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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

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Letter from the editor:

1969 starts out on an ominous note, the first issue is late!

Due to technical difficulties beyond our control, because the year end season in Japan is even worse than in the Western World. Many people reach a state of inebriation which actually allows them to function, and maintain a functionality throughout the holiday season.

Our other editor was very successful in this, and when he came out of his happy glow, we stood over him with a cudgel and managed to get this issue out --- a month late. He is very sorry and promises never to touch the stuff again, so, it will be a Happy New Year for us. This year is our second year of publication, and we say "BLEGGH" to our pessimistic friends. We still have a lot of information to disseminate to you students of Nihonto, and we hope to broaden the coverage of our Newsletter.

We still haven't licked the problem of providing good illustrations for the Newsletter. The reasons being: one, it costs too much, and two, it costs too much.

We won't tell you the sad tale of our finances, but with the present number of subscribers we've been in the red since the middle of last year.

If we ever get into the black, we are going to have illustrations, even if we have to paste photos into every issue.

For most of you, your subscriptions are going to start to run out in a couple of months. If the tax season seems particularly difficult, at least let us know about your intentions to renew, and we will carry you for a month or two.

To make things perfectly clear to late subscribers, subscriptions to the first year run out after the February, 1969 issue since the first two issues last year were free.

Those of you who asked for and received back issues, please bear in mind that those back issues count on your subscription, however the January and the February 1968 issues were free to you.

You can notify us of your intention to renew anytime, and pay later.

We hate to mention business matters in such a "scholarly journal", but neither of us have the wherewithal to be able to act like philanthropists.

HAPPY NEW YEAR,

Albert Yamanaka

January, 1969

GENDAITO OR POST-MEIJI SWORDS

From the first year of Meiji (1868), Japanese society which had been based on the rule of the Samurai class crumbled suddenly with the restoration of the imperial system.

The old provinces were abolished and prefectures were set up in their place.

In the 9th Year of Meiji (1876) the Haitorei law was decreed. This law forbade anyone except military and police personnel from carrying swords. With this law, most craftsmen and artisans such as swordsmiths, metalsmiths who made tsuba and other ornaments, saya-makers, tsuka makers, lacquer workers, and some craftsmen went out of business. However, there were a few who persisted in carrying on their craft at this time, people like Gassan Sadakazu of Osaka, and Miyamoto Kanenori of Tokyo, both of whom received commissions from the Emperor Meiji and became members of the Imperial Art Academy. Their students provided the basis of the people who were active in the revival of sword making in later years, which occurred thanks to the rise of the army and navy.

There is really no such thing as a general description of blades made in the Meiji (1863-1912) to Taisho Eras (1912-1926) because they are mostly copies of swords from the late Tokugawa Period and copies of swords made in earlier periods as well.

Since the swords made during the Meiji Period were for the military, their mountings were made in a European style, and many of the blades were very narrow and slender.

Of the short blades made, those for the navy were made in a sunzumari style with saki sori. Some of these short blades, by such smiths such as Gassan, were exceptionally well made. This came about after the military system was established, shortly before the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, but after the early Meiji Period. Until then, swordsmiths made very few, if any swords at all since no one was ordering new swords.

Gassan, is popularly known as a master of copying blades of early smiths and it was during this time that he made such swords in order to make a living.

It was said by an art dealer in Kobe, that there were great number of swords that Gassan made (which were forgeries of old masters) which this art dealer sold to foreigners who abounded in Kobe.

Most of these blades were said to have been made in the style of early Soshu tradition smiths such as Masamune, Sadamune, Yukimitsu, Go Yoshihiro and others. From this, one can well imagine the sword making ability of Gassan Sadakazu.

During Gassan's later years, the Sino-Japanese War had started and therefore it was no longer necessary for him to make forgeries. It was from about this time that he made the many tantos which we see today which are signed with his own name.

Miyamoto Kanenori of Tokyo originally came from Hoki Province or Tottori prefecture and went to study under Yokeyama Sukekane of Bizen Province, and received the title of Noto no Kami.

In Meiji 19 (1886), at the order of the Ministry of Home Affairs (comparable to the Department of the Interior of United States, or the Home Office of Great Britain), Kanenori made a Ken for the Ise Grand Shrine, and shortly thereafter became a member of the Imperial Art Academy. He is said to have lived in Komagome in the Hongo district of Tokyo and lived to the age of 96.

Morioka Masakichi was the nephew of the famous Nankai Taro Tomotaka and was sponsored by the Tokyo Sword Club, and went to Osaka to study under

Gassan Sadakazu. After studying with Gassan, he returned to Tokyo and made many swords, though we do not encounter many of this man's works.

Hayama Enshin originally called himself Masahiro, and also used the nom- de-plume (art name) of Junsai and shared in the Kiyomaro School's Shinshinto fame. Enshin studied under Suzuki Masao, who was a student of Kiyomaro. Enshin was a master swordsman who received a fief from the Matsudaira of Toyohashi in Mikawa Province.

Enshin was said to have been a master at tameshigiri, and he is known to have tested blades he made. It is reported that there was no one during the Meiji Era who could come close to matching the tameshigiri skills of Hayama Enshin.

