and, if the signature is to be believed, dating from the first half of the fifteenth century. After this battle the Manju swordsmiths were commissioned to produce large numbers of Kanmuri-otoshi-tsukuri spears for the arsenal of the Kikuchi-han. These kikuchi-yari have long kuki. We cannot be certain in dating these kikuchi-yari as few are signed but it is sure that most are from the Higo area and most seem to date from after middle of the Muromachi-jidai though some are a little earlier.

Although some experts seem to group hoko, or single armed yari, with magari-yari I feel a clearer distinction is needed since these form a large entity in their own right. The correct term may not be hoko which specifically refers to the early spears in the Shōsō-in Repository of the Nara period but nonetheless the word is widely used in bujutsu tradition. There is a tendency outside the tradition to use kama-yari as the generative title for the group. Both kama-yari and magari-yari have a number of variations which I won't go into here. Notwithstanding my distinction between the groups, the most famous surviving kata-kama-yari is that used by Kato Kiyomasa during the Korean War in the Momoyama-jidai. It was a marriage gift brought by Yourin-in, Kato Kiyomasa's daughter, according to the inscription on the tang.

<sup>1</sup> Nihon Kendō-shi, Yamada Jirokichi, 1919

<sup>2</sup> Japanese Polearms, figure p.37

<sup>3</sup> Nihon Yari-shi, Numata Kenji. Exhibition Catalogue of Famous Japanese Spears, Tokyo National Museum and Yomiuri Shimbun. Dec. 1972



Socketed blades are of interest, too, though they are uncommon, and they may be of some use in dating design styles since we do know when they came into fashion at the end of the Sengoku-jidai. But this knowledge may be of doubtful value as I know of at least two fukuro blades, one a yari and one a naginata that date from the mid-Muromachi bakufu period. Kuroda Nagamasa encouraged the use of fukuro-yari and ordered the Nobukuni smiths of Chikuzen Province to make them; Kuroda considered these socketed blades most useful on campaigns where bamboo could be cut and the heads fitted should normal hardwood shafts have been damaged. According to one Kendo authority who is also an expert on sword blades<sup>1</sup>, it was common practice for bushi to go to battle with two or three spare tanged yari blades thrust into their obi and the tangs were easily fitted to bamboo shafts which grew readily to hand. So here we can say we have both sides of the coin!

The deep interest I have in Japanese (and European) polearms has always been in the inseparable connection with their functional use and, in the Japanese context, with the classical Bujutsu tradition. I find no personal response in merely collecting weapons for their own sake. It has always given me pleasure to find various weapons preserved in the dōjō of the ryū-ha and I am certain that very many are so preserved and treasured. A good example of an excellent spear owned by a famous swordsman is the su-yari that belonged once to Miyamoto Musashi and is still kept by his family at Sanomomura in Okayama Prefecture. This blade is by Sekizumi Kanemitsu. Then there is the most famous su-yari of all that millions of bugeisha must have heard of - the beautiful yari named "Nihon-go-no-yari", unsigned, but with surely the most fabulous history. Originally presented to the Shogun, Ashikaga Yoshiaki, by the Emperor, it was afterwards possessed by Oda Nobunaga and then Toyotomi Hideyoshi. It was presented to Fukushima Masanori by the Taiko. The manner in which it came into the hands of Mori Tahai, an important kera of the Kuroda family, is the subject of the best known of all the warrior folk-songs in Japan and why this spear is also named "Nomitori-no-yari" (Drink to win yari) and sometimes "Kuroda-bushi-no-yari".

I believe that all the spears used by the famous Shizugadake-no-Shichihon-yari, the seven spearmen at the Battle of Shizugadake fought on the 5th, June 1583, are preserved and we know that the hands that grasped them were expert in classical Bujutsu. But the humble spears are also of interest. I have illustrated by line drawing a kikuchi nagamaki that belonged to the Taisha-ryū in Kyūshū. This is of very unusual shape but when we consider the formidable reputation of the Taisha-ryū which was regarded even in the late Sengoku-jidai with respect by bushi, we can understand in its study form something of the severe character of Bujutsu. But since the Taishi-ryū, founded by Marume Kurando in the mid-sixteenth century, and with roots going back to the eastern Kantō, is now extinct we are still left with questions of how exactly such a weapon was used?

<sup>1</sup>Ozaki Nobushige, Kendo Kyoshi, in personal conversation, August 1977.



## Conclusion

Because the true heyday of the spear was in the kōtō period of blades only a comparative few have survived and it seems to be for this reason they have been neglected by collectors. Another factor is the sheer physical length of most spears with all their fittings and the size of most homes! The great majority of yari and naginata that have found their way to collectors date from the Edo period when the spear was already in functional decline whereas the sword was prized as an important group symbol and work of art. The artistic finish of the blade and the hamon are generally much simpler than those found on swords but on the other hand the technical skill of the smith in making spear blades is of a high order. Of course there are good and bad spears just as there are good and bad swords.

By what standards should we judge spears? Should we view the varieties as a whole group covering the entire output of the mediaeval period, or should we be more selective and divide our grouping and critique into the kōtō and shintō areas as we do for swords? I thin the answer is something of both because by viewing the groups as a whole we can see the perspective development of form down the centuries, its highpoints of excellence and the decline that marks the peaceful Edo years. To judge a fine spear I think we should first look at the weapon overall; like good swords, yari and naginata are often handsomely finished. I like to see a well proportioned blade regardless of the name of the smith and as I have already said, elegantly modelled blades are usually, but not always, old. But in expressing these views I always try to remember that the best bushi taste was avoidance of ostentation and a leaning towards simplicity, even austerity.

## Postscript:

As I am actively continuing my studied of polearms I would very much like to have details of all types that are in the collections of members. Blade shape - preferably a photocopy of the blade if at all possible so that I have actual proportional sizes - length of kuki, signature and other marks, horimono, etc. If the mounts are good then I would like details, especially mon and the shape of the ishizuki (butt ferrule). Please write direct to me at The Well House, 13 Keere Street, Lewis, Sussex, England. Your letters will be most welcome.

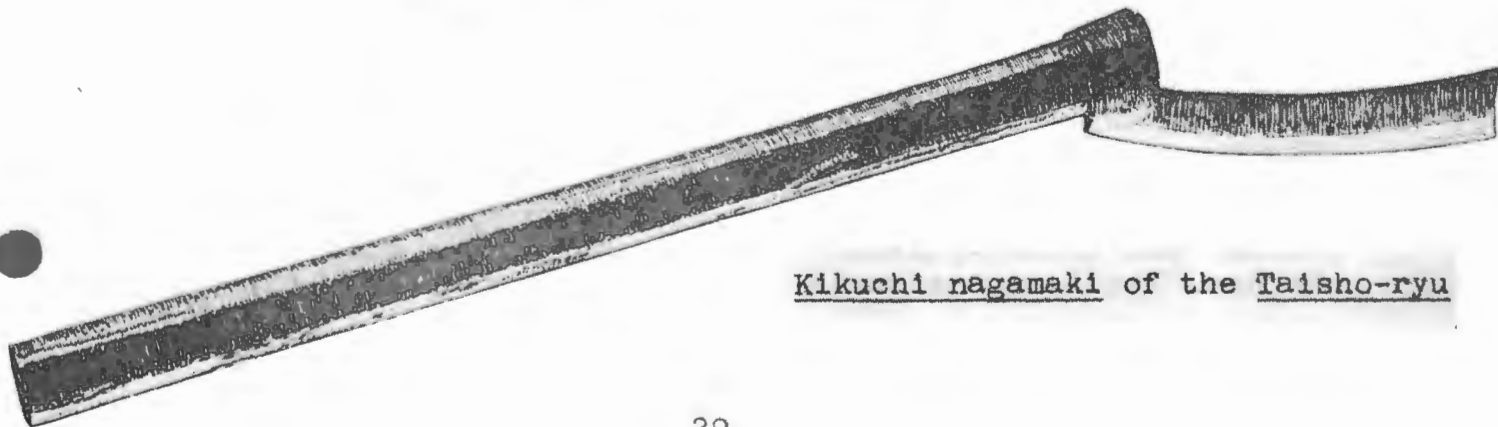
(signed) Roald Knutsen  
2/4/78



Chudan-no-kamae with su-yari  
(Author holding the yari)



Yedan-no-kamae with su-yari  
in the early 16th century  
style of the Kashima Shinto-ryu.  
Note the left hand  
gripping immediately above  
where the habaki would be  
on a live blade weapon.



Kikuchi nagamaki of the Taisho-ryu

## TANTO MONOGATARI- THE STORY OF TANTO SWORDS

by

TAEKO WATANABE  
Curator of the Sano Museum

A word, To-shi-ro, is a play on the word Shi-ro-to, which means an amateur in Japanese. The order of letters, shi-ro-to was transposed into to-shi-ro. However, there were many masters from olden times among those who were called "To-shi-ro So and so". For example, Kato Shirozaemon Kagemasa, who was the founder of Seto-yaki (Seto porcelain), and Awataguchi Yoshimitsu, who was a master of making Tanto blades were both called "Toshiro".

Toshiro Yoshimitsu lived in Kyoto in the mid-Kamakura period, and the Awataguchi school produced swords mainly for the court. Those which were done by this school, therefore, exhibit the upmost gracefulness and beauty of Japanese swords, unlike those which were possessed by tough and rough warriors in local places. Since it was believed at that time that God dwells in a graceful and beautiful object and so a man who owns it has the special divine help of God, some Samurai generals who had thought themselves brave men vied with each other in obtaining Yoshimitsu blades. Under this circumstance, legend came after legend.

