

NIHONTO NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER, 1969

VOLUME 2, NO. 10

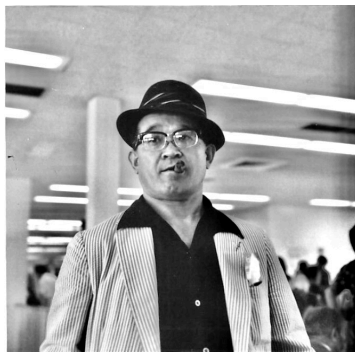
ALBERT YAMANAKA'S NIHONTO NEWSLETTER

Albert Yamanaka's Nihonto Newsletter was published monthly from January, 1968 to July of 1973. It was a mimeographed newsletter consisting of articles written on all aspects of Japanese swords: swords, schools, smiths, history, exhibits, appraisal, comments on collecting, etc.

Albert Yamanaka lived in Japan after the war and became a student of Honami Koson, the most prominent sword expert at the time and a descendant of the Honami appraisers and polishers.

Since this newsletter has been out of print since 1973, and there is a considerable amount of original and unique material presented in it, the Yamanaka family (which has the copyright to this material) supported this effort to make the Nihonto Newsletter available again in an online easily accessible version. We hope old and new collectors will enjoy reading it, and reading material that is often not available in English, even today.

Leon Kapp



ALBERT YAMANAKA
1973

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SWORD SMITHS

MINO PROVINCE

KANEMOTO SCHOOL

Kanemune who was active around the Oei Era had a student named Kanemoto. Kanemoto swords are popularly referred to as o-wazamono meaning that the cutting ability of blades by this sword smith is ranked at the very top.

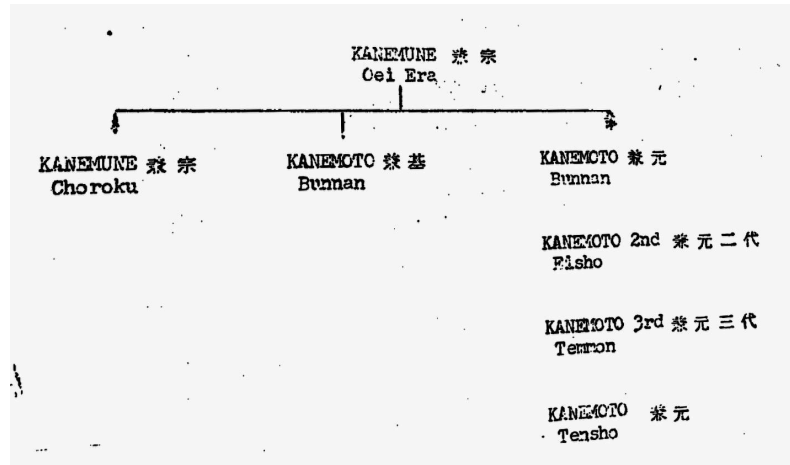
Kanemoto is also popularly referred to as magoroku, and his sambon sugi hamon (3 cedars) is the trade mark of this sword smith.

Kanemoto is also said to be the student of the first Kanesada and was active around the Bunnan Era (1444-48) and the 2nd Kanemoto was active around the Eisho Era (1504-1520).

The most famous smith, popularly known as Seki Magoroku, is the second generation Kanemoto.

There are 4 generations of Kanemoto, and the last one worked around the Tensho Era (1573-1591).

Kanemoto's works are just as popular for being o-wazamono as well as for the fame of his name among collectors.



KANEMOTO

Worked in the Mino Tradition approximately during Bunnan Era.

KATANA

Shape and Construction:

Katana shape of the Sengoku Period made a little gracefully, and in many

cases, a little short.

Hi and Carvings:

Bo hi or futatsuji hi are seen on rare occasions.

Hamon:

The width of the yakiba is narrow and in nioi, and there will be nie in places along the nioi.

The pattern will be komidare with ko-gunome or ko-gunome with togari, the so-called sambon sugi pattern. However, in the case of this Kanemoto, the peaks of the togari are not as sharp or pointed as those made by the later Kanemoto.

Boshi:

Midarekomi with a long kaeri.

Jitetsu and Hada:

Mokume hada mixed with masame hada. Due to the fact that the masame hada has not been tightly welded or fused in places, there will be hada ware (gaps or separations) in these areas.

The masame hada in the shinogi ji is very pronounced.

The overall effect of the steel is a little flat or plain.

Nakago:

The nakago is short with a tanagobara shape. The tip is ha agari kurijiri.

Inscriptions are mostly in two characters, "Kanemoto".

KANEMOTO, nidai or second generation

Worked in the Mino Tradition, approximately during the Eisho Era.

KATANA AND WAKIZASHI:

Shape and Construction:

Made in the shape of the Sengoku Period with a shallow sori and a little short.

The width and the thickness are koroai (just right) and there will be little hiraniku.

The shinogi is high.

Wakizashi are rare.

Hi and Carvings:

In rare cases, bo hi are present.

Hamon:

The width of the yakiba is koroai, or just right, and in nioi. The gunome and togari will have mura nie present.

The gunome togari pattern is characterized by the “sambon sugi” design. The reason why this type of hamon is called sambon sugi is that a group of three togari resembles a view of a group of sugi or cypresses from a distance. This group is always a group of three.

The sambon sugi by the early Kanemoto smiths of the early are not uniform and they are irregular and not as sharply pointed, however, those of the later Kanemoto smiths became pointed and the later they are, the more pointed they become.

Also, in the works of the early Kanemoto smiths, the valleys between the midare waves or the sambon sugi almost touch the cutting edge.

Quite often, the sambon sugi midare of the Kanemotos and those of Muramasa of Ise Province are confused.

The differences between these two sword smith's work is that in the case of Magoroku's sambon sugi, each group of three is distinct and separate from the next group of three, and within the group each peak is separate and distinct.

In the case of Muramasa, the individual peaks are not separate and distinct.

Boshi:

The boshi are midarekomi, but there will be only two peaks above the Yokote after which it becomes a jizo. This is called a Kanemoto boshi.

Also, some boshi are komaru with the kaeri yoru (the boshi is a small circle, and the kaeri ends abruptly).

In rare cases you will see yakizume boshi.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is mokume hada with masame hada in places. In some areas there will be ohada in which you will find ware.

The ware will occur as defined for Kanemoto work.

Masame hada will show up clearly in the shinogi ji.

The overall appearance of the steel is that of being flat and a little lifeless (grey and not much hada).

Nakago:

The nakago is short and the tip is kurijiri.

The file marks are, kiri, suji chigai, higaki, or takanoha.

Signatures will be in the two characters “Kanemoto”.

In cases there will be works with dates.

TANTO:

Shape and Construction:

Hiratsukuri chukan sori (musori), and the blade is a little wide and a little thin.

There were also hiratsukuri takenoko sori tanto in josun (8.5 sun) lengths resembling the shape of tanto made by Rai Kunitoshi of the Kamakura Period, but in

this case, the overall size of the tanto will be slightly smaller than those of Rai Kunitoshi.

Hamon:

Made in nioi and with gunome togari (sambon sugi), this type of hamon will be found on chukan sori (musori) tanto.

Takenoko sori tanto will have hoso suguha hamon and the edge or border of the hamon will be very clear and distinct.

Boshi:

Formed in gunome togari which can form a jizo boshi.

Those which are hoso suguha will have a komaru boshi.

Jitetsu and Hada:

Those with a gunome midare hamon will have an o-mokume hada.

Those with a hoso suguha hamon will have a ko-mokume hada with masame hada near the mune. The overall effect of the jitetsu is that the hada will stand out and also, there will be shirake utsuri.

Nakago:

The nakago is short with a kuri jiri tip.

The yasurime or file marks will be kiri, suji chigai, or higaki.

Signatures will be the two characters "Kanemoto".

Note:

Descriptions of works by the first Kanemoto were left out since:

- 1) works of first Kanemoto are rare.
- 2) the work of the first Kanemoto closely resembles those of the second Kanemoto, accordingly, any references to the first Kanemoto should be applicable to the second Kanemoto.