Miyaguchi Shigetoshi of Shizuoka became a swordsmith for the Japanese Army during the Meiji Era and worked at the Army Ordnance Depot in Tokyo. Yamana Tokiyoshi of Kagoshima went to live in Tokyo and worked at the Imperial Navy Ordnance Depot.

We list below some of the lesser known swordsmiths who worked during the Meiji Era.

Akihiro 明広	Mutsu Province
Miura Bunkichi 三浦文古	Mutsu Province
Choka Imaru 鳥海丸	Dewa Province
mayana Enshin 羽山円真	Tokyo
Kusunagi Fusanaga 房城	Ise Province
Fuyuhiko, 6 th generation 冬広 六代	Izumo Province
Mamiya Genshiro 間宮 原 四 郎	Totomi Province
Hosoda Heijiro	also known as Kajihei 銀 治 平
Miyano Heijiro	Kobe
Hakuo	Beppu
Otoshi Hidekazu 秀一	Echigo Province
Isshinshi Hideaki 一 ル子秀明	Kozuke Province
Miyakawa Hidekazu 宮 川 日 出 一	Mutsu Province
Fujiwara Hidekazu 藤 原 秀 出 一	Hitachi province
Kanetomo 兼 友	Mutsu Province
Kanefusa 兼房	Mutsu Province
Kanesada 10 th generation 兼 定 士 代	Mutsu Province
Kanesada 11th 兼定十一代	Mutsu Province
KUNIKANE 13 th generation 国包	Sendai
Ishido Kormori 石堂足則	Mutsu Province
Chojusai Koretoshi 2 nd generation 長太遊足俊二代	Yonezawa. Later signed Tsunao
Ishido Korekazu 7 th generation 是一	Tokyo. Also signed Ryusensai 竜泉菴
Ishido Korekazu 8 th generation 是一	Tokyo
Fujiwara Korenori 藤 原 是 則	Chikuzen Province
Fujiwara Kiyomitsu 9 th generation	Kaga Province
Enju Kunitoshi 延海図俊	Osaka
Rai Kuniyuki 19th generation 来園行	Also signed Kikuchi Muratsugu
Kinoshita Ise Daijo Fujiwara Kanetoyo 兼豊	Kaga Province
Hioki Kanetsugu 日冠兼次	Inaba Province. Also signed Kanehira
Watanabe Kanenaga 兼永	Tokyo
Ogawa Sentaro Kanekuni 小川 仙太郎兼国	Tokyo

Ryugansai Kaneyuki 兼 行
Yamada Kinjiro Kanemitsu 兼 光
Minamoto Kaneharu 包治
Kanemitsu 包光
Darani Katsukuni 7th generation
Ikeda Kazutoshi 4th generation
Kamata Moritake
Munemitsu 宗 光
Shoken Nyudo Motooki 松 轩 入 道 元 烈

Masakado
Tobama Masamitsu: 外 浜 正 光
Dotanuki Muneharu 宗 春
Yamada Muneyoshi 山 田 宗 吉
Tachibana Munetada 宗 忠
Takehara Munemitsu 宗 光
Kashiwagi Muneshige 宗 重
Dotanuki Munehide 同 田 資 宗 秀
Dotanuki Munehiro 同 田 京 広
Kanesaki Masakado 金 崎 正 門
Hosaka Masatsugu 保 阪 正 次
Yushaken Masao 遊 射 軒 正 雄

Minimoto Masanao 源 正 直
Masanobu
Inoue Masakuni 井 上 正 国
Masaaki 正 明

Tamura Masahira
Ki Masahiro
Fujio Masabei
Hioki Mitsuhiro
Kenryusai Morikazu

Hirai Masateru 平 井 正 邨
Seiryushi Norihiro 所 竜 子 盛 広
Senburido Kokusei
Morioka Masakichi 盛 岡 正 吉
Nagayuki 長 萃
Fujiwara Nobutomo 藤 原 信 友
Nobuyoshi 信 按

Mino Province
Tokyo
Tokyo
Tokyo
Kaga Province
Dewa Province
Mutsu Province
Mutsu Province
Also signed Yamato no Kami
Hidekuni 犬 和 守 券 国
Mito
Mutsu Province
Higo Province
Iyo Province

Chikuzen Province
Mutsu Province
Higo Province
Higo Province
Mikawa Province
Dewa Province
Also signed:
Tenenshi Toshimasa
Yuunsai Toshinaga
Munetoshi
Saneo
Buzen Province
Aki Province
Awaji Province
Mikawa province. Younger brother of
Hayama Enshin
Izumo Province
Buzen Province. Also signed Yoshihiro
Kozuke Province
Tokyo
Suo province