According to "Meitoku-ki", which seems to have been written around 1390, early in the Muromachi period, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu possessed a Koshi-gatana called "Yagen-toshi" (Yagen means a muller for grinding simples, and toshi means going through or thrusting). It is unknown why this blade was called "Yagen-toshi". In the second year of Meio era (1493), "Hatakeyama-ki" was written, in which there was a story of a Toshiro tanto. At the time of a battle between Hatakeyama Masanaga and Hosokawa Masamoto, Masanaga was attacked by Masamoto and realized that he had to commit seppuku. He tried to cut his belly with a Toshiro tanto three times, but failed to do so. He said "This tanto is no good," and threw it away. It pierced a yagen beside him. Quoting from the Hatakeyama-ki, "Since this was a serious happening for the lord, the blade has been called Yagen-Toshiro since then". There is another story which appeared in the Edo period. When Tokugawa Ieyasu tried to commit seppuku with a Toshiro tanto when he was beaten, he had pins and needles in his arm and could not move his arm at all when taking up the tanto and sticking it into his belly. When stopping, he had no pain in his arm. He grasped the tanto again and then suddenly he had another pain in his arm. At last, he could not achieve his will. He got angry

and threw away the tanto, which stuck into a yagen. He was a great general so he realized from this happening that this celebrated tanto taught him not to kill himself, and he finally conquered the whole of Japan. It would be better to leave it to scholars whether a legend is true or not. It was impressive that even a great man made a decision with the help of a sword at the last minute of his life-and-death struggle. This is really a feeling of a human being or human nature. Whether or not such divine help exists, it is nothing to the sword itself. The sword is just an innocent object which always carries the gleam of beauty.

Men say that the sword is the soul of the Bushi and will be rusted by a touch of (dirty) women. In fact, however, the technical terms expressing the appreciation of swords are the same as the words which are used by men who judge women. Among such words, the most elegant and pretty is "Furisode nakago".

A furisode nakago is a tanto-tang which has little curvature like the shape of a sleeve of a Japanese kimono called "Furisode". Tanto produced during the Kamakura period are usually 23 centimeters long and their tangs about 7-8 centimeters long. On such a blade with a limited length of 30 cm., lines and faces of good balance which make the blade have a perfect beauty of shape, a forging technique, and a tempering technique which all together exhibit a perfect harmony. Any tiny failure is not allowed at all. There is a strongly strained nature in it. On the other hand, the cute curvature of the tang which breaks such strain gives a feeling of comfort and also shows loveliness of the blade itself to those who look at the tanto. How refined and smart they were who had selected that word, "Furisode", which symbolizes a naivety of a girl before marriage. (A furisode kimono is usually worn by a girl before marriage.)

Tanto with furisode-nakago are generally called "Mete-zashi", which is written in two ways of Chinese characters meaning "right-hand" or "horse-hand". Both words phonetically sound the same the same as "Mete". In olden times, the left hand which holds the bow (Yumi in Japanese) was also called Yunde, which means a bow-hand, and in the meantime a right hand which holds a horse by the bridle was also called "Mete". It is thought accordingly that a mete-zashi means a tanto worn at the waist at the right side.

In "Masukagami" which was written in the Nambokucho period, there is a sentence describing "A tanto seen on his right side", in the story of the Emperor Godaigo who went into Kasagi. Considering that tanto blades were then worn on the left side, this sentence seems to have been especially added for describing how the Emperor had worn his tanto. Other reference literature such as "Heiji Monogatari Emaki" and "Moko Shurai Emaki" which were both produced earlier than the Masukagami do not depict any tanto worn on the right side. All tanto shown in them were worn on the

left side and had both shapes of hilt, straight tang and furisode nakago. A portrait of Hosokawa Sumimoto which was drawn in 1507, the Muromachi period, shows a tanto with straight hilt worn on the right hand. Among reference archives written in this period, a word "Morogoshi" (which literally means both sides of a waist) is found, and this means that tachi and a katana were worn on the left side together and in this case tanto on the right side. A compound word, "Mete-zashi" is first seen in the "Aizujin Monogatari" written in the Keicho era of the Edo period. Among tanto blades which were made after the Muromachi period, there are few tanto with furisode-nakago.

It is thought, therefore, that it is incorrect to assume that tanto with furisode-nakago were worn on the right side. It seems that a way of wearing tanto depends on the way a wearer likes. It is also conceivable that a hilt with a little curvature as shown in the drawings of "Moko Shurai Emaki", which was published in the first year of the Einin era (1293) in the Kamakura period, was a kind of fashion that was prevailing at that time.

In the Heian period, aristocrats in the court made it a rule to wear a tachi sword for formal attire. They thought it rude or out of etiquette to wear a tanto sword. The tanto swords were referred to as the blades which were possessed by non-noblemen or warriors who served under the aristocrats. It was thought among the court people that the tanto belonged to those who were looked down upon.

With advent of the Bushi age in the Kamakura period, it became popular to wear tanto irrespective of the upper and lower classes. They came to wear tanto in daily life, and gradually tanto were used as a sort of accessory. An appendix article of the Kenmu Shikimoku (code) was often promulgated in the Nambokucho period, in which rank-and-file warriors or those who were under the middle class were not allowed to carry gorgeously mounted tanto swords.

The spirit of the Kamakura bushi is found not only in their brave activities but also their positive attitude that they were enthusiastic in assimilating the court culture of aristocratic sense and in the meantime they were active in fostering their own new culture. The celebrated masterpieces of tanto produced during this period prove it.

## THE SOSHU SCHOOL TRADITION

by

Dr. Keith Evans

The Soshu school was started when several smiths went to Kamakura to work for the Hojo, then rulers of Japan. These smiths were Sukezane of Bizen, Kunimune of Bizen, and Kunitsuna of Yamashiro. These were the Kamakura Ichimonji.

Since there are so few long blades with signatures surviving from the beginning of the first works of the school in Kamakura, I will talk about the short swords. The first definitive Soshu style was that of Shintogo Kunimitsu, who was taught by both Kunimune and Kunitsuna. Kunimitsu made many tanto and they are of several styles, one having a furisode nakago like Rai Kunitoshi, and one having a straight-sided nakago, tapering to a rounded tip, like Bizen Kagemitsu. His nakago are long in proportion to the body of the blade. Shintogo Kunimitsu's hamon style is mainly in suguba of varying width, from ito (thread-fine) to chu (medium) suguba. A tanto with midareba also survives and it is an indication of a style to come in Masamune's work. However, Kunimitsu's work, although rich in the itame hada with chikei, shows mainly the suguba style on a short tanto of hirazukuri design. Kunimitsu also made kanmuri-otoshi zukuri tanto with suguba. Kunimitsu had many students, mainly his sons Kunihiro, Kunimitsu II, and Kunishige, all of whom made in their father's style. In addition, Yukimitsu was a most important student of Kunimitsu, and is accepted to be senior to Masamune. Yukimitsu, Norishige of Etchu, and Goro Nyudo Masamune; these are the three outside students of Kunimitsu.

Yukimitsu's tanto were like his teacher's but he also made a wider style with more flamboyant hamon of notare midare and even some hitatsura. His blades show a wider variety of carvings with complex grooves and even a carving of Fudo Myoo, although many of these carvings may have been done by Taishinbo. Yukimitsu's hada patterns are larger than Kunimitsu's and there are many workings in the jihada and hamon. The nakago is larger than Kunimitsu, and in Yukimitsu's wider blades, it becomes relatively shorter and wider (the funagata- boat bottom- curve) and ended in a small curved tip. The break of the curve was in the bottom third of the nakago.

Yukimitsu's fellow student, Masamune, brought the signs of genius to the Soshu school. His work displays designs and workings which are just different from anyone's work. I have seen several Masamune swords; I handled two of them in 1964 at the Tokyo National Museum; the first foreigner to touch them, Mr. Kashima told me.



They had an "off-handed" feel, rich but casual, unpretentiously extravagant, like a precious tea bowl which had been made to hold a peasant's noon meal. I couldn't tell Kashima-san why the swords moved me so much. It's not something to talk about, only experience.

Masamune made small tanto of 8-8.5 sun which were narrow and therefore had narrow, tapering side nakago, ending in a V-shaped tip. Sometimes the nakago had little fatness on the ha side, with the height of the curve in the machi third. His HOcho are wide tanto and have correspondingly wide nakago of the curving shape, the fullness being in the upper third and ending in a shallow V tip. Except for the richness of Masamune's hamon and the extraordinary ji nie and chikei, the shape of his blades was conservative and neat. A tanto in the Imperial collection, one of three with signature, has a furisode nakago and sugu hamon and closely resembles Shintogo Kunimitsu's earlier, conservative work.

Masamune's successor, Sadamune, created yet another Soshu style, more flamboyant in the hada and hamon, flashy in design with fancy grooves, ken and other carvings, larger and longer. The nakago has a longer V tip, and is shorter in relation to the new 1.1 shaku length. He also introduces a sori to his kowakizashi, a characteristic missing from earlier Soshu works, although prevalent in the Yoshino period blades of Masamune's other students Bizen Chogi and Hasabe Kunishige. Sadamune also introduced the katakiriba style and used carvings freely, passing this characteristic on to his student, Nobukuni of Kyoto and used to a lesser extent by his other student, Motoshige of Bizen. Neither of these men approached the gorgeousness of hamon or richness of jihada exhibited in Sadamune's short swords, although Nobukuni came close.

As the Soshu school passes into the mid-Yoshino period, Akihiro and Hiromitsu, contemporaries and students of Sadamune, further elaborated on Sadamune's style and introduced the hitatsura (full temper) tempering designs. Their jigane was very rich with surface patterns, but the genius of Masamune and his predecessors had been diluted, and the design effects were more studied, less spontaneous, than their masters' works. Hiromitsu and Akihiro short blades were in 1 shaku to 1.4 shaku range, wide, thin, and the nakago have straighter sides and a larger curved tip. The mune of most short swords of the Soshu school through Nambokucho period have 3 surfaces (mitsu mune) and except the furisode style, the nakago mune shows little or no sori.

As the Soshu school passes into the Muromachi period with such smiths as Hiromasa, Masahiro, Hiromitsu II and III, and Akihiro II and III, their inability to make the beautiful nie of the earlier masters made their swords mere copies of the early masterworks. In the hitatsura, the clumps of nie become circles of nioi and the chikei and kinsuji disappear, so that the hamon designs look drawn-on. The Oei period style was thicker, had ihori mune, less surface workings, a larger, straighter sided



nakago. Then another change in nakago shape occurred in the mid 15th century, and the nakago ha was made with a big curve, ending in a small tip. This design of nakago becomes standard around the Eisho period, when Tsunahiro was the main name of the Soshu school, at that time located in Odowara, a castle town of Sagami province. Hirotsugu, Tsuneiye, Yasuharu, Yasukuni, were other Soshu workers of this time, and their style is all quite similiar, with full temper patterns, O-hada, wide nioi hamons with ko-nie, few surface workings. They made tanto at this time in addition to the waki-zashi of hirazukuri, but the tanto had nothing of the early Soshu school. The Tsunahiro continued through their tradition into the Shinto period, using the hitatsura design and curved nakago with small tip. Tsunahiro was the best smith of Sue Soshu.