KANEMOTO, second generation or nidai, 二代

KANEMOTO, third generation or sandai, 三代

These smiths were active from about the Temmon Era to the Tensho Era.

The description of the work these two is generally the same as for the second Kanemoto, however those of the later generations or the dai sagari (successors) will have the following differences.

Hamon:

The hamon become wider and the gunome togari that form the sanbon sugi hamon become uniform.

Also, there will be some ashi, however they will not be very long.

In addition, the valleys of the midare hamon will not go too close to the cutting edge like those of the early Kanemoto.

Boshi:

The boshi is very wide. Some of the kaeri will end very abruptly, that is, it will appear like they were suddenly cut off, even though they are long.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The jitetsu will appear coarse or rough, and hard (light colored), and with a ko-itame hada which is very tightly forged. There will be very few ware of the gaps found in the early Kanemoto's work. The masame hada in the shinogi ji will stand out very distinctly.

TANTO:

The tanto are chukan sori (musori) in most cases, and there will be katana hi carved near the mune.

The hamon will be about the same as those in the longer blades. There are many naginata and yari by all of the Kanemoto smiths, and the hamon will be typical Kanemoto gunome togari.

KANESADA SCHOOL

The first Kanesada is said to be from the late Shizu School.

He worked in the Akasaka district of this province and had the title of Shinano no Kami as well as the use of the chrysanthemum seal and the chrysanthemum with a branch. However, such works are only recorded in old books and are not seen today.

The first Kanesada is supposed to have been active around the Bunei Era and he is commonly referred to as Oya Kanesada.

The second Kanesada is the famous "Nosada". At first, he inscribed his signature the same as as the first Kanesada, however from about the Eisho Era, he changed the way he wrote the "sada" character, and character is read as "No" by itself, so the second generation Kanesada is commonly regarded to as "Nosada".

The 3rd Kanesada also had his own peculiar way of inscribing the same character "sada". Instead of the "No" pronunciation by itself like the second generation, he inscribed it with the character "hiki" and therefore the 3rd Kanesada is referred to as "Hikisada".

Nosada is regarded as the master of his time and along with Magoroku Kanemoto, his works are ranked at the very top for their cutting quality and are o-wazamono.

Nosada had the title of Izumi no Kami.

KANESADA 兼定

Worked in the Yamato tradition approximately during the Bummei Era. He was commonly called Oya Kanesada (親兼定).

KATANA and WAKIZASHI:

Shape and Construction:

Katana and wakizashi are both in the style of the Muromachi Period, but slightly more graceful with lengths which are a little longer than usual for that time. There will be ample fumbari which tapers strongly towards the kissaki, which is small.

The shinogi is high and the width of the shinogi ji is narrow.

The sori is strong and quite often, at a glance, his works are mistaken for much earlier period work.

Hamon:

The hamon is narrow and in nioi, however, there will be some nie.

The pattern of the hamon is hoso suguha or chu-suguha and the edge or border of the hamon will be very distinct. Somewhere along the hamon, there will be komidare waves about the size of small peas.

Boshi:

The boshi is omaru with the kaeri yoru (small circle and abrupt end to the Kaeri). Sometimes there will be a yakizume boshi.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The jitetsu is very fine and the hada is mokume hada mixed with masame hada. The hada will be prominent.

The shinogi ji will have masame hada.

Nakago:

The nakago is short with a ha-agari kurijiri tip. The file marks will be kiri, suji chigai, migaki or takanoha.

The inscriptions will be very small and with two characters.

The shape of the blade, and details such as the sori and hamon will give the impression of being the work of a very early smith. However, as noted above, if the individual characteristics are well "remembered", then the work will be easy to identify. The ko-midare pattern within the suguha hamon will be the key to recognizing this work.

KANESADA, second generation or ni-dai, 二代

Worked in the Mino tradition and Soshu tradition approximately during the Eisho Era. He was called Nosada.

Katana and Wakizashi:

Shape and Construction:

The shape of the blade is in the style of the Sengoku Period with a shallow sori.

The shinogi will be high and the width of the shinogi ji will be narrow.

The hiraniku is koroai (just right).

The mune will be found in all three types, that is shin (mitsumune), gyo (ihorimune), and so-no mune (round).

The appearance of the blade will make it seem a little short.

There was also another very rugged and long type of katana made by the better smiths of this time, but these will also appear to be a little short due to the construction of the blade,

Kanesada also made o-wakizashi, but chu-wakizashi are rare.

O-hiratsukuri blades are sometimes seen.

Hi and Carvings:

If bo hi are present, they are finished in maru-dome or kaku-dome above the machi (providing that the blade has not been shortened).

There will be carvings on rare occasions, and they are made very intricately and well.

Hamon:

There will be variations in the width of the hamon.

Those made in nie will be like those of the Soshu tradition, such as o-midare with gunome and choji mixed together with nie kuzure. The hada within the hamon will be visible. Inazuma and kinsuji will be found all along the blade. Those with hamon in nioi will have gunome and choji midare along with gunome togari and yahazu midare mixed.

Details or hataraki in the hamon are found in abundance. There will be dense nioi with long ashi which run to the cutting edge.

Hamon which are narrow will have the valleys of the midare waves just about touching the cutting edge, like those found in the hamon of Kanemoto (first generation).

Hamon which are o-choji midare will have dense nioi like those of Fukuoka Ichimonji, and quite often mistaken for work from that school. However, somewhere along the hamon, there will be gunome togari or yahazu midare.

On some works, there will be a koshiba. The koshiba will be gunome choji or choji midare with dense nioi which becomes chu-suguha at the top.

On some works, there will be suguha from the machi to about the monouchi area, area. The hamon then becomes gunome or choji midare going into the boshi. Sometimes the hamon here will be chu-suguha.

In all cases, there will be the usual Mino tradition komidare ha present in places.

There are also hiro suguha, notare, and hako midare hamon.

Boshi:

The boshi is midarekomi which becomes a jizo boshi. Some will have a long kaeri. Hamon formed in nie will have a long kaeri and the tip will have hakikake. Boshi which are formed in nioi are usually midarekomi, and there will be jizo boshi.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The steel is very well forged forming a very fine jigane, and the steel will seem to be muji, or not have any visible hada at all. Although the hada will be ko-mokume hada with o-hada in places, there will also be some masame hada in places. The shinogi ji will have masame hada. Blades with hamon formed in nie will have ji-nie and chikei.

Blades with hamon formed in nioi will have ji utsuri.

Nakago:

The nakago is short and have a tanagobara shape with a ha agari kurijiri.

File marks will be kiri, suji chigai, higaki, or takanoha. Most of the works are signed in two characters, although there will be some that have long signatures and dates. Some blades will have the name of the person who ordered the blade. Some blades will have the name of the owner inscribed, but at a later date after the blade was made.

Tanto

Shape and Construction:

Hiratsukuri takenoko sori with josun (8.5 sun) lengths, although they may be a little short. The thickness is koroai (just right), and the shape of the blade is very well executed.

Hi and Carvings:

These are rare, but those encountered are suken or gomabashi.

Hamon:

Formed in nie in chu suguha or hoso suguha,

Boshi:

Komaru.

Jitetsu and Hada:

Very fine mokume hada.

Nakago:

Short with a kurijiri tip. The file marks are the same as described for katana and wakizashi.

NOTE:

As can be noticed from the description of the blade given for Kanesada (Nosada) above, it closely resembles that of Rai Kunitoshi of Yamashiro Province during the Kamakura Period.

The same can be said for Kaneyoshi as well as Kanemoto and Oya Kanesada. However, there will always be telltale details and characteristics for these smiths that will give them away.

A characteristic of the Mino Tradition is that, in making suguha, somewhere along the suguha hamon, there will always be a small midare wave, and this is the key. A tanto will look like the work of Rai Kunitoshi, however on closer inspection, the works of the above smiths will have a midare wave in the kaeri in the boshi. This type of kaeri is only made by the smiths of Mino Province. Also, a suguha hamon will have a small bump (or midare wave) so small that it goes unnoticed if one does not inspect the work carefully. This is be another key to identifying the work of Mino smiths.