Tokyo
Nagato Province
Mino. Also signed Goto Boi
Tokyo
Mutsu
Kaga
Dewa

Iwami Nobutada岩間信	Tosa
Nobumasa 信正	Owari
Satake Nobuaki佐武信監	Kii
Kurihara Nobuhide 栗原信秀	Tokyo
Enju Nobushige	Higo
Shoji Naokatsu	Tokyo
Shoji NAOHIDE直秀	Tokyo
Ichiryusai Nagayoshi	Tokyo
Seiunsai Nagayoshi	Tokyo
Takahashi Naganobu 高橋長信	Izumo and Tokyo
Miyoshi Nagamichi, 9th generation三善長道	Aizu
Nagahisa長久	Bungo
Miyaguchi Shigetoshi宮口榮寿	Tokyo
Yokoyama Sukekane横山祐包	Bizen
Suketoshi	Kurume
Jushinshi Takemiya Sukeharu 寿心子 武宮祐春	Hitachi
Osafune Sukekane	Bizen
Osafune Suketada	Bizen
Hisayama Suketaka 久山祐高	Bizen
Osafune Sukemune祐宗	Bizen
Takenaka Sukenobu竹中砧信	Bizen
Gassan Sadakichi月山 貞吉	Musashi, Settsu
Gassan Sadakazu 月山 貞一	Tokyo
Miyamoto Sanemori	Shimozuke
Shigefusa 重房	Aizu
Shigesuke重助	Signature used by Prince Arisukawa no Miya
Ajiki Torasaku虎作	Tokyo
Akimoto Toshimasa	Tokyo
Maeda Tetsujiro 前田鉄次郎	Tokyo
Toshihiro 俊広	Izumo. Also signed Toshitani
Toshihiro 俊広	Kurume
Toshihide 俊秀	Tosa
Taizo 対蔵	Tokyo
Tadayoshi, 9th generation, 忠吉	Hizen
Kudo Tadamasa工藤忠正	Shinano
Tadamitsu	Nagato
Tadamitsu	Aki
Tsunahiro, 13 th generation, 綱広	Sagami
Tsunahiro 14 th generation, 綱広	Sagami
Fujiwara Teruhiro藤原昶広	Satsuma
Terunao 照直	Dewa
Tokukatsu, 2 nd generation, 徳勝	Mito
Fujieda Teruyoshi	Tokyo
Takahashi Toshihide 高橋寿秀	Osaka
Yamana Tokiyoshi 山名時吉	Tokyo
Aoe Ujiharu氏海	Bizen

Kaifu Ujiyoshi 海部氏吉	Awa
Fujiwara Ujiyasu 藤原氏設	Tokyo
Takase Uko 高湖羽皇	Tokyo
Nobukuni Yoshinao 信国義直	Chikuzen
Nobukuni Yoshimasa 信国義昌	Chikuzen
Yoshisue	Tokyo
Fujiwara Yoshikane 藤原吉包	Hizen
Nagashima Yoshikatsu 長島義勝	Mito
Nakatsukasa Minamoto Yukihide 中務源行秀	Kaga
Yoshifusa 古房	Aizu
Yoshimune	Hizen
Shinryushi Sagitani Yoshitada	
Naminonira Yasuhira, 3 rd generation, 波平安平	Satsuma
Echizen Yasutsugu, 12 th generation, 越前	Tokyo
Echizen Yasunao	Tokyo
Izumo Yakumo	Izumo

The above list of sword smiths who were active from the late Tokugawa Period into the Meiji and Taisho Eras is not complete, for we are quite certain that we missed many. However, the list includes the majority of the sword smiths whose works we encounter now and then.

The reader may note that there are very few of them of any note.

In the Feb. Issue, we will cover swordsmiths in the Showa era, that is after 1926.

SWORD SMITHS

YAMASHIRO PROVINCE

HEIANJO SCHOOL 平安系

The founder of the Heianjo school, Mitsunaga, was active around the Genkyo Era (1321-1324) and is said to have founded the school in Kyoto. There are very few works by this sword smith left today, and the majority of them are tanto.

Nagayoshi is more or less regarded as the representative sword smith of this school, and is listed as the son of the founder Mitsunaga, and was active around the Ryakuo Era (1338-1342), although there are said to be very few extant works from this period. Most of Mitsunaga's works are dated from about the late Yoshino Period's Oei Era (1394-1428), Kakitsu Era (1441-1444) and Bummei Era (1469-1487). Nagayoshi is also said to have studied under Muramasa of Ise Province, and there may be some truth to this since there are notable similarities between the two sword smiths' work.

The length of the active period which is popularly given for Nagayoshi, Rekio (1338) to Bummei (1457) is too long for the span of any one man's life and this may be due to the fact that there was more than one Nagayoshi in the Heianjo school.

There is only one Nagayoshi listed in the direct lineage after the founder Mitsunaga, however, another Nagayoshi is listed with dates such as the Embun Era (1356-1361), Oei Era, Hotoku Era (1449-1452), and Meio Era (1492-1501).

Whether these four are four separate sword smiths is not clearly known. Old texts give us these different dates for the separate swordsmiths.

NAGAYOSHI

worked in the Yamashiro Tradition, Mino Tradition, and Late Soshu Tradition
ca. from the Rekio Era (1338-1342) to about the Bummei Era (1469-1487) (see above).

KATANA:

Shape and construction:

Made in the shape of Katana from the Muromachi Period, though the width of the blade does not taper or narrow going towards the kissaki.

Some blades have a shape in the style of Sengoku Period katana.

In either case, the shinogi is high and the blade is somewhat thin at the mune.

Carvings:

Bo hi with soe hi, futasuji hi, ken with dokko, and bonjj. A characteristic of the carvings is that they are very long

Hamon:

Two distinct separate types of hamon were made: those with a narrow yakiba and those with a wide yakiba. In both cases, they lack nie.

The pattern of the hamon will be notare midare, gunome midare, hako midare, yahazu midare, and chu suguha with midare.