Because there were so many students of the Soshu smiths, the Soshu style spread all over Japan. Kaneuji took the style to Mino, Nobukuni to Kyōto and on to Kyushu, Sa to Chikuzen and the Nagato Sa school, Hasabe to Kyoto and several generations of his name. Later, the Shimada smiths of Suruga, the Hoki Hiroyoshi, and even the Sue Bizen smiths used Soshu styles in horimono, hamon, and shapes. The Kyoto Sanjo school and Heianjo school showed much Soshu influence and Heianjo Nagayoshi passed this on to his student Muramasa of Ise, who modified his nakago to a new distinctive shape. The Soshu style of hamon, jihada, and nakago shape became a standard for late Koto smiths and also was widely copied by early Shinto and Shinshinto artists, but that is a subject for another time.

The following is an article that appeared in the Transactions of The Asiatic Society of Japan, Vol. II, 1882. It was read before the society Nov. 26, 1873.

## THE SWORD OF JAPAN: ITS HISTORY AND TRADITIONS

by

Thomas R. H. McClatchie

There is, perhaps, no country in the world where the sword, that "knightly weapon of all ages", has, in its time, received so much honour and renown as it has in Japan. Regarded, as it was, as being of divine origin, dear to the general as the symbol of his authority, cherished by the samurai as almost a part of his own self, and considered by the common people as their protector against violence, what wonder that we should find it spoken of in glowing terms by Japanese writers as "the precious possession of lord and vassal from times older than the divine period", or as "the living sould of the samurai"?

The sword has in Japan a history of its own, and has formed the subject of several treatises, written with the object of assisting the student of the art of fixing the date and maker's name of a blade, an art which apparently was a subject of great attention from olden times. Among these the principal works are the "Koto Meijin" or "Collection of Names of Old Swords" and the "Shinto Bengi", or "Reference as to New Swords". The former was compiled in 1791 A.D., and the latter was published by Kamada Saburodaiyu in the year 1779 A.D. The expression "old swords" is explained as applying to those made before the 8th year of the period Keicho, or 1603 A.D., while all those manufactured after the same date are included under the heading of "new swords".

Saburodaiyu, in his preface to the "Reference as to New Swords", gives a short sketch of the Japanese legends regarding the history of the weapon; and though his allusions, in connection with his subject, to the mythology of his country may perhaps provoke a smile, still they are worthy of note as being the words of an author who is generally held to be a high authority on the matter of which he treats. The translation of this sketch reads as follows:-

If we search out in bygone days the origin of the sword, we find that our country excelled barbarian localities in regard to metal. In the olden times of the Divine period, When Izanagi and Izanami no Mikoto, standing upon the floating bridge of Heaven, thrust down their glittering blade and probed the blue ocean, the drops of its point congealed and hardened and became an island, after which the dieties created

several other islands. These eventually became a large country composed of eight islands, and amongst the names of this country- they styled it too the land of many blades. In its early days there existed the Divine Swords To-nigiri and Ya-nigiri. Then, too, when Sosano no Mikoto smote the eight-clawed Great Dragon, and struck him on the tail, the sword of the deity became slightly nicked, and from the inside of the tail he drew out a single blade. "This," said he "is a marvelous sword", and he caused it to be presented to Tensho Daijin. This was styled the "Sword of the Clustering Clouds of Heaven" and also the "Grass-mowing Sword". Should not this be said to be the commencement of fixing the dates of swords? That "Sword of the Clustering Clouds" was made one of the "Three Divine Precious Things", (i.e. the Seal, Sword, and Mirror held by the mikados),- "it has had no equal in this country, and, being the gigantic weapon that watches over it, is a thing of great dread even to speak of. Now, when our country had arrived at the Heavenly rule of Sujin Tenno, the 10th of the mortal emperors (97-29 B.C.), he feared to dwell in the same palace with the "Divine Precious Things", and so he caused a person called Amakuni, a man of the department of Uda in the province of Yamato, a far-removed descendant of Me-hitotsu-gami to forge an imitation of the sword, and as for the "Clustering Clouds" that had descended from the Divine age, he was pleased to offer it up to the shrine of Tensho Daijin. Under the heavenly rule of Keiko Tenno (71-131 A.D.), Yamato Take no Mikoto, at the time of his expedition against the east, went to pay reverence at the shrines of Ise. His aunt, Yamato Hime no Mikoto was the resident of the shrine at that period, and she besought that the Divine sword "Clustering Clouds" might be handed down to him from the shrine, and so gave it over to Yamato Take no Mikoto, together with a tinder-case attached. This is said to have been the origin of the custom of fastening a charm-case to a sword as a guardian for children. Yamato Take no Mikoto, having accomplished the subjugation of the east, offered up the sword at Atsuta in the province of Owari. Up to the present day, the virtue of this sword, permanent and immutable, even unto the end of myriads of ages, is the guardian of our country and our homes, and the protector of our own selves. In no way can it be fully described by the pen! The second "precious sword" was buried in the Western seas at the time of the death of Antoku Tenno (1185 A.D.).

Throughout the whole of the above passage, the word sword is invariably rendered by the Japanese word "ken", which signifies a long, straight, double-edged sword, as opposed to the "katana" of modern times, which has but single edge, and is slightly curved toward the point. The "ken" is the oldest form, and the "katana" the newest, while between the two comes a sword much like the katana, only a great deal more curved. A beautiful specimen of a

ken is now in the possession of the most noted fencing master of Yedo. It is about three feet in length, and perfectly straight; the blade is some two and a half inches in breadth, and the point somewhat heart-shaped. It is exceedingly heavy, double-edged, and engraved with various devices. This ken is said to be between seven and eight hundred years old. The curved sword was worn swinging from a belt, to which it was attached by two strips of leather; it appears to have been a common style of war-sword, and was generally very short. The shape of the katana was obtained by dividing the heavy ken down the center of the blade, thus producing two single-edged swords of more convenient weight. Besides these again, there is the wakizashi, or short dirk, the custom of wearing which, together with the katana, as a sign of gentle birth, is said to have been introduced about the commencement of the Ashikaga dynasty, in the early part of the 14th century. The length of this dirk has of late years been gradually lessened to about nine and a half inches. This is the weapon with which the ceremony of hara-kiri was performed, the dirk being then presented to the principal on a small square tray made of white wood, such as is used in temples. Hence the allusion, in a popular song written at the time of the recent revolution,—"The gift I wish to present to my lord of Aidzu is 'nine and a half inches' on a temple tray,"—meaning that the author of the song, who was evidently attached to the loyal party, desired nothing better than the death of the nobleman in question.

The names of noted smiths are many in number. The first who appears who to be a really authentic personage is one Amakuni, who lived during the reign of the 42nd Emperor Mommu Tenno (696-707 A.D.) He is stated to have been a man of Uda in Yamato, and this circumstance, coupled with the fact of similarity of name, induces the belief that he was a remote descendant of that Amakuni whose name has been mentioned above as having made a sword in imitation of the Divine blade called "Clustering Clouds". There are various tales of other clever smiths before the time of Mommu Tenno, but it is hard to place much reliance on these legends. with regard to later times, the "Reference as to New swords" says, "The good makers of olden days were Kamige, Shinsoku, and Amaza, and of the middle ages, Munechika, Yasutsuna, Sanemori, Yukihiro, and Yoshimitsu, with Kuniyoshi of Awataguchi (in Kyoto). There were many Bizen of old, in the period Shoku (1217-1220) there were numerous artisans, and subsequently came Masamune and Yoshihiro, who were universally renowned." Of the above names, Yoshimitsu is placed by the author of the work as first in point of merit.

It appears rather strange that in this list there should not be found the name of Muramasa, who is certainly one of the most widely known smiths of Japan; it is most probable that his name was omitted by some oversight, as he is mentioned elsewhere in the book. The four makers of swords who seem to be best known

in Japan are Munechika, Masamune, Yoshimitsu, and Muramasa. Of these, Munechika is by far the oldest; he was born in 938 A.D. and his swords were famous from 987 downwards. Masamune and Yoshimitsu acquired their renown towards the end of the 13th century while Muramasa did not appear till nearly a century after them. These makers, as indeed all smiths of any note, had their own marks which they engraved on the hilt of the sword, most frequently accompanied by a date, but as, of late years, the practise of counterfeiting the marks of well known makers has been largely indulged in, these are not always to be depended on. Muramasa was succeeded by his son and grandson, who both bore the same name, and the latter of whom flourished in the early part of the 15th century. The blades turned out by the family acquired the unenviable reputation of being unlucky and of frequently bringing their owners into trouble. Mr. Mitford, in his "Tales of Old Japan" narrates the legend as to the reason why the Yoshimitsu blades were deemed of good omen in the Tokugawa family, while those of Muramasa were thought unlucky.

The profession of the smith was deemed and honourable one, and those who engaged in it were generally men of good family. It is mentioned of the Emperor Gotoba Tenno, who succeeded to the throne in 1186, that not only did he "give directions to the noted smiths of the various provinces and make them forge, but also worked with his own hand". In later years the famous smiths received from the court an honorary rank, which was in proportion to the renown they had gained. Thus it is a common thing to see engraved on a sword the name of the maker, with the title "Kami of such and such a province" appended. This, however, is also explained by the assertion that the maker engraved on his work the title of the nobleman in whose jurisdiction he lived; but of the two explanations the first-named is apparently more worthy of credit. To these names a date is generally added, while on the other side of the hilt is occasionally written a motto or a verse of poetry, some of which are rather curious:-

"There's nought 'twixt Heaven and Earth that man need fear, who carries at his belt this single blade:" again,- "One's fate is in the hands of Heaven, but a skillful fighter doesn't meet with death:" and again,- "In one's last days, one's sword becomes the wealth of one's posterity."