If there are no midare waves as mentioned above, then the kaeri in the boshi will be yoru (short and end abruptly).

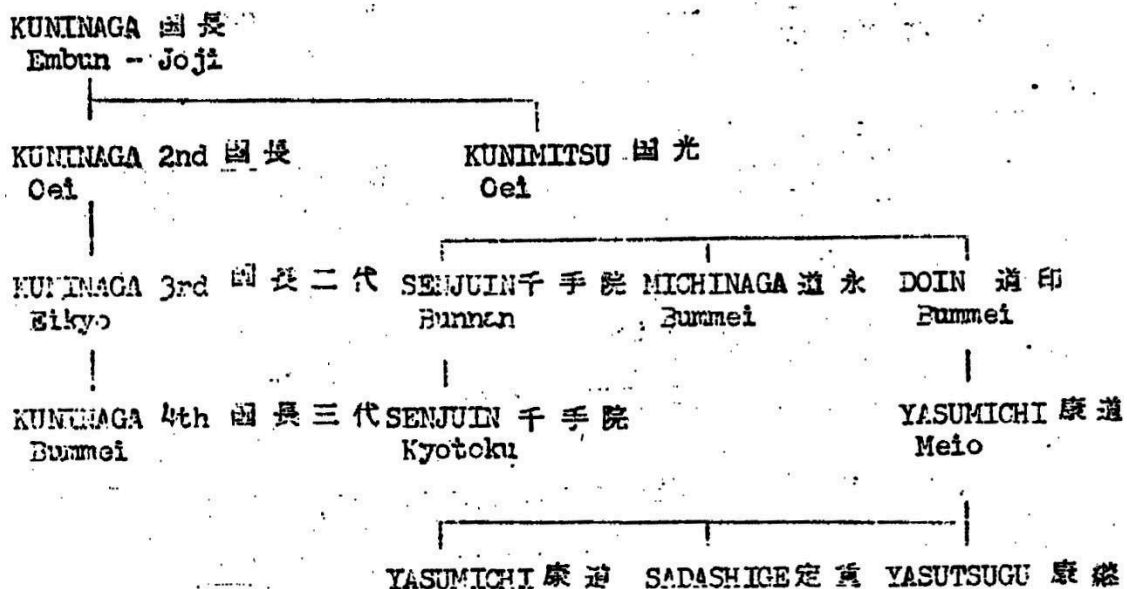
Even though the jitetsu may be extremely fine, there will be a whitish effect.

Finally, there will, in almost all cases, be masame hada near the mune.

AKASAKA SENJUIN SCHOOL 赤坂千手院系

The Akasaka Senjuin smiths are from the Senjuin School of Yamato Province who moved to the Akasaka area in Mino Province after the decline of sword making in Yamato Province.

The founder is said to have moved to Mino Province around the Joji Era. The founder, Kuninaga has left very few works with us and today the few that are seen are all from the time when he was in Yamato Province. The majority of the smiths from this school worked from about the late Muromachi Period into the Sengoku Period, and although the inscriptions may contain Senjuin, the works themselves will have Mino Tradition characteristics emphasized.



SENJUIN SCHOOL 千手院系

Smiths worked in the Yamato Tradition and Mino Tradition. As seen in the genealogy, there are several generations from about the Joji Era, however the majority of the works seen today are from the Sengoku Period and these are commonly called Akasaka Senjuin.

KATANA:

Shape and Construction:

The shape and the construction of the blade will be about the same as those commonly known as Seki works, although on rare occasions, there will be works that closely resemble those of the Zenjo Kaneyoshi School in the Muromachi Period, but these are very rare.

Hamon:

The hamon is formed in nioi with mura nie. The pattern will be o-midare, notare midare, hiro-suguha, or notare with a “bump” somewhere on the habuchi (hamon border). Most will have some yaki kuzure.

Some blades will appear to look like the works from late Bizen Province Osafune smiths of the same period. Those which will have hamon formed in nioi and will have midare valleys, and in the hamon, there will be nioi kuzure.

There will also be yaki kuzure at the edge of the hamon.

Boshi:

The boshi will be notare, midarekomi, with a komaru or ichimai.

Most of the boshi will have yakikuzure.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada will be mokume hada with masame hada in places. The hada will show up clearly. The overall effect of the steel gives the impression that it is very hard (light colored).

The shinogi ji will have masame hada as seen in the work of all or most Mino smiths.

Blades which were made in the Bizen Tradition with the Bizen midareba will have a weak appearing steel (strong or coarse hada), and there will be shirake utsuri.

Nakago:

The length of the nakago is a little long with a kurijiri tip. The file marks are kiri and suji chigai. On the shinogi ji, the file marks can be suji chigai and on the hira in kiri. We also sometimes also see higaki or takanoha.

HACHIYA SCHOOL

The founder of the Hachiya school, Kanesada兼貞, supposedly worked around the Oei Era, and although works by this smith are very rare, what we see today are all from smiths working during the Sengoku Period.

The majority of the works of the smiths of this school which are encountered are short blades, and many of these give the impression of being quite old, and of being much older than they actually are.

The founder Kanesada was a student of Daruma Masamitsu in Yamashiro Province who later went to Hachiya in Mino Province and started this school.

KANESADA	worked in the Oei era
KANESADA	2 nd generation
KANESADA	3 rd generation, worked during the Tembun Period in Seki
KANESADA	worked in the Mino tradition during the Oei era.

KATANA:

Shape and Construction:

Katana shapes from the Sengoku Period. Shapes are very firm or stout and thick with a chu kissaki.

Hi and Carvings:

Rare, but they are seen. There are bo hi, bo hi with soe hi, and futatsuji hi.

Hamon:

Formed in nioi with mura nie. The pattern of the hamon is o-midare, gunome choji, notare midare, yahazu midare, and o-notare. Occasionally there will be hiro-suguha or chu-suguha.

In all cases, the edge or border of the hamon will be very distinct and clear, and also, there will be sharp or pointed features somewhere along the hamon. On some works there will be a koshiba. Mune yaki are also seen sometimes.

Boshi:

The boshi is either midarekomi or with a komaru. The kaeri will be very long and stop abruptly.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is mokume hada mixed with masame hada and the hada will stand out. The overall effect of the steel gives the impression of being very hard (there is a light color or cast).

The shinogi ji will have masame hada with Mino traits. Also, there will be shirake utsuri.

Nakakgo:

The nakago is short with a kurijiri tip.

File marks are kiri, suji chigai, and rarely higaki or takanoha.

The mei will be inscribed with two characters.

TANTO:

There are two distinct types made.

One style is hiratsukuri chukan sori (musori), and the other type is sunzumari (less than 8.5 sun) in a small size.

On some works there will be two katana hi carved near the mune.

The hamon is in nioi and o-midare or gunome choji mixed with yahazu midare.

There are also notare and notare midare hamon.

Short tanto usually have hamon in nie in a komidare pattern, and are very well made.

The boshi is midare with a long and yoru (small circle and abrupt end to the kaeri).

The jitetsu is forged more finely than we see in katana, and the hada is mokume hada mixed with masame hada. The masame hada is found near the mune. Most of these works will have shirake utsuri.

KYOHO MEIBUTSU CHO

Installment 21

TSURUMARU KUNINAGA

鶴丸国永

Owner: Matsudaira Mutsu no Kami

Signed

Length: 2 shaku 5 sun 9.5 bu

Value: 3000 kan

This tachi was handed down in the Hojo clan, and then went to Lord Nobunaga. It later went to Mitsueda Kambei during the Jokyo era (1684-1688). He was the second son of Koteki and entered the priesthood. During the ritual held for this event, at Ichijo In at Fuji no Mori in Fushimi that the blade was borrowed and put into a tachi mounting. At that time, an old mounting as well as papers were discovered. The reason for the name Tsurunomaru is not known.

Yamanaka Note:

The blade is said to have belonged to Kojo Sagami no Kami Sadatoki, although prior to him it belonged to his ancestor and was handed down in the Hojo family. Oda Nobunaga owned it for a time, and then gave it to his retainer Mitsueda Kambei.