Those which are chu suguha will have the edge or border of the Hamon very sharp and distinct.

The o-midare hamon will be like those in the Mino tradition, which will be in nioi with "blotchy nie", and some will be like those of the Soshu tradition. Also, Nagayoshi made o-koshiba, which is one of his hallmarks, and he seems to have taken pride in making these koshiba.

If the blades are ubu, they invariably will have this koshiba. The koshiba border will be sharp and distinct and the pattern will be the same on both sides of the blade.

Boshi:

Komaru with a small kaeri, and also midarekomi with kaeri yoru, and some kaeri will be very long.

Jitetsu and Jihada:

Swords which are chu suguha will have a very fine textured Ko mokume hada.

Swords which have a midare hamon will have o-hada, and the steel will lack "life" and it will seem very hard and coarse suggesting that the steel was overworked.

Nakago:

Short and stubby with a tanagobara style, and with a kurijiri tip, or a shallow ha-agari kurijiri. Sometimes the nakago will be kengyo. The file marks will be kiri or suji chigai.

The inscriptions are carved on the shinogi ji or on the shinogi line of the nakago in five characters, "Heianjo Nagayoshi". Some nakago are inscribed with the two characters "Nagayoshi".

TANTO:

Nagayoshi made many different types of tanto such as hiratsukuri sunnobi with koshizori, hiratsukuri with a length of about 6 sun but very wide, sunzumari takenoko zori tanto in Bizen Province's Eisho Era style, shobu tsukuri, unokubi tsukuri, moroha, and yari as well as naginata. Most of these will have carvings, but depending on the type of hamon the blades have, the texture of the steel will differ from one blade to another.

The Heianjo sword smiths are regarded as having been skilled in making short length blades.

DARUMA SCHOOL 遠磨系

Founded by Shigemitsu who came from Yamato Province and later went to live in the Ayanokoji Section of Kyoto in Yamashiro Province.

The works of the founder, Shigemitsu are not seen at all, and are very rare, and this is the smith who sometime is referred to as Daruma Masamune 遠磨正宗, Kunishige, or just Daruma. Shigemitsu's son Masamitsu later went to live and work in Hachiya in Mino Province. Masamitsu had a student Kanesada whose descendents all worked in Mino Province.

Work of the Daruma smiths is not often encountered, although they are not necessarily good blades, in spite of the fact that they are rare. Most of the works of these smiths are Tanto, with tachi, katana and wakizashi being very rare.

TANTO:

Mostly hiratsukuri josun (approximately 8.5 sun long) and takenoko sori.

They are a little thick and will have a fukura.

The Hamon will be in nie and chu suguha but there will be very little hataraki to see in the Hamon.

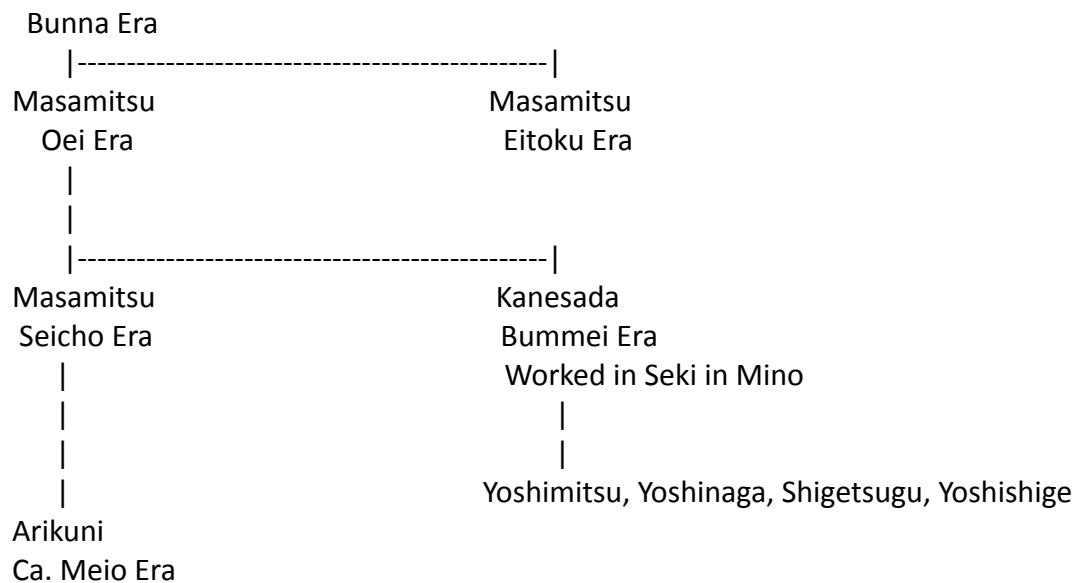
The boshi are mostly komaru.

The jitetsu will be ko-mokume hada, but the steel will seem "weak".

The nakago are short and stubby in a tanagobara style with a shallow kengyo tip. The file marks will be katte sagari. Tanto which are a long sunnobi style will have an o-midare hamon with rough nie, and will resemble the work of some of the mid-Soshu tradition sword smiths like Hiromitsu and Akihiro.