Apart from these mottos, it was a common custom to give names to famous swords. "Little Crow" was the title of one in great repute in the Taira family, while in the house of Minamoto there were two hereditary swords named "Higekiri" and "Hizamaru". The two latter names arose from the circumstances that when these swords were tried on two criminals sentenced to decapitation, one cut through the beard of the victim after severing the head from the body, while the other also divided the knee. The historian Rai Sanyo narrates the fact that the forging of these two swords occupied the smith for a period of sixty days. The dirk with which Asano Takumi no Kami, the lord of the famous forty seven ronins, committed hara-kiri, is still preserved at the temple of Sengakuji



in Yedo, while swords alleged to have belonged to Minamoto no Yoritomo and to the Taiko Hideyoshi are to this day shown at the shrine of Hachiman at Kamakura.

It was the writer's good fortune, in the spring of the present year, to pay a visit to the famous shrines of Nikko in the province of Shimotsuke. The highest mountain of that cluster of hills is called Nantaizan, and has been considered for many ages a sacred place. Upon this mountain are several small torii, or gateways, such as are seen leading up to Japanese temples, and these guide the traveller to a small shrine at the summit. Here, on a bare rock overhanging a steep precipice some sixty or seventy feet in depth, lay, half-buried in the snow, a large number of sword-blades, old and rusted, which had evidently lain there exposed to the wind and rain for many years back. Tradition says that, in old days, any one who had committed a deed of blood with any weapon, was accustomed to make a pilgrimage to this mountain, and there fling away the instrument as a sort of expiation for his crime. The guides on the spot, however, stated that though this was doubtless true in many cases, still it was not an absolute fact. Among the sword-blades there lay one, broken into three pieces, but which when whole must have been not less than eight feet in length. This sword bore a date of some twenty-one years back, and the maker's name, Izawa Gijiro, who turned out to be a smith late of renown in the castle-town of Utsunomiya, some few miles off. Many a tale of blood, no doubt, could those old blades have told, had they a voice; but there they lay, as still as the hands that once wielded them, fitting emblems of the decay, in these days, of that once deep-rooted pride which was wont to cherish the sword, under the belief that it was the source of manly spirit, and the very fountain of honour.

The different ways of carrying the sword are stated by some Japanese to have been indicative of the rank of the wearer. Thus, persons of high birth are said to have generally worn it with the hilt pointing straight upwards, almost parallel with the body; the common people to have stuck it horizontally in the belt; while ordinary samurai wore it in a position about half-way between the two just quoted. This, however, does not appear to be an idea worthy of much credence, for all visitors to Yedo some three years ago must have noticed that the style of carrying it first quoted above was one that found great favour in the eyes of the low-class swashbucklers of the Capital, who frequently were seen swaggering about girt with weapons placed perpendicularly in their belts and reaching almost from the level of their chins to their ankles. To clash the sheath of one's sword against that belonging to another person was held to be a grave breach of etiquette; to turn the sheath in the belt, as though about to draw, was tantamount to a challenge; while to lay one's weapon on the floor of a room, and to kick the guard with the foot, in the direction of anyone else, was a deadly insult, that generally resulted in a combat to the death. It was not even thought polite to draw a sword from its sheath without begging the permission of any other persons present.

The decay of the practise of wearing swords is certainly a hopeful sign of more intelligent and orderly times. The contrast between the present peaceful condition of the great cities of Japan, and that of the same places a few years back, is in itself a sufficient argument that the swords were not really needed, but were, on the contrary, incentives to violence. Tales of unfortunate dogs serving as a test for the sword of the roystering student, or of some wretched foot passenger losing his life beneath the stroke of a ruffian anxious to try the edge of his blade by what is so expressively styled in Japanese "cross-road cutting", are happily now unknown. That these tales were, even in former times, much exaggerated is more than likely, but that such things did actually occur is beyond all doubt, and it is gratifying to find the Japanese themselves so far awakened to a sense of the uselessness of their once dearly cherished swords as actually to ridicule, in the public press, the few who still adhere to the old custom. Honesty of purpose and firmness in action, - straight-forward dealing and steadfast endeavour, will do far more to help on this country to her proper place among the nations of the world, than could ever have been achieved by means of her formerly much-prized possession, the "girded sword of Japan".



## CANADA IS MY KATANA

by

Dr. Keith Evans

"Two pieces of gold is not enough! These swords were given to my ancestor by the great Hideyoshi himself for bravery on the battlefield- they are priceless!"

"Listen to me, Samurai. Do you see that pile of swords back there? I have paid so much to you samurai, I'll go broke if I buy any more swords. What can I do with them? You don't understand how difficult it is to be a pawnbroker these days, everyone selling their precious family treasures, but nobody buying anything."

"But, my ancestor fought with the Taiko himself-"

"Two pieces, take it or leave it, I'm busy."

"Give me the money, here is my soul".

Nagano-san stumbled out of the pawnbroker's shop, tightly clutching the gold pieces. He felt naked, helpless. Why had the government taken his life away? What would he do now?

"Hey, Nagano-san!" It was Morita-san, his captain. "Where are you going? Where have you been? Hey, you look bad!"

"Oh, Morita-san, I have just sold my ancestor's swords, my greatest possessions. I'm sick. My life is over! At least, I still have my tanto, and tonight I will spend this gold for a beautiful room and a clean kimono and finish it all. My captain, will you take my head for me?"

"Hey, don't be a fool, Nagano-san. You are a samurai, who should know how to live as a new Japanese, not die like a coward. Go away, start a new life. You are a young man, strong and adventuresome. You were one of my best men, I remember. Listen, Nagano-san. This morning I saw a ship getting ready to leave the port. It is big and has much cargo. There are many places to hide. It is going east, to the rising sun, to the "New World". I will help you tonight and in the morning you will smell salt air instead of death. Keep your gold, Nagano-san. You will need it in your new life."

And so it may have been, because on a day in 1877, a Japanese named Nagano, a stowaway on an English cargo ship, was put ashore at Vancouver, B.C. A hundred years later, two Texans

dropped from the sky, to settle lightly on Canadian ground in Toronto, Ontario. An hour later, Gay and I entered the magnificent Ontario Science Center to celebrate the Japanese-Canadian Centennial by attending the opening night of a grand exhibit of the swords, armour, fittings, and accessories of the Samurai.

Conceived by member David Pepper as a "local" exhibition to celebrate the Centennial, the idea had grown to a full-fledged exposition of international stature!

JSSUS member, Walter Compton, loaned many items and Dr. Homma of NBTHK arranged the loan of over fifty items of highest caliber, all brought from Japan by Morihiro Ogawa. Loans from Canadian sources fill out the great displays which David and Morihiro so artistically arranged. It was a night which tradition and generosity made possible and a celebration quite fitting to honour the first intrepid Japanese immigrant to Canada. To recall all of the magnificent blades is difficult, but there are many which I can still see in my mind's eye. The first display to be seen was a sword donated to NBTHK by W. Compton, and designated Juyo Bunkasai; a slim, elegant, mumei tachi attributed to Fukuoka Ichimonji, and accompanied by its Keicho period ito maki tachi koshirae of kinnashiji nuri with kirimon. An ubu tachi, by Awataguchi Kunitsuna, one of the founders of the Soshu school, showed well the mid-Kamakura style of a thicker sword. A Masamune daito with O-kissaki was sent as a private loan from Japan, as was a Shumei Sadamune ko-wakazashi with a beautiful O-notare hamon against dark blue steel.

Dr. Compton's Bizen Chikakage, first exhibited at Dallas in the Token Kenkyu Kai's Meibutsu Room in 1972, displayed the strong shape and beautiful, soft hamon which made the late Kamakura Bizen blades so famous.

A blade of stupendous size by Bitchu Aoi Naotsugu, with its original Nambokucho period tachi koshirae again made me wonder at the strength of the men who carried the huge swords of that time.

There was a Muramasa yari, and a very handsome Seki Kanemoto daito with sanbonsugi hamon from the Sengoku period as well as many others of lesser names and designs. And from the Shinto period, a Noda Hankei daito and a Nagasone Okisato daito and many other maker's works. Among modern blades was a tachi made by Musashi no Kuni Yoshiwara Yoshindo, which looked like a flashy mid-Kamakura blade!

The displays included many beautiful koshirae, the three I best remember being a kinnashiji efu no tachi, Marquis Hosokawa's hiramaki uchigatana koshirae with Tsuchiya Yasuchika fittings, (a fit suit for a Sa blade), and the beautiful solid gold tanto koshirae with shishi mitokoro mono, a treasure of the Maeda family.

There was a magnificent soft metal tsuba and kodogu display, but the fittings which delighted me most were the pagoda and sickle design katchushi tsuba, the tortoise shell design by Nobu-  
iye, Kaneiye's pagoda design tsuba, an Owari lattice design tsuba of great dignity, and a Hikoso tsuba of darkened copper with Odowara mimi. There were many educational displays, showing polishing techniques, swordmaking tools, armour-clothed mannikins, clothing styles, two continuous movies, etc., etc. It was truly a great exhibition. Nagano-san would have really like it.

OSAFUNE SWORDSMITHS OF BIZEN PROVINCE  
DURING THE SHINTŌ AND SHINSHINTŌ PERIODS

by Albert Yamanaka

Swordmaking prospered in the areas of the lower reaches of the Yoshii River which ranges in the mountain ranges which divides the Honshu Island of the Western Honshu. The lower reaches of this river is divided by two provinces, Mimasaka and Bizen. A number of reasons can be found why Bizen Province was suited for swordmaking:

1. Fine grade iron sand was found in abundance.
2. Water was readily available from the wells which were replenished from the river and the mountains subterranean water routes.
3. Charcoal made from Akamatsu (red pine) was found in abundance in the mountain reaches.
4. The proper clay was available for use in tempering.

All of these things combined brought about the craft of swordmaking as early as the Heian times and has continued on up to the present.

Many schools were founded in Bizen Province. There is the KO BIZEN group which does not necessarily fall into any group as a school. There is FUKUOKA ICHIMONJI, YOSHIOKA ICHIMONJI, KOKUBUNJI, SHOCHU ICHIMONJI, OSAFUNE, HATAKEDA, UGAI, OMIYA, YOSHII. Of these there are many who are treated separately even though they fall into these groups. The largest group would be the OSAFUNE School from which came KANEMITSU, CHOJI, MOTOSHIGE, YASUMITSU and MORIMITSU, IESUKE and TSUNEIYE, NORIMITSU KATSUMITSU, TADAMITSU, SUKESADA and KIYOMITSU. Still further down in the periods are the late koto so called EISHO BIZEN, and from this the only ones that seems to have continued on into the Shintō Period are the descendants of OSAFUNE YOZOZAIMON no JO SUKESADA.