Honami Koteki supposedly negotiated the sale of the sword to the Date of Sendai during the Meiji Era, and presented the blade to Emperor Meiji, and the blade is still in the Imperial Collection. The blade is said to have been one of the best preserved and is in an excellent state of preservation.

Matsudaira Mutsu no Kami refers to the Date clan.

In the Date clan records, the history of this blade is given:

During the Hogen Era (1156-1359), it belonged to Murakami Taro Nagamori. Later it went to Kiyono Saburo Nyudo, and then to Adachi Yoshikage, and during the Battle of Koan (1281 during the Mongol Invasion) the blade was lost.

Later, Hojo Sadatoki, the 9th Hojo regent (1273-1311), had the blade searched for, then it again went to Adachi.

Adachi later changed his name to Akita. Akita Hidesuke was very close to Oda Nobunaga and gave this blade to Nobunaga who later gave it to Mitsueda Kambei. On Genroku 16, August 3rd (1703), the value on the Orikami was set at 200 Mai.

Another record lists the blade as having been once owned by Taira Sadamori prior to the owners listed above.

After Mitsueda Kambei, through the mediation of Hoami Masutada, the blade next went to the Date of Sendai during the Teikyo Era (1684-1688) and since then it has been handed down in the Date Clan.

On Meiji 14 (1881) when Emperor Meiji visited the Date at Sendai,

the blade was given to the emperor, and since then it has been in the Imperial Collection and is one of the outstanding blades in that vast collection. The blade is one of the best preserved blades from the Heian Period. We recall first seeing this blade back in 1946, and our impression of the blade at the time was very good and we still remember some of the characteristics of that blade.

A detailed description of this blade is:

Length: 2 shaku 5 sun 9 bu 3 ri

Sori: 8 bu 8 ri

Width at the Machi: 9 bu 2 ri

The blade has a shinogi tsukuri form and an ihori mune. There is a very short kissaki, a strong koshizori and a strong funbari. The hada is a tightly forged ko-itame hada and there are very fine ko-nie over the entire length of the blade.

The hamon is ko-choi ko-midare and there are kawazuko choi and tobiyaki in places. There are ashi and yo extending deeply into the hamon. There are very dense nioi accompanied by ko-nie.

There is are kinsuji at the monouchi on the omote of the blade, and the boshi is midarekomi ending in a togari on the omote and a komaru on the ura.

The nakago is ubu and has a kijimomo shape with a slight sori.

The tip of the nakago is kurijiri and there are slight traces of katte sagari yasurime showing in places.

There is one mekugi ana, and above the mekugi ana near the mune on the tachi omote, there is a two character inscription "Kuninaga".

The character "kuni" is inscribed in a very distinct way.

If one were to be asked to pick the five best blades in existence, this Kuninaga would be one of the five.

AIZEN KUNITOSHI

愛染国俊

Owner: Matsudaira kaga no Kami

Signed

Length: 9 sun 5 bu

Value: 100 mai

Owned by Lord Hideyoshi.

Received by Mori Mimasaka no Kami.

Later as his legacy, it was presented to the Shogunate, then

Lord Iemitsu gave it to Lord Kaga when Lord Tsunanori had his first audience with the Shogunate. It is also said that the blade was handed down by Lord Toshitsune at this time.

There is a carving of a hoko on the omote and bo hi and soe hi on the ura. On the nakago omote, there is a carving of aizen.

Yamanaka Note:

The Tokugawa Jikki for the first Year of Shoho (1644), on February 12th states that "Lord Iemitsu gives Maeda Inuchiyo (Tsunanori) a wakizazashi by Kunimitsu."

However, there seems to be some error here.

Mori Mimasaka no Kami was a trusted retainer under Oda Nobunaga, and he died on the 9th of April in Tensho II (1583) at the Battle of Nagatsuka. His place was taken over by his younger brother Tadamasa who later had a fief of 120,000 koku in Shinano Province at Kawanaka Jima.

After the death of Hideyoshi and the Battle of Sekigahara, Mori sided with the Tokugawa forces, and on the 18th of Keicho (1613), he was given 180,000 Koku in Mimasaka Province and also the title of Minasaka no Kami.

This blade for a long time was handed down by the Maeda of Kaga Province and Honami Kozan, once remarked that this blade was the best sword in existence.

The blade is said to be very good, and we recall seeing this blade a number of times, however our impression of the blade was not as good as the original Kozan's, our namesake.

In the notation of our copy of the Kyoho Meibutsu Cho, we note that we first saw the blade in 1949 in August and commented "yokunai" (not very good). The blade left the Maeda collection after WWII and presently is owned by a private collector.

TORIKAI KUNITOSHI

鳥養国俊

Owner: Owari

Length: 1shaku 9 sun 9 bu

Value: 60 mai

There are hi on both sides. Owned by Torikai Sokei and handed down to his son Yahei. Lord Yusai purchased it for 150 Kan. It was handed down to his son Tadaoki. Jibu Shoyu purchased it for 500 Kan.

Probably, during the time of the Battle of Sekigahara, Tomita Shinani no Kami obtained it as a result of the battle, and presented it to Lord Iyasu, and it was then handed down to Lord Owari.

On the 3rd of Keicho (1593), on the death of the Lord Dainagon, the blade came to us (Honami) and the value was set as above.

Yamanaka Note

This blade is still in the Owari Tokugawa Collection, and in our notation in the Meibutsu Cho, we said "Yoroshii" on seeing this blade, and we recall that we liked this blade a little better than the previous Kunitoshi.

The death of Dainagon refers to Tokugawa Yoshinao, who died on the 3rd of Keian (1651) and not on Keicho 3 as the text states.

The name for the blade Torikai comes from the fact that it was owned by Torikai Sokei, as stated in the text. Sokei comes from Torikai Village in Nakajima Gori in Settsu Province, and was well versed in calligraphy. His son also was well known for his calligraphy.

YUUKI RAI KUNITOSHI

結城来國俊

Owner: Matsudaira Yuuki no Kami

Signed

Length: 9 sun

Value: unknown

Owned by the Yuuki family in the Eastern Province. Owned by the 2nd son of Lord Ieyasu, Yuuki Chunagon Hideyasu. It was left to his son Sani Saisho 三位字相念 who later called himself Ipakku 一伯.

Later it was given to Kyojoya of Rokujo in Kyoto from whom Lord Toshitsune obtained it.

Yamanaka Note

The Yuuki family referred to in the text traces their origin back to Fujiwara Hidesato of the late Heian Period.

During the Yoshino Period, the Yuuki fought for the imperial forces against the Ashikaga. During the time of Hideyoshi, Hideyoshi gave his daughter to one of the Yuki, Hidayasu, (his adopted son although he actually was Tokugawa Ieyasu's 2nd son).

In the Battle of Sekigahara, Hideyasu, although adopted by Hideyoshi, nevertheless fought with his father's forces and eventually came to own 600,000 koku in Echizen Province. His son Tadanao took over the family and performed many feats of battle during the Osaka battles.

Tadanao eventually became deranged and was banished to Kyushu, although when Tadanao was in Kyoto, he sold the blade or gave it to Kyojoya from whom Maeda Toshitsune purchased it.

The blade was then handed down in the Maeda family until about the late Taisho period, about 1925, when it was sold at an auction.

FAMOUS SWORDS, KOKUHO: NATIONAL TREASURES OF JAPAN

No. 51:

NORIFUSA則房

MUMEI

Length: 69.4 cm

Sori: 2.8 cm

Width: 3.0 cm

Shape and Construction:

Shinogi tsukuri with a shin-no-mune (mitsumune). The kissaki is a little stubby and is an ikubi kissaki style.

The blade is a little thin.

Hi and Carvings:

Bo hi are carved on both sides of the blade, and are a little wider than usual for this period.

The hi end in kakinagashi carved into the nakago.

Hamon:

The hamon is choji midare and very hanayaki (gorgeous and with abundant activity) and there are juka choji present.