Daruma School Geneology

Shigemitsu



The Kurama smiths, led by Yoshitsugu migrated from Seki in Mino Province to Kyoto, and were active around the Eikyo Era (1429-1441). Though there are not too many sword smiths listed in this school, others are Yoshisada (Meio Era 1492-1501), Yoshishige (Oei Era), Yoshisuke, Yoshinaga, and Shigetsugu, and all were active about the same time, in the late 1400s to the early 1500s.

Tachi, katana and wakizashi are rare, with tanto being the majority of blades commonly encountered. Tanto are a hiratsukuri takenoko sori style with a sunzumari (over 8.5 sun) length. Also, there are moroha tanto as well.

The hamon are in nioi and chu-suguha, with a typical Mino hamon (sharply defined edge or border). Midare hamon will have sharp borders or edges in places. Although the hamon are in nioi, there will be mura nie. Some will be yahazu midare. The boshi are midare and the tip is togari or a jizo with a kaeri yoru and long return.

The jitetsu will be ko-mokume hada with masame hada present in places.

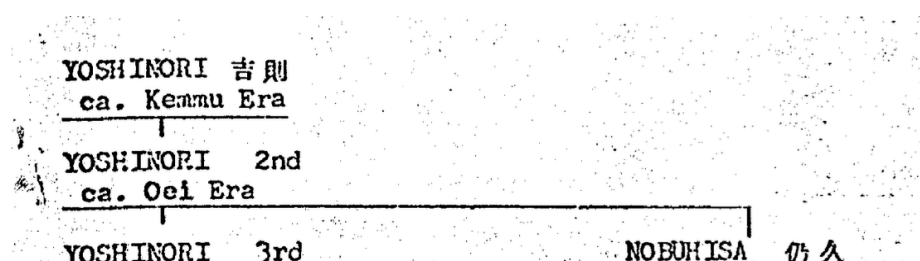
The nakago is short and narrow, with a kurijiri tip, and the file marks are katte sagari or higaki. The inscription or mei is two characters.

SANJO SCHOOL 三条系

YOSHINORI 吉則

Yoshinori is said to have lived and worked in the Sanjo section of Kyoto during the Kenmu Era (1334-1338), and following Yoshinori, there are four generations after him. The works of the first Yoshinori are not often seen, though those of the others are seen from time to time. The later Yoshinori smiths went to work in Izumi Province and in Echizen Province.

Yamato Daijo Yoshinori of the Shinto Period is one of the descendants of this school.



The hamon are chu-suguha with rough nie which form mura nie in places, and also form nijuba and sunagashi in places.

Blades with nioi will also will have mura nie like that seen in Oei Bizen blades as well as yakikuzure. Some blades will be in the Mino tradition with togariba or yahazu midare which will also have mura nie. Some blades will have gunome and choji, and in cases there will be hitatsura.

The boshi will often be midarekomi with a long kaeri. Others will be a jizo boshi, whereas still others will be ichimai.

The jitetsu will be weak with mokume hada mixed with masame hada.

The nakago is short with a broad tip, and some will have a tanagobara shape, and the tip is a shallow kurijiri. The file marks are kiri, or suji chigai.

Tanto in most cases are hiratsukuri with a chukan sori (mu-sori or no sori). The hamon in most cases are chu-suguha with gunome midare and with mura nie. Some tanto are sunzumari (over 8.5 sun) with a takenoko sori, whereas others will be moroha tsukuri.

KYOHO MEIBUTSU CHO

13th Installment

Mori Masamune

Zogan Mei

Length: 1 shaku 6 sun 3.5 bu

Value: 130 Mai

Owner: Doki tango no kami

As a legacy of Lord Hideyoshi, it was received by Mori Kawachi no Kami 毛利河内守.

A chamberlain named Ina turned the blade over to Kaga Dainagon Toshiie 加賀大納言利家 at his castle. On the 26th of December in the first year of Genna, the Year of the Kinoto - U (rabbit), 1615, the katana Mori Masamune, was presented to the shogunate by Matsudaira Shoyu. It was then given to Okubo by the palace (i.e., the shogunate).

On the 5th of Shotoku, Kinoto Hitsuji (1715), the blade was sold (by the Okubo) and was purchased by Koho (Honami) for 1,000 Kan. Since there was a large kizu around the mid-section of the blade, and it was also very poorly shaped, the kizu was removed and the blade was reshaped.

The blade formerly was 2 shaku 1 sun 8 bu long, and was made into its present length and the value was raised.

There are no chu-wakizashi by this sword smith.

As the legacy of Matsudaira Higo no Kami, it was presented to the shogunate. The value at this time was 200 Mai.

The blade was at Inaba Tango no Kami's 稲葉丹後守 and Doki Iyo no Kami 土岐伊予守 wished to possess the blade, and accordingly it was given to him.

Yamanaka Note:

There are many things about the entry for this blade which are not clear at all, in fact most of the text is a complete puzzle.

We hope it is not due to the fact that we are poor translators, but since the text is a puzzle, it was the best we could do.

The blade was received as a legacy of Toyotomi Hideyoshi by Mori Kawachi no Kami who at the time was at a place called Ina in Shinano Province, and Mori at the time was sometimes called Ina. The Ina district eventually came to be included in the Maeda domain.

Sometime later, the blade came to be in the shogunate collection, and in the castle registry, it was noted that the blade was presented to the shogunate by Matsudaira Kunai Shoyu, which refers to the Ikeda of Okayama in Bitchu Province. This means that the blade went from the Mori to the Ikeda before it went to the shogunate. However, due to the fact that there was a major fault, Honami Koho was commissioned to sell the blade.