Not much weight is placed on swordsmiths during the Shintō and Shinshintō Periods with the exception of YOKOYAMA KOZUKE DAIJO SUKESADA and a few other minor smiths, but the various lineage did start in the koto period and the smiths during the Shintō Period can trace their origin directly to YOZOZAIMON no JO SUKESADA of the Eisho Era of the late Koto. Four generations after YOZOZAIMON, there is TOSHIRO SUKESADA who had four sons. Of these four, the youngest, SOZAIMON no JO SUKESADA, had a son who later became KAWACHI no KAMI SUKESADA. Three generations after this smith came the ISE DAIJO SUKEHIRA whose son takes after the main SUKESADA lineage and the second becomes KAGA no SUKE SUKENAGA, the eldest son of SUKENAGA becoming SUKEKANE!

On the 19th year of Tensho (1591), the Yoshii River broke it's banks and the entire area around Osafune village was flooded. The Yoshii River had been flooding this area since ancient times, however this flood of 1591 was supposed to have been the largest and most devastating one ever. As a result of this flood, many swordsmith died. HICHIBEI SUKESADA and a few others were supposed to have been the only surviving swordsmiths and it is these few survivors who carried on the tradition of swordmaking into the Shintō Period. The most noteworthy of these survivors is KOZUKE DAIJO SUKESADA, followed by HICHIBEI SUKESADA and KAWACHI no KAMI SUKESADA.

The first smith of the Shintō Period from Osafune is HICHIBEI SUKESADA who was active around the early 1600s. He is sometimes referred to as Shintō Sukesada 1st. He is followed by seven generations of the main Sukesada lineage (some say there are eleven generations), on until the present times. HICHIBEI SUKESADA had three brothers; GORO SUKESADA was not a swordsmith, GENZAEMON no JO SUKESADA started his own lineage, the youngest brother SOZAEEMON no JO SUKESADA lineage prospered. His son in turn, KAWACHI no KAMI SUKESADA, is well known and is followed by HICHOROEMON SUKESADA whose younger brother TADANOSHIN SUKESADA went to take after the main Sukesada lineage and became the 4th Sukesada (also known as YAMATO DAIJO SUKESADA). Two generations afterwards comes ISE no KAMI SUKEHIRA who originally signed as SUKESADA. His son SUKEMORI becomes the last of the main lineage (SUKESADA 11th in some records but the 9th by actual count), the younger brother being KAGA no SUKE SUKENAGA. SUKEMORI's son becomes the 1st SUKEKANE, though this smith actually is the son of SUKENAGA who takes after SUKEMORI's line as Sukesada went to take after the Sukesada line. KAGA no SUKE SUKENAGA is noteworthy not so much for his swordmaking, though he was quite good at this, but mainly for having sent forth a great many smiths to the sword world. He is known to have had about 40 students all of which are little known since most of these Osafune smiths from that time are rated very low.

The third son of KAGA no SUKE SUKENAGA had his own lineage. His son SUKENAGA 2nd had few students and whose son, SUKEHARU, followed by SENRYUSHI SUKESADA, who had a few students. Of the students there is one who is interesting and that is HONAMI SOKEI. Originally from Bizen Province, he studied swordmaking under SENRYUSHI SUKESADA. Later he was adopted by HONAMI YASABURO of the KOMI lineage. SOKEI is currently active near Tokyo and is into polishing and appraisal. The 1st SUKEKANE also had few students of which MIYAMOTO KANENORI is the most known one as he was also quite active and became a member of the Imperial Arts Academy during the late Meiji.

TOMONARI Eien - Wanko Era  
987 1004

友成 ①

SUKEMITSU Kansho Era  
1460

祐光 ②

SUKESADA Taiei Era 1521

YOZOZAEMON no JO

祐定 ③

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

Gembei no JO  
Eiroku Era 1558

祐定 ④

JUBEI no JO

祐定 ⑤

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

祐定 藤四郎

Hichiroemon no Jo

祐定 ⑥

Gonzaemon

祐定 ⑦

Onishi  
Hikobei no Jo

祐定 ⑧

Toshiro

⑨

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

祐定

Toshiro  
Tensho Era - 1573

祐定 藤四郎

⑩

Yozobei no Jo  
Yozozaemon no Jo

⑪

SUKESADA 1st

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

Hichibe no Jo

祐定 ⑫

土佐守

Goro

祐定 ⑬

Genzaemon no Jo  
Keian Era 1648

祐定 ⑭

Sozaemon no Jo  
Keian Era

祐定 ⑮

SUKESADA 2nd

TAHEI

MAGODAIU

SUKETADA

SUKENOBU

KOZUKE DAIJO  
Heibe 祐定

⑯

⑰

太平

⑱

孫太夫

Hichidaiu  
Kihachi 祐定

⑲

Hichinoshin

⑳ ㉓

祐信 土佐

⑳ PAGE 48

SUKESADA LINEAGE CHART

The circled numbers along with each name refers to the text portion of the lineage which follows this chart.

Due to printing difficulties, the chart has been cut into page size, with match points added from page to page to simplify its usage. The chart has also been used in its original draft form in order to utilize the written characters.

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SUKESADA 3rd

YAMATO DAIJO  
Hichinoshin Sukenobu  
祐定・大和太掾

22  
20

SUKESADA 4th

Tadanoshin  
祐定・忠道

REF: # 53 - SEE PAGE 50

53  
4

SUKESADA 5th

TOSHINORI 25

TOSHIYOSHI 26

TOSHIMITSU 24  
(Ato) Hichibei  
祐定  
寿光 隼士衛

寿光 27

Takunishin  
寿吉

TOSHINORI

HAGATSUGU 28  
長次 源之進

Hichibei 寿光  
Sadaharu 士兵衛  
定治 27 25

Gennoshin

TOSHITSUGU  
Yasunoshin 28  
長次 源之進

SUKESADA

SUKEMORI

Yozozaeon 祐定  
Hichibei 与三右卫门  
士兵衛 29

Yuji 祐定  
源治 30

SUKESADA

SUKEMORI 祐定 32  
祐盛

SUKESADA

Heizaemon

祐庭:平左卫门

③③

MAGOSHIRO

孫四郎

③④

XXX

③⑤

XXX

③⑥

SUKESADA

Gennoshin

祐定-源之道

③⑦

GENHICHIRO

源七郎

③⑧

GENUEMON

源右卫门

③⑨

GENZO

源藏

④⑩

SUKESADA

Gempachiro

祐定-源八郎

④①

YASUJIRO

安次郎

④②

GENZAEMON

源左卫门

④③

SUKESADA

Yasujiro

祐定

安次郎

④④

TOSHITSUGU

Gempachiro

秀次-源八郎

④⑤

SUKETSUGU

Ryusuke

Hichirobei no Jo

祐次

柳外-土郎兵卫尉

SUKEORI

TOSHINOBU

Gennojo

秀信-源之丞

④⑦

④⑥

Tsunanori

祐藏

④⑧

49.

SUKESADA

Rokuzaemon

Hachizaemon

六左卫门 ⑤⑩

八左卫门 ⑤⑪

KAWACHI no KAMI  
YOSHIMITSU  
Nizaemon

祐定 - 河内守 - 義光 -

④⑨

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

祐定 - 辰右卫门

⑤④

Hichiroemon

Tadanoshin

Tatsueemon

祐定 - 土御右卫门

⑤②

4th of main  
lineage

祐定 - 忠之進

⑤③ - ②③

SUKESADA

SUKESADA

Hichiroemon

Gengo

祐定 - 源吾

祐定 - 土御右卫门

⑤⑤

⑤⑥

SUKEHIRA

SUKENAO 1st

祐直

⑤⑧

SUKESADA  
ISE no KAMI  
Kakuji

SHUSHINSHI  
Gengoro

秋水子 - 源五郎

祐平  
伊勢守

堂治

⑤⑦

SUKENAO 2nd

祐直 - 源五郎 ⑤⑨

Gengoro

Kinohachi

喜三八 ⑥⑩

SUKENORI      xx    Ⓐ    xx    Ⓑ    SUKEKANE    Ⓒ    xx    Ⓓ    xx      SUKENAGA      Ⓔ    PAGE 52