The nioi is very dense and ashi and yo are present in abundance all along the hamon. In areas, these ashi and yo are angled in a direction opposite of what is usually seen (kyo saka ashi?).

Boshi:

The boshi is midarekomi and there is a komaru.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is a tightly forged ko-itame hada, and there are midare utsuri all along the ji.

Nakago:

The blade is o-suriage mumei and consequently nothing of the original nakago is retained.

The present nakago has a kurijiri tip and the file marks are a shallow katte sagari. There is one mekugi ana.

The hamon, due to the fact that the ashi and yo slant in a reverse direction to the usual style, tells us that this is the Norifusa from the Katayama Ichimonji school in the mid-Kamakura period. It is an excellent blade in an excellent state of preservation.

It is one of the early blades of the Katayama Ichimonji school.

This blade was given by the 5th Tokugawa shogun Tsunayoshi to his grandson Iechiyo on his birth.

No. 52

SUKEZANE

助真

Signed

Length: 71.2

Sori: 2.5 cm.

Width: 3.2 cm.

Shape and Construction;

Shinogi tsukuri with a shin-no-mune (mitsumune), and the blade is a little wide.

Although the blade has been shortened somewhat, it still retains much of its fumbari and the blade has a strong koshisori.

The kissaki is ikubi kissaki.

Hi and Carvings:

There are bo hi on on both sides of the blade, and they are finished in kaki nagaki carved into the nakago.

Hamon:

The yakiba is wide and the omote side is o-choji midare with variations in the height of the midare waves, and in places, there are togariba midare.

The ura side doesn't have as much variation in size, and it is more or less uniform.

Ashi and yo are present in great numbers, as well as sunagashi in places.

Wherever ashi are seen, there will be nie clustered around them.

The general appearance of the hamon is that it is wide and very hanayaka.

Boshi:

The boshi is midarekomi and the tip has hakikake.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is itame hada which is prominent.

There are very thick layers of ji-nie and also distinct midare utsuri.

Nakago:

The blade is suriage, but the remnant of the original nakago has an inscription "Sukezane", below the hi. The hi is finished in kakinagashi.

There are two mekugi ana, one at the tip of the nakago, which seems to be the original mekugi ana. The later addition is made in the usual location, right below the machi.

This blade is popularly called Nikko Sukezane and is regarded as the most outstanding blade by Sukezane in existence.

This blade was the blade which Tokugawa Ieyasu carried into many battles, and it has been in the Toshogu Shrine in Nikko since its founding.

The koshirae of the blade is the one which Ieyasu had made, and it dates from the time when Ieyasu was active, that is from the late Momoyama Period into the early Tokugawa period.

No. 53

SUKEZANE

助真

Signed

Length: 66.9 cm
Sori: 1.8 cm
Width: 3.2 cm

Shape and Construction:

Shinogi tsukuri with a shin-no-mune (mitsumune).
The blade is wide and has a very pronounced koshisori.
There is a chu-kissaki, and the style is not an ikubi kissaki but it is close to being one.

Hamon:

Choji with ko-choji with kwazuko choji. Overall, the hamon could be described as juka choji. There are abundant ashi and yo in nioi with nie clustered around them.

Boshi:

The omote tip is togari and the ura is komaru with hakikake. There are abundant nie.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is itame hada with mokume hada present in places. The hada is prominent in places and there is an abundance of ji-nie. Utsuri is also present.

Nakago:

The blade is suriage and only about an inch of the original nakago remains. At the top of the existing original nakago there is a somewhat small inscription "Sukezane".

This Sukezane was handed down in the Kii Tokugawa family for a number of generations, and is often compared with the Nikko Sukezane (No. 52 above), although it lacks in such a comparison.

Nevertheless, it is in a very excellent state of preservation and one of the outstanding works of this sword smith.

No. 54

KUNIMUNE

国宗

Signed
Length: 81.7 cm
Sori: 3.2 cm
width: 3.2 cm

Shape and Construction:

It is shinogi tsukuri with a shin-no mune (mitsumune), and is wide. The kissaki is an ikubi kissaki, and the blade, although it has been shortened, still retains very much of the original koshi sori.

Hi and Carvings:

There are bo hi on both sides of the blade which end in kakinagashi carved into the nakago.

Hamon:

The hamon is choji midare which has a little "reversed" feeling (they slant in the opposite direction from the usual direction). There are kawazuko choji in places and a great number of ashi and yo which result from the very dense nioi and ko-nie clustered around the choji.

Boshi:

The boshi is midarekomi and the tip is komaru. Hakikake and nie are clustered around the tip

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is itame hada and there are ji-nie all along the blade. Midare utsuri is also very clear.

Nakago:

The nakago is ubu and the tip is kurijiri.

The yasuri are katte sagari and there are three mekugi ana.

Right below the mid-section of the nakago on the omote side there is an inscription "Kunimune".

Kunimune, commonly referred to as Bizen Saburo Kunimune is one of the founders of the Soshu tradition and along with other smiths of the mid-Kamakura period such as Norimune and Sukemune of Bizen Province, and Kunitsuna of Awataguchi in Yamashiro Province, and he is considered to be an outstanding sword smith,

This blade is also in the Nikko Toshogu Shrine and has an ito-no-machi tachi koshirae which dates from the early Tokugawa period.

No. 55

KUNIMUNE

国宗

Signed

Length: 72.6 cm

Sori: 2.5 cm

Width: 3.1 cm

Shape and Construction:

Shinogi tsukuri with a shin-no-mune (mitsumune). There is a chu-kissaki. The blade has a very strong koshisori, even though the blade has been shortened a little.

Hamon;

The hamon is a mix of choji, o-choji, and juka-choji, as well as ko-gunome midare. There are a great number of ashi and yo.

The edge or border of the hamon is clear and distinct, that is the nioi do not fade out going away from the hamon border as in the case for other smiths of this time.

Boshi:

Midarekomi with a komaru tip. There are hakikake at the tip which make the boshi tip appear to be a togari (pointed) shape.

Jitetsu and hada:

The hada is ko-itame hada and tightly forged. The hada stands out a little, and there are abundant ji-nie and midare utsuri.

Nakago:

The nakago has been shortened a little, and about half of the present nakago is original.

At the center of the nakago, there is inscription, "Kunimune" inscribed on the shinogi ji.

There are three mekugi ana, and the one at the bottom or below the inscription is the original one.

THE TOKUGAWA JIKKI

Part II

KEICHO 11

January 15

Todo Takatsugu, son of Takatora, comes to Edo and is received by Hidetada and receives a Katana by Kanemitsu and a wakizashi by Kunimitsu. From Ieyasu, he receives a wakizashi by Norishige.

March

Construction of Edo Castle is started and completed in September.

April 18

Katagiri Katsumoto, as the messenger of Toyotomi Hideyori pays homage at Toyokuni Shrine and presents a tachi with an orikami valuing it at 100 Mai.

April 19

Yagyū Munenori, the fencing master, dies at age 80.

April 28

Ieyasu, on a visit to Kyoto presents a tachi with an orikami.

May 1

Shimazu Yoshihiro and his son Tadatsune, having exported a blade by Ichimonji are reprimanded

May 15

Sakalibara Yasumasa dies at age 59.

May 16

Hori Hideharu dies at age 31.

June 10

For efforts made in the construction of Edo Castle, Ikeda Terumasa is given a tachi. Ikeda Nagayoshi is given a wakizashi by Bizen Saburo Kunimune 備前三郎国宗. Kuroda Nagemasa's retainer, Mori Taheita and Noguchi Sasuke Kazunami are given "koshi no mono" (swords).

June 17

Ieyasu calls Shimazu Tadatsune to Fushimi castle and has him change his name to Iehisa and gives him a tachi by Nagamitsu and a stallion.

August

On completion of the construction of the Ontake Shrine in Musashi Province, a tachi and a stallion are donated to the shrine.

August 15

Six suits of armor, 4 tachi and 5 wakizashi are given to the King of Senjo.

August 18

On a celebration at Hokoku Shrine, a tachi with an orikami is presented to the shrine.