Koho thought things over, and knew that a chu-wakizashi by Masamune was very rare. A chu-wakizashi left by Matsudaira Hizen no Kami (Maeda) as his legacy to Inaba Tango no Kami was the only such known blade. And if the fault were to be removed and the blade reshaped, the blade will become a fairly good one, and on this assumption, Koho bought the blade for 1,000 Kan and reworked the blade as he had planned. The blade turned out well and it was purchased by Doki Iyo no Kami.

The present location of this blade is not known to us.

KODAMA MASAMUNE 小玉正宗

Unsigned

Length: 8 sun 3.5 bu

Value: 1000 Kan

OWNER: The Owari

The history regarding this blade is not known. It has little sori. It was appraised during the Keian Era.

Yamanaka Note:

Nothing is known about this blade nor its present whereabouts.

It is not in the present Owari Tokugawa Collection, therefore it may have left that collection sometime prior to the establishment of the Owari Foundation, the Reimeikai.

HOCHO SUKASHI MASAMUNE

Unsigned

Length: 7 Sun 1.5 Bu

Value: unknown

OWNER: Naito Sakyo no Suke

The width of the blade is 1 sun 3 bu and there is a gomabashi carved in a sukashi style going all the way through the blade with a tsume below that.

Since there is a sukashi carving, and the blade is shaped like a hocho (kitchen knife), the name clearly resulted from this.

The blade was purchased for 10 Hiki at an antique shop in Nagoya.

Yananaka Note:

This is one of the three Hocho Masamune, and the only one with a sukashi carving.

Naito Sakyo no Suke refers to the Naito who ruled at Nobeoka in Hyuga Province (present day Miyazaki Prefecture). Takase Uko wrote a brief comment on this blade back in 1919, in which he said "100 Hiki (or piki) equaled 15 momme of silver or 24 Sen, and 10 Hiki equaled 2.5 Sen".

2.5 Sen in 1919 would be equivalent to about 50 Yen today, or about \$0.14 in US dollars.

The blade left the Naito shortly after the Meiji restoration and was owed by Marquis Inoue during the late Meiji period, and was owned by a lumber dealer named Kashima of Tokyo.

The blade presently is in the Okano Collection of Okayama and is one of its Kokuho.

A description of this blade is as follows:

Shape & construction:

Hiratsukuri, and the blade is very wide with a width of 1 sun 2.5 bu. It is very thin and has a so no mune (round mune) and there is a slight sori to the blade.

Carving:

There is a sukashi gomabashi (carved all the way through the blade) with a tsume underneath. The tsume is not sukashi or carved through the blade.

Hamon:

O-notare and o-midare with an abundance of nie, chikei, kinsuji and inazuma, as well as profuse uchinoke ail along the blade.

Boshi:

The tip is togari on the omote and round on the ura.

Jitetsu & Hada:

Ko-itame with abundant nie and chikei in places. From the abundance of ji-nie, the steel has a beautiful sheen.

From the ji-nie, nie utsuri is present.

Nakago:

Short, and the tip is a kengyo style. File marks are suji chigai.

KOKUHO: NATIONAL TREASURES OF JAPAN

PART III

Number 9:

RAI KUNIYUKI来国行

Length: 2 shaku 5 sun 3 bu

Sori: 1 sun 2 ri

Width: 9 bu 8 ri

Shinogi tsukuri with an ihori mune and a strong koshi sori. The kissaki is an ikubi kissaki. The hada is ko-itame hada with an abundance of ji nie.

The hamon is ko-midare mixed with ko-choji midare, there are ashi and yo all along the blade, and there is an abundance of ko-nie. There are sunagashi which become kinsuji in places. The boshi on the omote is midarekomi and kuzure. The ura side boshi is omaru and has hakikae at the tip.

There are bo hi on both sides of the blade with the omote side finished with kakinagashi and the ura side with kakitoshi.

On both sides above the machi area, there are sanko tsuki ken carved in ukibori inside of the hi.

The nakago is ubu and has a kiji momo style. There are three mekugi ana, and the file marks are kiri.

Below the 2nd mekugi ana there is a large two character inscription "Kuniyuki".

This particular Kuniyuki is probably one of the best Kuniyuki works because

it is ubu and in an extremely fine state of preservation. However, we quite recently saw another Kuniyuki which probably is the best of all the Kuniyuki blades. This other blade has a name attached to it and is called "Tsurikane Kiri" which means "hanging chain cutter". The blade belonged to Toyotomi Hideyoshi who had the blade shortened for his personal use, and is only about 2 shaku long, attesting to the fact that Hideyoshi must have been a very small man in stature.

It would be just like Hideyoshi to have shortened such a blade for his personal use, without giving the slightest thought for disfiguring such a fine blade. But then swords were made to be used and therefore, one can well understand the old warrior doing this without giving it a second thought.

All of the people who saw this blade could not believe that this was the famous Tsurikane Kiri Kuniyuki which belonged to Hideyoshi, for the blade is perfect in all respects, there not being the slightest "fault" commonly found on most Rai blades.