SHIKA ⑥1 no suke 祐盛 - 亮助 ⑥2 祐包      NAGA no SUKE

SUKENORI

SUKEKANE 1st 祐包 - 俊左工頭 ⑥5  
 俊吉

Gohichibei

Shunzaemon  
Shunkichi

長盛 ⑥4

後七兵工

SUKEKANE 2nd

MIYAMOTO  
KANENORI

SUKETERU

TAKENAKA  
SUKENOBU

HIRAGA  
MORIKUNI

Kenji

66-1

66-2

66-3

66-4

祐包 ⑥6  
健治

SUKEKANE 3rd

官本  
包刻

祐映

竹中  
祐信

平賀  
護國

Kakutaro

祐包 ⑥7  
寛太郎

祐永  
加賀介 ⑥3

HISAYAMA  
SUKETAKA

Hokuemon ①  
久山祐高  
左右工門

MOHEI  
SUKEHARU

祐春-茂平 ②

KUMANOSUKE  
SUKETOSHI 2nd

祐利 ③  
熊之助

SUKETOSHI 1st

Ikojiro  
祐利 ④

SUKEYUKI

Toshiro  
祐幸 ⑤

SUKEMITSU

Sakichi  
祐光 ⑥

ISEJIRO

伊勢次郎  
⑦

NAGAIRO

Fujita  
Kengo  
永弘  
藤田謙吾 ⑧

SUKETADA

Yokoyama  
祐忠 ①

TAKAHIRA

Yokoyama  
Sawaemon  
高平  
沢右工門 ⑨

SUKENORI

Yokoyama  
祐則 ⑩

SUKENARI

Yokoyama  
祐成 ⑪

SUKEYOSHI

Yokoyama  
祐義 ⑫

TOSHIMASA

Maeda  
Tetsugoro  
寿政 ⑬

SUKEHARU - SUKEMITSU

TOSHINSHI  
Takemiya Kiyotaro  
祐春-祐光 ⑭

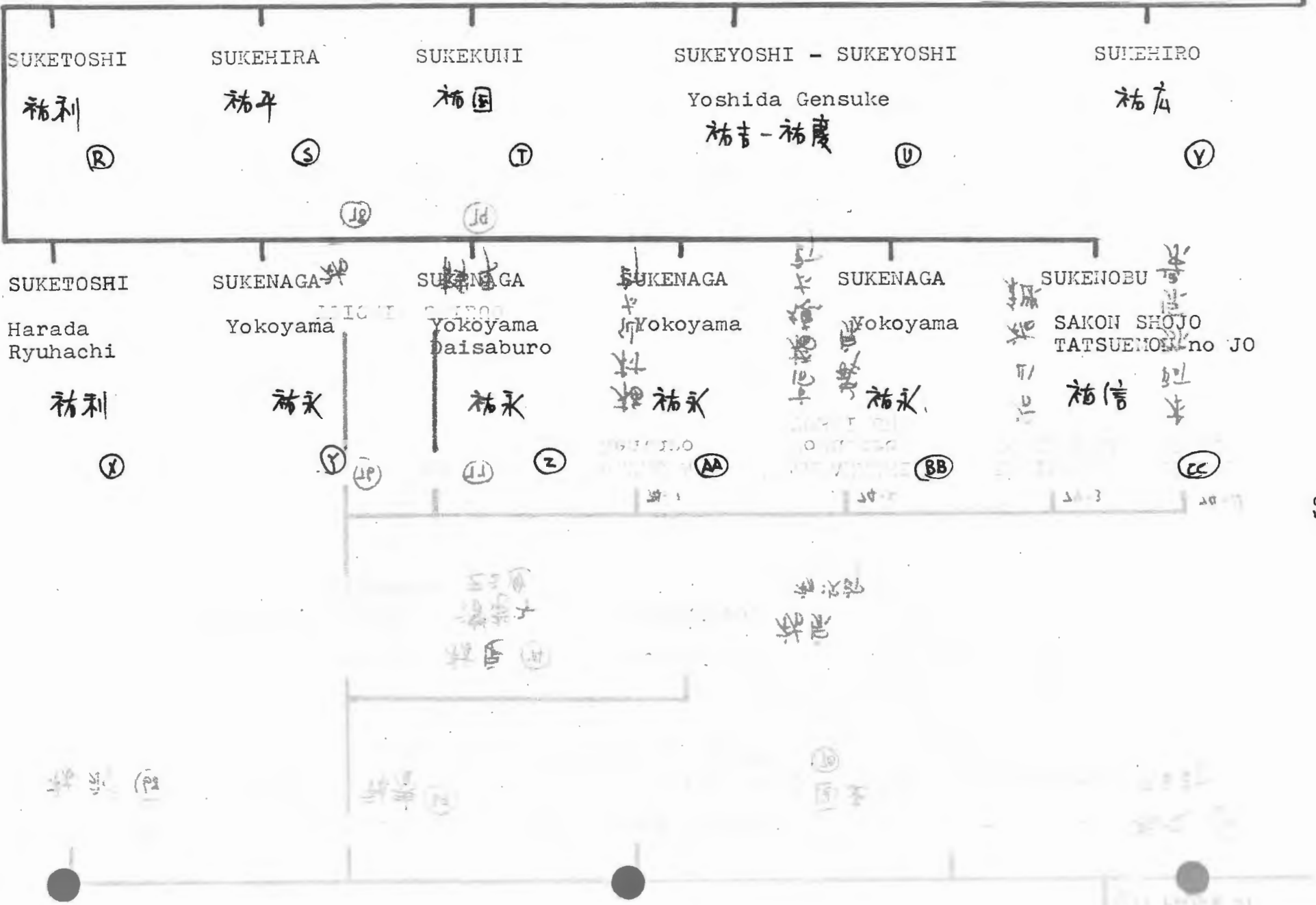
SUKETSUNE

Yokoyama  
祐恒 ⑮

SUKEYOSHI

Yoshikawa  
Rokuro  
祐芳 ⑯

52.





SUENAGA 2nd

祐永 (68)

SUENAGU

祐春 (69)

xx- KUNIMASA

Iyo Prov. 正 (70)  
Uwajima

xx - SUENHISA

祐久 (71)

Kyugoro 久五郎

SUKESADA 祐良 (74)

SENRYUSHI 潜菴子  
Motonoshin 之進

SUENAGU

Hatsujiro

祐宗  
初次郎

xx (76)

YUICHI

祐

(78)

xx (77)

SHIZUO

静男

(79)

74-1

UMENURA Sentaro

梅村仙太郎

74-2

TAKAHASHI Tokutaro YOSHIMUNE

高桥徳太郎 義宗

74-3

TANIYAMA SUKETSUGU

谷山祐継

74-4

HONAMI SOKEI

本阿弥宗景

SUKESADA LINEAGE  
(numbers correspond with lineage chart)

- 1) TOMONARI Circa Eien (987-988) - Kanko Era (1004-1011), commonly referred to as the founder of swordmaking in Bizen Province.
- 2) SUKEMITSU There are five generations of SUKEMITSU, the 1st being active around the Bunna Era (1352-1356) and the last around the Tensho Era (1573-1592).
- 3) SUKESADA YOZOZAEMON no JO ca. Talei Era (1521-1528).
- 4) SUKESADA GENBEI no JO ca. Eiroku Era (1558-1570).

It is not clearly known, but it seems as though (3) YOZOZAEMON no JO SUKESADA listed in this lineage stems from one of the SUKEMITSU (2), probably the 3rd or the 4th and not necessarily the 1st.

- 5) SUKESADA JUBEI no JO, ca. Eiroku Era (1558-1570) and younger brother to (4) GENBEI no JO SUKESADA.
- 6) SUKESADA HICHOROEMON, son of (4) GENBEI no JO.
- 7) SUKESADA GONZAEMON, went to work in Mimasaka Province.
- 8) SUKESADA HIKOBEI no JO.

On Tensho 19 (1591) the Yoshii River flooded the whole of the Osafune and the surrounding areas. This seems to have been an annual occurrence, however this flood of 1591 seems to have been quite large and as a result, many of the swordsmiths of Osafune village left the area and went to other provinces. HIKOBEI no JO SUKESADA was not the exception as he went to Ikeda of Awa Province and later, after about the 1600s, went to Settsu. During this time he returned to Osafune and made swords there also.

- 9) SUKESADA TOSHIRO. His father GENBEI no JO SUKESADA (4) had four sons: HICHIROEMON SUKESADA (6), GONZAEMON SUKESADA (7), HIKOBEI no JO SUKESADA (8) and TOSHIRO SUKESADA. The eldest did not have sons nor did he take off-springs. The second brother went to Mimasaka Province and the third brother went to Awa Province. Therefore, TOSHIRO SUKESADA took after the family, after his elder brother.
- 10) SUKESADA ref. (9).

- 11) SUKESADA YOZOB EI no JO (also YOZOZAE MON no JO). Later he went to Settsu Province.
- 12) SUKESADA HICHIBEI no JO, commonly referred to as SHINTO SUKESADA 1st. Born Tensho 4 (1576) and died June 10th of Empo 2 (1674) at the age of 97. Said to be 5th generation from YOZOZAE MON no JO SUKESADA of the Talei Era (3). Works of this man are said to be from the time when he was 57 years old, from about the Kanei Era (1633). The surname of YOKOYAMA is not seen on this smith's works. Many of this smith's works which are seen were actually made by his son, KOZUKE DAIJO SUKESADA (16), that is, those of his later years and when KOZUKE DAIJO was young and still in his teens.
- 13) SUKESADA GORO, no works of this smith exists.
- 14) SUKESADA SUKESADA - GENZAE MON no JO. Circa Keian Era (1648-1652). He had eight sons of which only one is known to have become a swordsmith, GENNOSHIN SUKESADA (37). The others did other things such as making farm implements.
- 15) SUKESADA SOZAE MON no JO (written two different ways). Ca. Keian Era (1648-1652). Third son of TOSHIRO - SUKESADA (10) started his own lineage which eventually ends up with SUKEORI (48) around the early 1800s.
- 16) SUKESADA II KOZUKE DAIJO, HEIBEI. Born 1632, died January 29th, Kyoho 6 (1721) at the age of 89. Received the title KOZUKE DAIJO on Kambun 4 (1664) when he was 32 years old. The eldest son of HICHIBEI SUKESADA (12), when he was 57 (?), did not have off-springs and his position of the SUKESADA lineage was taken after by HICHONOSHIN SKUENOBU (20), son of his youngest brother.
- 17) TAHEI Nothing known
- 18) MAGODAIU Nothing known
- 19) SUKETADA HICHIDAIU, KIHACHI. Nothing known, however from his name he may have been a swordsmith.
- 20) SUKENOBU HICHINOSHIN, later became YAMATO DAIJO SUKESADA  
22) SUKESADA when he took over the position of his eldest  
III brother KOZUKE DAIJO SUKESADA (16). Born (?) and died Kyoho 12 (1727). Received the title of YAMATO DAIJO on Shotoku 6 (1716), January 6th, which is the date when he took after the position as the head of the SUKESADA lineage and his elder brother. During the Jokyo Era (1684-1687) and there about, he is known to have done many DAISAKU for his brother.