September 21

Three suits of armor and 10 tachi are sent to Rome. Ten Katana are sent to the King of Annan as gifts.

October 8

Three suits of armor and 10 nagamaki are sent to Rome,
Possibly to someone whose name can be translated into something like “Hernando Michael”.

November 5

A katana is sent to Korea.

November

Fujiwara Nobutaka resigns from the position of Kampaku.
Takatsukasa Nobufusa succeeds him.

December 7

Ieyasu in trying to obtain herbs and incense from Tian Yin, sends the King a gift of a tachi and wakizashi.

December 24

Date Masamune when giving his daughter to Kozuke no Suke Tadateru as his bride, gives tachi to ten of his retainers.

On this same month:

Hidetada visits the Date mansion and gives a tachi by Nagamitsu and a tachi by Ohara Sanemori to Masamune, and a tachi by Rai Kunitoshi to his son Sojiro.

On this same month:

Hidetada visits the Todo Takatora mansion and gives him a sword.

On this same month:

The use of the Eiroku coin is stopped.

Sometime during this year:

Munehide and his son Muneshige receive a 10 man platoon (laborers?) from the Ikeda of Harima Province.

KEICHO 12 (1607)

January 25

Ieyasu gives Honda Izumo no Kami Tomihisa a tachi by Samonji左文字 for his efforts and merit in completing the reconstruction of Suruga Castle.

January 28

An Imperial messenger is sent to Osaka and congratulates Hideyori (Toyotomi) on his birthday.

Court nobles sent a tachi. A tachi was sent by Hino Terusuke as well.

February 12

Tsugaru Tamenobu presents 50 katana and a crane to the Shogunate.

March 7

On the celebration of the New Year, Hideyori sends a gift of a tachi and silver to the Shogunate.

April 8

Echizen Hideyasu dies. As his legacy, a katana by Samonji左文字 is given to Ieyasu. A katana by Sadamune is given to Hidetada.

Also, on this same day, Yoshinao officially becomes the ruler of Owari Province.

April 9

Self Immolation (Junshi) is prohibited.

Junshi (suicide or seppuku) was very much in vogue among loyal retainers when their lords passed away and they followed. This was said to be the ultimate act in Bushido.

May 10

Five long swords are given to three emissaries from Korea.

May 25

The above emissaries visited Ieyasu in Sumpu (Suruga) and are given three tachi and 2 katana.

June 2

Ikeda Uemonojo Toshitaka receives the title of Musashi no Kami and receives a tachi by Nagamitsu, a katana by Rai Kunimitsu and a wakizashi by Samonji from the Shogun.

July 3

Ikeda Terumasa receives the Imperial Courier at Himeji Castle and receives a tachi by Kanenaga and a stallion.

July 9

(Torotomi) Hideyori gives Ieyasu a katana by Rai Kunimitsu on the event of Ieyasu moving to Sumpu.

On this same day, Echizen Tadanao also presents a wakizashi by Kuniyasu (Awataguchi) to Ieyasu.

August 13

Ogasawara Hyobu Daisuke Hidemasa's second son Daigaku no Suke Tadamasa is received by the Shogun and receives a katana by Samonji 左文字.

August 18

On Ieyasu's moving to Sumpu, the Imperial court gives him a tachi, and nobles also send tachi as gifts. Also, Kazusa no Suke Tadateru presents a Tachi by Sukeshide.

October 4

His 8th daughter is born to the Shogun Hidetada.

The attending physician, Imaoji Nobutoshi Dosan receives a mounted Tanto

October 22

Fire breaks out in Sumpu Castle, and in the Ina (sitting room) of Ieyasu where sword boxes were kept, and a box with 34 or 35 blades was saved. However, a box with 72 swords was too heavy to be moved, so the box was broken open and the swords were thrown into the pond in the garden to save them.

Of those that were destroyed in the fire, there was a wakizashi by Masamune which had been received from Hideyori (Toyotomi) and a wakizashi by Mihara 三原.

December 28

Suo Inaba no Kami Yorinaga's son Matsuchiyo is received by the Shogun Hidetada and is given 3 Ichimonji tachi.

Sometime during this year:

Seizo Hisanari, son of Nakagawa Shuri Daiyu Hidenari is received in audience by Shogun Hidetada and receives a katana by Rai Kunimitsu.

Sometime during this year:

Kamei Musashi no Kami deals in trade with a foreign country and makes a profit. Among the items he exported there were many katana and wakizashi.

Sometime during this year:

The first Masatsune 政常 retires and his son then takes the name of Sagami no kami Masatsune 相模守政當.

Sometime during this year:

Hizen Masahiro (first generation) 肥前 正広 is born.

KEICHO 13, 1608

March

Date Masamune receives the title of Maisudaira Mutsu no Kami and is given a Katana by Rai Kunimitsu.

Most of the Daimyo at this time still had the name of Hashiba, however, many were changing their name to Matsudaira.

Note: it was the custom in the Toyotomi period that loyal retainers were given the use of the surname Hashiba, the family name of Hideyoshi.

This system was carried over into the Tokugawa Period and so many (most) of the daimyo, regardless of whether they were connected by blood or otherwise, were given the use of the original surname of the Tokugawa, Matsudaira.

April 18

Ikeda Terumasa's son Tadatsugu receives a katana by Masamune from the shogunate.

July 15

Five long swords are sent to Luzon.

July 22

Toyotomi Hideyori sends a tachi by Nagamitsu to the Shogun.
Matsudaira Tadanao sends a wakizashi by Kuniyasu and other gifts.

August 18

The Shogun Hidetada goes to Sumpu and receives a tachi by Nagamitsu and a tachi by Norishige and other gifts.

August 25

Ieyasu invites Hidetada to Sumpu Castle for a feast, and gives him a tachi by Yukihiro (Bungo).

On this same day:

Honda Masanobu presents a Tachi.

August 28

Imperial messenger from the court in Kyoto brings a gift of a tachi and other items.

September 6

Maeda Toshitsune presents a tachi by Nagamitsu.
Ikeda Toshitaka presents a tachi by Ichimonji.

September 9

Maeda Toshinaga presents a tachi by Mitsutada.

KEICHO 14, 1609

January 25

Katagiri Katamoto, as a messenger from Hideyori, brings a gift of a tachi and 100 Mai of silver to Owari Yoshinao.

February 20

Date Masamune, having received the use of the surname of Matsudaira the year before, makes a gift of 100 Mai of gold, 2 stallions and 2 wakizashi.

March 23

The Toyama Castle of Maeda Toshinaga in Etchu Province is ravaged by a fire, and most of the treasures are destroyed. However, a wakizashi by Yoshimitsu and the tea jar Ochishiba were saved.

April 4

On the birth of Ikeda Shintaro Mitsumasa of Okayama in Bizen Province, a katana by Aoe and a wakizashi by Nobukuni are given.

In this same month:

The 3rd son of Ikeda Terumasa, Matsuchiyo, changes his name to Matsudaira Sakon Teruzumi and receives a ko-wakizashi by Yoshimitsu.

May 5

A wakizashi by Masamune is given to Ikeda Terumasa's son, Fujimatsu. Also, a wakizashi is given to Katsugoro Matsuchiyo.

December 15

Shimazu Hyogo no Suke Nyudo Koreara, having received the rule over the Ryukus, presents a tachi and a stallion to the Shogunate.

December 22

A katana by Kanenaga is given to Matsudaira Yamashiro no Kami Tadakuni, son of Matsudaira Awa Nobuyoshi.

Also, a wakizashi by Yukimitsu is given to Iga no Kami Tadaharu.

December 26

Hidetada visits Kasahara Hyobu Daiyu Hidemasa at his residence at Wadakura Mon (Wadakura Mon is the gate outside the imperial palace moat today) and gives him a wakizashi by Hiromitsu.

KEICHO 15, 1610

January 15

Arima Harunobu visits Ieyasu at Sumpu and is greatly commended for his deed of having attacked and destroyed foreign vessels, and is given a famous blade by Ieyasu himself.