Most of those who see the blade with us thought that the blade was an Awataruchi or Gojo. This particular blade has never been nominated for Kokuho or any other category, since the owner is perfectly content with the blade as is, knowing perfectly well that this is THE Kuniyuki of all the Kuniyuki swords.

Number 10:

RAI KUNITOSHI 来国俊

Tachi

Length: 2 shaku 5 sun 5 bu

Sori: 8 bu 8 ri

Width: 9 bu 4 ri

Shinogi tsukuri with a Gyo no Mune (ihori mune), with a very strong koshi sori, and fumbari.

The hada is ko-itame hada with ji-nie and there is an effect which looks like utsuri. The hamon on the lower part of the blade is komidare with saka midare and ko-nie, and there are kinsuji. Towards the upper part of the blade, the hamon is notare-chu suguha with saka ashi. The nioi edge is very distinct and well defined.

The boshi is komaru. The carvings on the blade are bo hi with soe hi on the omote which end in kakinagashi in the nakago. On the side of the hi and above the machi there is a bonji under which there is a short suken.

On the ura, there are bo hi with tsure hi ending in kakinagashi in the nakago. There is also a soe hi at the bottom of the blade above the machi.

The nakago is ubu with a kiri tip, and the file marks are kiri. There is one mekugi ana.

The inscriptions are:

on the front: Rai Magotaro saku 来係太郎作
花押 (Kakihan) 正応五年 (Shoo 5 nen) 辰入月 (tatsu 8 gatsu) 13 hi (August 13, 1292)

The inscription below the last character “hi” is undecipherable.

Rai Magotaro is another name for Rai Kunitoshi, and it is said that this is the only blade with this particular inscription.

The condition of the blade being what it is, and the very uniqueness of the inscription makes this blade a very rare and at the same time an interesting blade.

Number 11:

RAI KUNITOSHI 米 国 俊

Tachi

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun

Sori: 8 bu

Width: 9 bu

Shinogi tsukuri with a gyo no mune (ihori mune). The blade is slightly narrow. The sori is koshi-sori with a strong fumbari, and with a very small kissaki.

The hada is ko itame hada, and very tightly forged with ji-nie which forms nie utsuri.

The hamon is in hoso-suguha with ko-choji and ashi. Around the mid-section of the hamon, it becomes very hanayaka (exuberant and active or flashy) and is a midare-ba.

On both sides of the blade above the machi, there is a koshiba.

On the whole, the edge of the hamon is very distinct or well defined and has abundant ko-nie.

The boshi is suguha and there is a komaru.

The nakago is ubu and the tip is kurijiri. The file marks are katte sagari and there is one mekugi ana. Between the machi and the mekugi ana there is a three character inscription Rai Kunitoshi 米 国 俊.

The popular belief concerning this blade is that it is the work of Kunitoshi from around the Shoo Era (1288-1293) and Einin Era (1293-1299).

There are many who believe that this blade is not what it is supposed to be, for the simple reason that the inscription is made on the hira of the nakago, rather than on the shinogi ji, and this opinion is shared by this writer. However, there are several other blades with signatures on the hira of the nakago.

Number 12:

RAI KUNITOSHI 米 国 俊

Kodachi

Length: 1 shaku 9 sun 9 bu 5 ri

Sori: 5 bu 5 ri

Width: 7 bu 5 ri

Shinogi tsukuri with a Gyo no Mune (ihorimune).

The kissaki is a ko kissaki.

The sori is koshi sori with much fumbari.

The hada is ko-itame hada and very tightly forged. There are abundant ko-nie all along the blade.

The hamon is hoso suguha with small ashi. The edge of the nioi boundary is very distinct and well defined and there are abundant ko-nie.

The boshi is a shallow notare and there is a komaru.

The nakago is ubu with a kiji momo shape and the tip is a shallow kurijiri. The file marks are katte sagari. There is one mekugi ana.

Below the machi and near the mune there is an inscription, Rai Kunitoshi 米国 俊.

This blade is in a hiru maki tachi koshirae from the Kamakura period, and from about the same time as the blade itself.

The blade is in the Futaara Shrine in Nikko.

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NUMBER 13:

RAI KUNITOSHI 米国 俊

Tanto

Length: 8 sun 1 bu

Width: 7.5 Bu

Hiratsukuri with a so no mune (round mune), and an uchi sori.

The hada is ko-itame hada, and tightly forged, and there is an abundance of fine ji-nie which makes the entire ji appear like nashiji.

The hamon is chu suguha with small ashi, and the edge of the hamon is very distinct and well defined with ko-nie. Around the monouchi area, there are kinsuji. The ura boshi has a komaru point, but the omote point is a togari.

There is a gomabashi carving on the omote and a koshi-hi on the ura.

The nakago is ubu, and there is a furisode style shape with a kiri tip. The file marks are katte sagari, and there are two mekugi ana, under which there is a three character inscription Rai Kunitoshi来 國俊.

The characterers are large and cover the width of the nakago.

There are many tanto as well as tachi by this smith, but, this particular tanto is one of the outstanding blades by this smith, in that the blade is in a very excellent state of preservation, and in addition, the hamon and the ji are very well made.

NUMBER 14:

RAI KUNITOSHI 来 國俊

Tanto

Length: 8 sun 3 bu

Width: 8 bu 5 ri

Hiratsukuri and with a So no Mune (round). It is thick and the sori is uchi sori. The hada is ko-itame hada, and tightly forged. There are abundant ko-ji-nie.