- 23) SUKESADA IV TADANOSHIN. Born Tenna 3 (1683) and died  
53) February 27, Emkyo 7 (1750) at the age of 67.  
(Enkyo 7th is actually Kanen 3rd). Second  
son of KAWACHI no KAMI SUKESADA (49). Took  
after YAMATO DAIJO SUKESADA and the main  
SUKESADA lineage.
- 24) TOSHIMITSU GOHICHIBEI, Originally used SUKESADA name. Born  
1717 and died April 21, Meiwa 8 (1771) at the  
age of 54. The reason for Sukesada having  
changed his name to Toshimitsu after calling  
himself the 5th SUKESADA is that Lord Ikeda of  
Bizen Province so ordered him, though for what  
reason is not recorded.
- 25) TOSHIMORI Younger brother of TOSHIMITSU (24), took after  
27) his brother's position as the head of the SUKESADA  
lineage and became the 6th. Details unknown.
- 26) TOSHIYOSHI TAKUNOSHIN. Born 1736 and died Meiwa 6, (1769)  
at the age of 33.
- 27) TOSHIMORI HICHIBEI, SADA HARU. Died December 29, Kansei 7  
25) (1795). When he was born is not recorded, however  
his elder brother was born in 1717 and the younger  
brother in 1736, therefore it can be assumed that  
he was born between 1717 and 1736 and probably  
about 1725, therefore he lived to be about 70.
- 28) CHOJI GENNOSHI
- 29) SUKESADA YOZOZAEMON, HICHIBEI.
- 30) SUKEMORI YUJI
- 31) TOSHITSUGU YASUNOSHIN. ca. Bunsei Era (1818-1829). Worked  
in Okayama, Bizen Province.
- 32) SUKESADA SUKEMORI (61), eldest son of SUKEHIRA (57). Took  
after the position of the main SUKESADA lineage.  
He is known as the 11th SUKESADA.
- (NOTE- The 1st SUKESADA (12) and this smith, there  
are only 6 smiths whereas the generation is 12th,  
so something is lacking between the 5th TOSHIMITSU  
and the 11th TOSHIMORI.)
- 33) SUKESADA HEIZAEMON. Not a swordsmith.
- 34) MAGOSHIRO Not a swordsmith.
- 35) --- Name unknown.
- 36) --- Name unknown.

- 37) SUKESADA GENNOSHIN. Born 1650, died October 7, Kyoho 7 (1722).
- 38) GENHICHIRO Not a swordsmith
- 39) GENUEMON Not a swordsmith
- 40) GENZO Not a swordsmith
- 41) SUKESADA GENPACHIRO. Born 1711, died July 27, Kampo 3 (1743).
- 42) YASUJIRO Not a swordsmith
- 43) GENZAEEMON Not a swordsmith
- 44) SUKESADA YASUJIRO. became a student of TOSHIMITSU (24).
- 45) TOSHITSUGU Born (?), died Temmei 5 (1785). Student of Toshimitsu (24). Also signed SUKESADA.
- 46) SUKETSUGU HICHIROBEI no JO, RYUSUKE.
- 47) TOSHINOBU Died at age 15 in 1783.
- 48) SUKEORI nothing known.
- 49) SUKESADA KAWACHI no KAMI, NIZAEEMON. Originally signed YOSHIMITSU. Made swords at Tsuyama of Mimasaka Province. Received KAWACHI no KAMI title sometime during the Genroku Era (1688-1703). Died December 19, Hoei 6 (1709), age unknown. Used the chrysanthemum seal and character ICHI.
- 50) ROKUZAEMON (nothing)
- 51) HACHIZAEMON (nothing)
- 52) SUKESADA HICHIROEMON, son of KAWACHI no KAMI. Active during the Kyoho Era (1716-1735).
- 53) SUKESADA ref: (23)
- 54) SUKESADA TATSUEEMON
- 55) SUKESADA HICHOROEMON, died September 27, Horeki 10 (1760).
- 56) SUKESADA GENGO, died December 7, Meiwa 8 (1771) age 75.

- 57) SUKEHIRA ISE no KAMI (?); KAKUJI. Born 1754, died August 25, Bunsei 12 (1829). Originally signed SUKESADA. He went to Satsuma Province to study under OKU YAMATO no KAMI MOTOHIRA by the order of his Lord Ikeda of Bizen Province. Returned from Satsuma in 1785. On Kansei 1st (1789) he received ISE no KAMI title. Some of the works are signed 55th generation TOMONARI.

(NOTE: From what can be seen in searching records of this smith, he had great many students and as listed in the geneology, there are close to thirty, but there seems to have been many more which are not recorded. SUKEHIRA can be considered as another great teacher, though not as great as SUISHINSHI MASAHIDE, whose students became more famous than the teacher. In the case of SUKEHIRA, there are hardly any known smiths of skill and all of the smiths are rated 3rd rate or lower. SUKEHIRA himself was not a smith of note and it makes one wonder why so many went to study with him! He may have been considered of a higher ranking at the time, contrary to the current standard.)

- 58) SUKENAO I SHUSHISHI, GENGORO. Born 1768, died October 6, Kaei 1 (1848).
- 59) SUKENAO II GENGORO, born 1799, died July 5, Meiji 10 (1877).
- 60) KINOHACHI Died February 27, Kyowa 3 (1803).

(NOTE: The lineage shows KINOHACHI as being the son of SUKENAO II, however datewise, these two do not coincide as KINOHACHI on his birth, the father would had been only four years old. Therefore, KINOHACHI probably came from another family to take after the 2nd SUKENAO.

- 61) SUKEMORI Died February 4, Kaei 4 (1851). SHIKANOSUKE.  
32) SUKESADA (29) having had no son, SUKEMORI was chosen to take after the main Sukesada lineage and after this he signed as SUKESADA. The position as the head of the ISE no KAMI SUKEHIRA lineage went to his son NAGAMORI (64). Signed TOMONORI 56th generation.
- 62) SUKEKANE Student of SUKEMORI ref: (65)  
65)



- 63) SUKENAGA KAGA no SUKE. Born 1794, died 6/2 Kaei 4 (1851) at age 57. His elder brother SUKEMORI having taken after the main family lineage, SUKENAGA is said to have taken after the main family lineage after SUKEHIRA and not NAGAMORI. This is not clearly defined in any records.
- SUKENAGA is known to have wandered around the western Japan and made many swords wherever he went with the place names inscribed in the many works he left. Signed with chrysanthemum seal and "ichi" and also signed as 56th generation after TOMONARI.
- 64) NAGAMORI HICHIBEI. Nothing known of this smith except that after his father went on to take after the main SUKESADA lineage, he became the head of the SUKEHIRA line. However, this may only have been in name as there does not seem to be any swords by this smith. (?)
- 65) SUKEKANE SHUNKICHI, TOSHIZAEMON no JO. Said to be son-in-law of SUKEHIRA. The lineage shows him to be the 2nd son of SUKEHIRA, however this seems to be an error. He is known to have come from a village called Fukuda, nearby, and then became student of SUKEHIRA, becoming adopted by Sukehira. So being the son-in-law is probably correct. Signed TOMONARI 58th generation. He had only a few students of note.
- 62) a) KIYAMOTO KANENORI became famous in the late Meiji and Taisho, became a member of the Imperial Art Academy and died on 1926 at age 98. KANE NORI had the title of NOTO no KAMI, so he probably is one of the last to use such a title.
- 66) SUKEKANE II KENJI. Born 1846 and died 6/7 1891 at age 45. Signed TOMONARI 59th generation. He lived in Tokyo and was employed by the army, working at the Army Arsenal.
- 67) SUKEKANE III KAKUTARO. Born 1866 and died 2/21 1916 at age 50. Note: During this time, there are six others who used the same name - SUKEKANE - and each smith can be identified as being separate as they have distinct characteristics in their signature.
- 68) SUKENAGE II MOHEI, SUKEHARU. Born 1818 and died 12/21 Ansei 5  
63-b) 1858 at age 40. Student of KAGA no SUKE SUKENAGA, then adopted by SUKENAGA (63) and became SUKENAGE 2nd. Signed TOMONARI 56th and also 57th generation. From about the 1840's he was already making DAISAKU for his teacher-father SUKENAGA 1st.

No works of SUKENAGA II is seen after 1841, the year in which the 1st SUKENAGA died. There seems to have been some sort of family trouble within this lineage, SUKENAGA II having become disgusted and may have drifted away from Osafune. This may be the reason as he was adopted by the 1st SUKANE which the rest of the 'clan' was not in agreement with. There is no 'tomb' of 2nd SUKENAGA. There are works of a smith who was a student of the 1st SUKENAGA, named FUJITA NAGAHIRO (68-h), the works of this smith greatly resemble that of the 2nd SUKENAGA and the signature penmanship is identical to 2nd SUKENAGA. SUKENAGA II and FUJITA NAGAHIRO may be one and the same person, also the carvings are identical from these two smiths.

- 69) SUKEHARU  
63=b) MOHEI. Born 1818, died 12/21 Ansei 5 - 1858 at age 40. Student of KAGA no SUKE SUKENAGA, later adopted by same. Signed TOMONARI 56th generation. Known to have made most of KAGA no SUKE SUKENAGA's work - DAISAKU - and there is very little of his own works left. This is probably the reason he was adopted by SUKENAGA.
- 70) daughter Married student of KANENAGA I - KUNIMASA of Uwajima in Iyo Province.
- 71) KUNIMASA (70 above)
- 72) daughter Married Yokoyama Kyugoro SUKEHISA.
- 73) SUKEHISA (above 72) Died 7/26 Meiji 2 - 1869 at age unknown. Signed TOMONARI 59th generation. Married SUKENAGA's daughter, so probably was a student under him.
- 74) SUKESADA MOTONOSHIN, SENRYUSHI. Signed TOMONARI 60th generation. Born 1852 and died 11/25 Showa 4 - 1929 at age 80. Originally signed SUKETADA, pen-name of SENRYUSHI. His father (SUKEHARU ?) died when he was nine years old, on 1863. When he was 14, he was nominated to the official swordsmith of the Bizen Province (Ikeda Clan). He made swords for Emperor Meiji on 1909 when he was 22. He made swords for many famous personages of Meiji and Taisho Eras. He had many students of which some known ones are: Umemura Sentaro, Takahashi Tokutaro YOSHIMUNE, Taniyama SUKETSUGU, Honami Sokei. Honami Sokei probably is known to many, from his name, he is currently engaged in polishing and appraising, however he was originally a swordsmith. He came from Bizen Province where he studied sword making under SUKESADA. He was later adopted by the Honami clan - one of the branch Honami of the KOMI lineage. Younger brother of KOTOKU - 9th Honami, Honami Sokei presently owns the copper seal which Toyotomi Hideyoshi gave to Honami.