April 6

Matsudaira Kunai Shoyu Tadakatsu visits Ieyasu at Sumpu and receives a wakizashi.

August 14

Shimazu Iehisa accompanied by the king of Ryukyu, Shonei, visits Ieyasu at Sumpu and presents a Tachi. Shonei also presents a tachi.

August 18

Ieyasu holds a reception for Iehisa and Shonei and gives Iehisa a wakizashi by Sadamune.

August 28

Shimazu Iehisa presents a tachi by Nagamitsu to the Shogun. Also, the Ryuku King presents a tachi to the young heir of the Shogun.

September 16

Shimazu Iehisa in leaving Edo visits the Shogun and begs his leave, and receives a katana by Kaga Sadamune from the Shogun.

Note: Kaga Sadamune: this blade is not known to us and it possibly could be a Meibuisu or a Meibutsu of the Kaga Maeda. Currently, there is no record existing of a Sadamune with the name Kaga attached to it.

October 16

A tea ceremony is held at the Date Masamune mansion which Hidetada attends, and gives a wakizashi by Rai Kunimitsu 来国光 to Masamune's son Sojiro.

November 1

A tachi by Nagamitsu and a horse are given to Arima Naozumi.

November 26

Ieyasu goes to Edo and visits Sakai Tadamasa and gives him a katana by Ichimonji.

December 25.

Hidetada visits the Uesugi Kagekatsu mansion and gives him a tachi by Kanenaga, a katana by Morie 守家, and a wakizashi by Samonji, and other items.

Kagekatsu in return gives a tachi by Rai Kunitoshi 来国俊, a katana by Masamune 正宗 and a wakizashi by Sadamune and other items.

Hidetada himself gives a katana by Kunimitsu (Shintogo) to Sadakatsu, son of Kagekatsu.

December 28

Ieyasu and Hideyori meet at Nijo Castle (Kyoto).

Ieyasu presents the Nansen Ichimonji 南泉 一文 学 and a wakizashi by Samonji.

Hideyori gives him a tachi by Sanemori and other items.

Hideyori, also gives a tachi by Mitsutada to Owari Yoshinaga, and a tachi by Morie to Kii Yorinobu.

Note: the Nansen Ichimonji is a meibutsu listed in Book II of the Meibutsu Cho and currently is owned by the Owari Reimeikai.

IDENTIFICATION OF NIHONTO THROUGH SHAPES

PART IX: THE SHINTO PERIOD

Although it was defined in an earlier issue, we here again restate the descriptions of Shinto and the characteristics and differences between Koto and Shinto.

The differences between Shinto and Koto are as follows, although there may be some differences according to the individual school and sword smith. Unless otherwise indicated all descriptions are of Shinto blades below.

1) The length of the Shinto blades are about 2 shaku 3 sun or thereabouts for katana, and about 1 shaku 5-6 sun or thereabouts for wakizashi. The sori is shallow. The blade is wide and thick and has a Gyo-no-mune (ihorimune) with a low ridge. The hiraniku is koroai (just right). The kissaki will be a little long and a chu-kissaki.

2) A koto blade when held in the hand will feel light. Shinto blades when held in the hand will feel heavy.

3) Bo hi when carved, will have the tip at about the Yokote, and it will end in marudome above the machi in most cases.

4) On the whole, there is very little carving, however, depending on the sword smith and school, those that are seen are usually by those smiths that are well known for them, and the carvings themselves will be made very intricately and delicately.

5) Blades with wide yakiba made in choji midare or o-midare will have hataraki (activities) at the habuchi (hamon border), but nothing inside the hamon.

6) Hamon worked in nie will have rough nie.

7) The hamon of Koto blades, when a midare wave is made, will have midare from the yakidashi into the boshi.

In the case of Shinto, most often they will start out in a suguha, and then become a midare. Then the boshi will be suguha.

8) The steel or the jitetsu will be about the same throughout the country. The steel will be hard and the color of the steel will seem blackish and it will have a strong sheen or cast. This is especially so in the shinogi ji.

9) The shape of the nakago is very well made with the tip being a little narrow. The file marks will have kesho yasuri in most cases. The mekugi ana will be very clean, due to the fact that a drill was used to make it. The inscription will be long with the name of the province, the village name, titles, and with dates.

During the Shinto period, all five traditions of the Koto period were made in addition to which the Shinto tradition was added. However, the five traditions of the Koto period made during the Shinto period will have the following distinctions:

YAMASHIRO TRADITION:

Hamon in nie and in chu-suguha hotsure. Ko-maru boshi. Ko-mokume hada.

YAMATO TRADITION:

Hamon in nie and in chu-suguha hotsure. Habuchi will have a very distinct masame present and there will be abundant hataraki. Masame hada will be seen in most cases.

SOSHU TRADITION:

Hamon in nie and o-midare nie kuzure and with sunagashi. There will be o-hada in the steel.

MINO TRADITION:

Hamon will be in nioi and there will be togariba in the midare pattern. Some hamon will be made in togari alone,

BIZEN TRADITION:

Hamon will be in nioi and either choji midare or koshibaraki midare (midare with wide valleys between the midare peaks).

The shapes of the blades made during the Koto period varied greatly from one period to the next and this is also true, to a certain extent during the Shinto period, however, by and large, they are about the same throughout the period. Those of the early Shinto period will still be influenced by the previous Sengoku or Momoyama periods, but they are much better made during the Shinto period as is evident from seeing Keicho Shinto blades.

On the whole, the construction and shape of the blades made during Shinto period can be described as follows:

KATANA:

Length: 2 shaku 5 sun or thereabouts

Sori: shallow

Mihaba: a little wide.

There will be some works that will taper strongly towards the kissaki and others that will not.

Hiraniku: is usually appropriate.

Kasane: the blades are thick.

Kissaki: there will be a chu-kissaki in most cases, and there will be a fukura.

Mune: gyo-no-mune (ihorimune).

WAKIZASHI:

Will be about 1 shaku 7 sun or thereabouts, and all other particulars can be described in about the same way as for katana.

TANTO:

Those made in a josun (8.5 sun) takenoko sori style of the Kamakura Period will have a length, width, and thickness slightly larger than the koto blades.

Sunobi (over 8.5 sun) sakisori tanto or hiratsukuri ko-wakizashi styles from the Yoshino Period are also made a little larger in scale. All particulars are about the same as those of katana, although with slight variations to match the size of the blades.

YAMASHIRO PROVINCE

Umetada Myoju 埋忠明 寿

The shape of the blade is very elegant, but slightly short, and the sori is shallow. Tanto are chukan sori (musori) katakiriha and very well shaped. Practically all of this smith's tanto will have exceptionally well made carvings.

Higashiyama Yoshihira 東出 義平

The shape of the katana and wakizashi will have the width of the blade a little wider towards the kissaki, which itself is a little long, and the center of the sori will be slightly shifted towards the kissaki.

Horikawa Kunihiro 堀川 国広

This smith made many different styles of swords. He made many copies of the old masters, however, those that are made in his own style are either in the style of tachi from the Late Kamakura period or the tachi style from the Yoshino period, both of which are made in an o-suriage shape. He also made hiratsukuri ko-wakizashi which were about 1 shaku long or thereabouts, and which were wide and thick.

The mune are gyo-no-mune (ihorimune) or shin-no-mune (mitsumune).

He also made hiratsukuri ko-wakizashi in the Embun-Joji Era Style. His takenoko sori tanto are like those made during the mid-Kamakura period by Rai Kunitoshi of Yamashiro Province, although the shape of the tanto itself will be a little strong and thick compared to the old masters' work.

Dewa Daijo Kunimichi 出羽大掾国路

The shapes of this smith's works are generally about the same as those of Horikawa Kunihiro, his teacher, although the sori will be a little shallow, and the width a little wide.

There is not very much hiraniku, the kissaki will be long, and there will be little fukura.

However, there are blades that are different, and these blades will be thin with hardly any sori giving the Impression of a very late Seki blade.

Tanto are made in the Embun-Joji era style: i.e. a hiratsukuri ko-wakizashi style.

Most of this smith's tanto will have carvings.

Other styles of tanto are chukan sori (musori) hiratsukuri tanto, although some are in the Yamashiro tradition, and some are in the Yamato tradition

He also made shobu tsukuri blades, yari, and naginata.

Horikawa Kuniyasu 堀川国安

The works of this smith are about the same as those of his teacher Horikawa Kunihiro, however, on the whole, the shape and construction tends to become slightly weaker.

Echizen no Kami Kunitomo 越前守国壽

About the same as his teacher Horikawa Kunihiro. The general shape of his blades is very firm, although the width of the blade will be slightly narrow.

Osumi Daijo Masahiro 大隅大 掾正弘

About the same as his teacher Horikawa Kunihiro, although inferior in most respects.

There will be little hiraniku and the kissaki will be long and give the impression that the blade is a koto.

Iga no Kami Kinmichi 伊賀守金道

The shape of the blade is in the Shinto style and wide with a shallow sori, and the width of the blade towards the kissaki will seem to be wide.

The kissaki is long and the sori will seem to have a sakisori feeling.

The general appearance of the blade is very strong and firm. This smith also made blades that were very narrow with a shallow sori and the overall appearance being weak, in contrast to his other work.

Those blades made in the former style are very well made, and those in the latter style are made poorly.

Omi no Kami Hisamichi 近江守久道

About the same as Kinmichi, although the shape of the blade is a little more graceful than his teacher's Kinmichi.

Late Kinmichi and dai sagari (successors) 金道

The work becomes poor in all respects and many will be made smaller and shorter.

Inaba no Kami Yoshimichi 丹波守吉道

Made katana in the suriage style of the Muromachi Period as well as those in the Shinto Style.

Made very few wakizashi.

Tanto are hiratsukuri and narrow. The length will be a little long for the shape, and it will be thick.

Etchu no Kami Masatoshi 越中守正 悛

Katana are made in the osuriage tachi style of the Yoshino Period.
Some will be in the Shinto style. He also made sunzumari (standard length) katana.
Tanto in most cases are in the Enbun-Joji Era style sunnobi (small) hiratsukuri ko-wakizashi style.

He also made chukan sori (musori) style tanto, as well as sunzumari (less than 8.5 sun) takanoko sori style tanto.

Other sword smiths who worked in Kyoto during the Shinto period made katana shapes with a shallow sori which taper strongly towards the kissaki and will be thick.

YAMATO PROVINCE

Tsutsui Kijyu 筒井起充

Made katana shapes of the Shinto Period, however, at a glance the blades will seem like a Koto blade.

The general appearance of the blade is that it is narrow and tapers going towards the kissaki.

The kissaki will be small.

There will be hiraniku and it will be thick.

Monjyu School 交珠系

Most of the blades by the sword smiths of this school have great similarities to the late Tegai school from the Koto period.

SETTSU PROVINCE

Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke 河内守園助 .

Typical shape of the Shinto Period. Both, katana and wakizashi are very firm or stout and will have good hiraniku. The blade will be thick and the kissaki will be slightly long.

Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke, ni-dai, 河内守国助二代

Made shapes from the Shinto period, however, the width will taper slightly going towards the kissaki, and there will be a slightly graceful appearance.

On rare occasions, the blades will be like those made by the 1st Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke.

Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke, third generation or san dai, 河内守国助三代

The lengths of the katana are a little short, and most of the works by this smith are wakizashi.

All blades will taper strongly towards the kissaki and are graceful.

Kobayashi Ise no Kami Kuniteru 小林伊勢守国輝

Made katana and wakizashi the style of the Shinto Period, both of which are wide and have very little hiraniku.
Going towards the kissaki, the blades will seem wide. The kissaki is long on most blades.

Tsuda Sukehiro (Soboro Sukehiro) 神田助広 (ソボロ助広)

the lengths of the katana are a little short, and most of his works are wakizashi.
In either case, the width of the blade will taper strongly towards the kissaki and will have a graceful appearance.

Tsuda Echizen no Kami Sukehiro 神田 越前守助広

Made katana in the shape of the Shinto Period which taper strongly towards the kissaki, and there will be hiraniku.

The shinogi will be high.

The kissaki will be a little short.

The general appearance is of a very well balanced shape, giving much grace to the blade.

There are some works that are wide going towards the kissaki, and the kissaki itself is long giving the blade a strong appearance.

Tsuda Omi No Kami Sukenao 津田近江守助直

Very firm or stout shape of the Shinto Period which were wide and tapered strongly towards the kissaki. The kissaki are long.

Katana are rare, and most works are wakizashi.

Inoue Izumi no Kami Kunisada 井上和泉 宇国 貞

Katana shape of the Shinto Period with a shallow sori. The blades are narrow and taper towards the kissaki. The kissaki is short.

There will be hiraniku, the shinogi is high, and it is thick

There are some works that are made with a very strong or stout shape, i.e. the sori is very good and the blades are wide, and the thickness is just right, so there is a strong appearance.

Inoue Izumi no Kami Shinkai 井上和泉守 真政

Katana are made with the shape of the Shinto Period, and they taper strongly towards the kissaki. The kissaki is short, and the overall appearance is very graceful. Other works are in contrast to the above, and will be very wide, with a long kissaki, and they will appear to be wide going towards the kissaki. There will be a strong hiraniku and they will be thick, giving the blade a very strong appearance.

Yahata Kitamado Harukuni 八幡北您治国

Both katana and wakizashi are made in a Shinto style and are wide. There is a saki sori, and the blade will be wide going towards the kissaki.

The kissaki will be long.

The blade will be thick giving a strong appearance to the blade.

Wakizashi are relatively rare.

Suzuki Sadanori 鈴木貞則 and Dohi Shinryo 土肥 真了

Both of these smiths will have similarities to Inoue Shinkai's work, but their work is inferior to his in all respects.

Tamba no Kami Yoshimichi 丹波守吉道

Both katana and wakizashi are made in the Shinto style, however, they will taper strongly towards the kissaki giving the blade a graceful appearance. Made mostly wakizashi.

Yamato no Kami Yoshimichi 大和守吉道

Katana and wakizashi taper strongly towards the kissaki producing a graceful appearance. However, there are some works made with a very strong looking shape, due to the width, thickness and sori, and these blades are very well made unlike the former.

Ishido Tameyasu 石堂 為康

Katana shapes of the Shinto period with a shallow sori, thick, and with a long kissaki.

Tatara Nagayuki 多々良長幸

Same description as Ishido Tamayasu.

Awataguchi Omi no Kami Tadatsuna 粟田口近江守忠綱

Katana and wakizashi both taper strongly towards the kissaki giving the blade a graceful appearance. Katana will be a little short.

Awataguchi Ikkanshi Tadatsuna 粟田 口一竿子忠綱

Katana and wakizashi made in the style of the Shinto period, they will be wide, there will be a saki sori impression in which case the width will seem wide going towards the kissaki. The kissaki will be long. The appearance is that of a very strong sturdy blade.

However, on occasion, there are works that are unlike the above and are made very gracefully.

Hiratsukuri ko-wakizashi about 1 shaku 2 sun in length or thereabouts were made. They will be wide, they will be thick, and there will be a sakisori.

Also, there are tanto made with a length of about 9 sun with a slight sakisori and are thick.

Other smiths of this School are:

Oshi Nagatsuna 塙 長綱

Tadayuki 忠行

Masatsuna 正綱

Kanetsuna 包綱

and Dai sagari (successor) Tadatsuna 代下り忠綱

These smiths are all lesser versions of Omi No Kami and Ikkanshi.

Mutsu no Kami Kaneyasu (Hidari Mutsu no Kami):

Katana and wakizashi made in the Shinto style.

They will be wide, there will be sakisori, and they will be wide going towards the kissaki which is long. They will be thick and there will be very little hiraniku.

On rare occasions there will be works that are very graceful.

Sakura Terukane 坂倉照包

Katana and wakizashi made in the Shinto style, however, the sori will be shallow and they will taper strongly towards the kissaki.

The kissaki will be a little long and there will be little hiraniku.