- 75) SUKEMUNE HATSUJIRO, RYUMEISHI. Born 1822, died 2/1 1899 at age 77. Originated from Ise Province. Student of SUKEHARU (69) and later became a Yokoyama having married into one of the SUKESADA daughters. Signed TOMONARI 58th generation.
- 76) daughter SHIZUKA.
- 77) daughter MURAME.
- 78) SUKEKAZU Signed TOMONARI 61st generation. Died sometime during the Taisho Era (1912-1925) at age 27.
- 79) SHIZUO Supposedly the present 'head' of the Yokoyama Clan.

Students of ISE no KAMI SUKENAGA (63)

- a) SUKETAKA Hisayama Mokuemon.  
SUKETAKA was a swordsmith as well as a gunsmith.
- b) SUKEHARU ref: (69)
- c) SUKETOSHI I Ikujiro.  
A member of the Yokoyama Clan. Died 1865.
- d) SUKETOSHI II Kumanosuke.  
Son of SUKETOSHI 1st. Seems these two SUKETOSHI were students of SUKENAGA, both father and son. Died 1867.
- e) SUKEYUKI Toshiro.  
Died 1852. Yokoyama Clan member.
- f) SUKEMITSU Sakichi.  
Born 1845 and died 5/19 1874. Signed TOMONARI 60th generation, 62nd and 63rd generation. Did not use 61st generation.
- g) ISE JIRO Nothing known except that he died on Meiji 1st (1868) at age 53. Sword name unknown.
- h) NAGAHIRO Fujita Kengo.  
Died 6/6 1879. SHINRYUSHI. Of Hagi of Nagato Province.
- i) SUKETADA Yokoyama
- j) TAKAHIRA Yokoyama Sawaemon. GARYUSHI. Circa Temp Era (1830-4
- k) SUKENORI Student of SUKEKANE (65). Yokoyama.

- l) SUKENARI Yokoyama. Signed 56th and 57th generation TOMONARI. Student of SUKENAGA (63). Active between 1840 - 1860s. Also worked in Fukuyama of Bingo Province.
- m) SUKEYOSHI Yokoyama. Student of SUKENAGA (63). Also studied under Sakurai Masatsugu. Died 1912 at age 85. Signed TOMONARI 58th Generation. Worked in Fukuyama of Bingo Province.
- n) TOSHIMASA Maeda Tetsujiro. Circa 1854-59, Ansei Era. Worked in Matsuyama in Bingo Province.
- o) SUKEMITSU Student of SUKENAGA. Mito of Hitachi Province.  
 SUKEHARU Student of SUKEMITSU, name - Takeyumi Kitaro, pen name Toshinshi. Worked into Meiji Period.
- p) SUKETSUNE Yokoyama. Student of SUKENAGA. Circa Kaei Era 1848-53.
- q) SUKEYOSHI Yoshikawa Rokutaro. Awa Province.
- r) SUKETOSHI Student of SUKENAGA. Kurume of Chikugo Province.
- s) SUKEHIRA Naruoka Chojiro. Student of SUKENAGA. Awaji Province.
- t) SUKEKUNI Akashi of Harima Province.
- u) SUKEYOSHI Mita Gensuke. Hikone of Omi Province. Originally of Wakasa Province but later went to Hikone. Changed his name three times though in which order is not clear. 祐吉 祐慶 助吉
- v) SUKEHIRO Settsu Province.
- w) SUKETOSHI Harada Ryuhachi. Student of SUKENAGA. Also studied under Aoki Kiyoteru. 1794-1851.
- x) SUKENAGA Yokoyama. There are six smith who used this same name in the Yokoyama clan with (63) and (68) being most noteworthy. The other four are not known at all except for the fact that they used the 58th through 61st generation of TOMONARI. The 60th is known as Daisaburo.
- z) SUKENOBU Tatsueemon. Sakon Shogen, Sakon no Suke. 56th generation TOMONARI. Died 1857. Also was a gunsmith. From 1845-47 he worked in Katsuyama of Mimasaka Province and made swords as well as guns there.

## GLOSSARY OF SWORD TERMS

BY

F. KAREL WIEST

This glossary makes no pretence of being complete; the terminology used in describing temperlines in the blade and the point alone is so complex as to require several pages of diagrams to clarify it. However, it covers the major areas of Japanese terms as used in discussing swords.

More detailed information and greater in-depth discussion of the features of the Japanese sword can be found in many published works. The most useful (and most readily available) are these;

Robinson, B.W. The Arts of the Japanese Sword. Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vt., 1971

Yumoto, John M. The Samurai Sword. Charles E. Tuttle Co, Rutland, Vt., 1958

Dobree, Alfred. Japanese Sword Blades. George Shumway Publisher. York, Pa., 1971

Compton, Dr. Walter. Nippon-To; Art Swords of Japan. Japan Society, New York, N.Y., 1976

Hawley, W.M. Japanese Swordsmiths. Published by the author. Hollywood, Ca., 1966

Now let's look at the Japanese terms which you may meet in sales catalogs and similar learned works. Note that in almost every case a standard English word or phrase will substitute accurately.

### Parts of the Blade

shiri...tip of tang

nakago...tang

hitoye...back of tang

mekugi-ana...hole for peg

mune-machi...shoulder between tang and back of blade

ha-machi...shoulder between tang and cutting edge

to... blade

yakiba...tempered edge

hamon...temper line--the frosty line between hardened edge and flat of blade

jigane...area of blade between temper line and ridge  
shinogi...ridge marking intersection of edge and flat  
shinogi-ji...flat area between ridge and back  
mune...blunt back edge of blade  
yokote...short ridge between edge area and point  
ko-shinogi...continuation of ridge in point area  
kissaki...point area  
boshi...temper line in point area  
mitsukado...point at which shinogi, yokote, and ko-shinogi meet  
fukura...the cutting edge of the point

### Shape of the Blade

ken...straight, double-edged, often widening at point; found only  
on archaic swords or those made as gifts to temples  
to...standard single-edged, slightly curved blades  
naginata...blade for glaive, sometimes mounted as dagger or short  
sword  
yari...spear head, usually triangular in cross-section, sometimes  
mounted as dagger  
shinogi-zukuri...ridge parallel to back until it meets point, flat  
about one-third of total blade width  
kiri-ha...ridge parallel and close to sharpened edge, flat of  
blade about two-thirds of width  
shobu-zukuri...ridge continues through to point without a break  
hira-zukuri...V-shaped cross-section  
u-no-kubi zukuri...cross-section of middle part of blade tapers  
both ways from ridge  
torii zori...regular curve throughout length of blade  
Bizen zori...blade more strongly curved near hilt  
koshi zori...same as Bizen zori

### Details of Blade

ha...edge  
hada...grain  
muji...no visible grain  
masame...straight grain  
itame...wood grain  
mokume...burled wood grain  
ayasugi...wavy grain  
hamon...temper line along edge of blade  
boshi...temper line in tip area  
hoso...narrow  
chu...medium  
hiro...wide

suguba...straight  
 notare...wavy  
 gunome...zig-zag  
 nokogiri...saw-toothed  
 choji...wide irregularly notched  
 ashi...narrow points  
 (There are many other names for fancy temper line patterns,  
 which only the specialist need know.)  
 nioi...a narrow frosty line defining the temper line  
 nie...a wider, coarser line at the same place  
 hi...fuller(a groove cut in the blade parallel to the back)  
 bo-hi...wider fuller  
 tsure-hi...narrow groove  
 bo-hi ni tsure-hi...a wide and a narrow fuller  
 futasuji-hi...two narrow fullers  
 horimono...decorative carvings  
 bonji...Sanskrit inscription  
 kanji...Japanese inscription

#### Details of Tang

nakago...tang  
 futsu...normal tang  
 furisode...kimono-sleeve form  
 funagata...ship-bottom form  
 tanago-bara...fish-belly form  
 kijimomo...pheasant-thigh form  
 kurijiri...U-shaped tang tip  
 ha-agari kurijiri...uneven U-shaped  
 kengyo...V-shaped  
 kata-yamagata... uneven V-shaped  
 kiri...squared-off tang end  
 kiri chigai...file marks at right angles to length of tang  
 suji chigai...marks slanting left(edge down and to left)  
 ko-suji chigai...slightly slanting left  
 O-suji chigai...sharply slanting left  
 katte ogari...slanting right(ko-katte and O-katte also)  
 taka no ha...V-shaped marks meeting at central ridge, points to left,  
 ("arrow feather")  
 gyaku taka no ha...V-shaped, points to right  
 higaki...checkered  
 sensuki...shaved(smoothed with a tool like a draw-shave, instead of  
 a file)  
 mekugi ana...hole for retaining peg  
 mei...the signature of the maker  
 mumei...unsigned



## The Hilt

tsuka...hilt

fuchi...ferrule at base of hilt

kashira...pommel or cap at top of hilt

fuchi-kashira...a matched set of ferrule and cap

menuki...ornaments on the sides of the hilt, under the wrappings, to improve the grip

same...nubbly white cured skin from a kind of ray, used to cover the hilt under the wrapping(or without a wrapping in certain styles of mounting)

tsuka-ito...the wrapping on the hilt

uchi-himo...the flat braid used for wrapping

mekugi...the peg, of male bamboo, which holds the blade, hilt, guard, and washers all in place

nanashi menuki...the style of hilt which uses no wrapping, the hilt ornaments and pommel cap being secured with glue or pins; the same is exposed

tsuba...the sword guard

seppa...the washers on either side of the guard

habaki...the collar at the base of the blade; it helps to secure the guard and is tapered to make a watertight seal in the mouth of the scabbard

## The Scabbard

saya...scabbard

shirasaya...storage scabbard--of plain wood, in two sections, carefully fitted to the blade and the tang, respectively, to keep a blade safe from the elements when not in use; the various sets of mountings for each blade were stored on wooden replicas of the blade until needed

koiguchi...the fitting at the mouth of the scabbard, usually of horn--the throat

kuchi-gane...the same, if of metal

uragawara...a reinforcing piece across the base of the slot for the side implements

kurikata...a know with a hole through it to secure the cord which holds the scabbard in the sash

sageo...the tying cord

sori-tsuno...a hook(pointing toward the throat) to hold the scabbard in the sash when the sword is drawn

origane...another name for the sori-tsuno

kojiri...the chape

nigurome...copper with a trace of gold, which has a warm brown color  
santoku...yellowish bronze containing copper, tin, and zinc  
karakane...brass of copper, tin, and lead, dark in color  
sawari...pewter  
seido...patinated bronze