The hamon is hiro suguha with a shallow notare and ashi. There are abundant ko-nie at the edge of the hamon.

The boshi is komaru on both sides, and has some hakikake at the tip as well as niju-ba.

The carvings are katana hi with suken on both sides of the blade.

The nakago is ubu, the tip is kurijiri, and the file marks are kiri. There are two mekugi ana, and on the nakago omote, the inscription is Rai Kunitoshi来 国後. On the nakago ura, There is a date of Showa 5 nen (正 和 五 年) 11 Gatsu hi (十 一 月 日), or November, 1316.

This is one of the blades which Rai Kunitoshi made in his later years. There is a blade dated Showa 4 Nen, at the age of 75, therefore, this blade was made when Kunitoshi was 76 years old.

This is another very excellently made blade in a very excellent state of preservation. The blade is in the Atsuta Shrine collection in Aichi Prefecture.

IDENTIFYING SWORDS THROUGH THEIR SHAPES

PART II: THE KAMAKURA PERIOD

As mentioned in the history section (March, April, and May Issues), the Kamakura Period is divided into three parts, early, mid, and late Kamakura.

The shape of the blades during the early Kamakura period was about the same as those of the Heian period, but were slightly longer in length, about 3 shaku. The sori became somewhat shallower. They become a little wider and the tapering of the blade towards the kissaki becomes much less pronounced than in the previous period. In other words, the overall appearance of the blade is stronger than in the two previous periods. Also, it was during the mid-Kamakura period that the ikubi kissaki tachi came into being, with an original length of about 3 shaku 4-5 sun.

The width of the ikubi kissaki tachi is about the same at the machi and the yokote area, although in its original length there was some fumbari. The sori is a little strong, and though there was not much hiraniku, there is quite a bit of niku in the hamon area. This is called a hamaguri-ba (hamaguri refers to a clam-like cross section shape). The shinogi ji is not wide. However, from the shape of the blade, the width of the blade will seem wider towards the tip than towards the base. This is especially so because of the shape of the stubby ikubi kissaki. The ikubi kissaki is very stubby appearing and the length and width of the kissaki are about equal.

The shape of the blade during the late Kamakura period is based on the previous mid-Kamakura period's shape, but the kissaki becomes longer. The niku on the hamon disappears and the hamon area becomes flat giving the blade an overall appearance of being very sharp.

Tanto which were not made in great numbers during the early Kamakura period are seen in the mid- and late-Kamakura periods.

Tanto made during the mid-Kamakura period have a length of about 8 sun 5 bu approximately. The width of the blade is narrow in comparison to the length, and it is a little thick. There is a fukura giving the blade an appearance of elegance. This is called a josun takenoko sori tanto. The tanto from the late Kamakura period were made in a length of about 9 sun, and slightly wide, and the fukura will not be as round as those seen earlier. The blade has a chukan sori (musori) and the general appearance gives the blade a somewhat strong feeling.

We would like to explain in more detail about individual sword smiths:

Yamashiro Province:

The Awataguchi School

Some smiths were:

Kunitomo, Hisakuni, Kuniyasu, Kunikiyo, etc.

The swordsmiths of the Awataguchi School are all considered masters, and all of them helped bring about a great surge in the improvement of sword making during the Kamakura Period.

Also, the number of swordsmiths who went to serve and teach the Emperor Gotoba helped bring glory and recognition for the skill of the Yamashiro swordsmiths.

The general description of Awataguchi works is that they have the tachi style of the Heian period, but with a slightly stronger and firmer feeling, meaning that the blade is a little thicker and a little wider.

There may be slight differences from one swordsmith to the next, but generally they are about the same in their overall appearance.

Yoshimitsu is well known for having made a great number of tanto. They were made in takenoko sori with a josun length (8 sun 5 bu), though in cases there will be a few in sunnobi (over 8.5 sun) or sunzumari (less than 8.5 sun) lengths. There will be generous hiraniku and they will be a little thick. The nakago are longer than those of other smiths in this period.

The Rai School

KUNIYUKI AND THE NIJI KUNITOSHI 二 字国 俊

Tachi: in the shape of the mid-Kamakura period. That is the shape is very firm or robust. Also made ikubi kissaki style tachi.

RAI KUNITOSHI 来国俊

Tachi: made in the style of the mid-Kamakura Period, very firm and robust and with extensive fumbari and tapering towards the kissaki.

Tanto: made in a hiratsukuri takenoko sori josun length with the thickness and width in good proportion to the length of the blade. Also made unokubi tsukuri tanto as well as shobu tsukuri tanto, although very rarely.

RAI KUNIMITSU 来国光

Tachi: there is a shallow sori and the width of the blade does not vary too much from the machi to the tip. Hiraniku is lacking and the kissaki is long.

The general appearance is of a very strong tachi shape.

Other tachi were made in a late Kamakura period style, but they are thick and will have hiraniku, so therefore this type is sometimes mistaken for an ikubi kissaki style tachi.

Still other tachi have a very deep sori and with extensive fumbari and taper towards the tip. This type will often be mistaken for an early Yamashiro style.

Distinct tanto Styles:

One) Takenoko sori tanto with a josun length (8.5 sun) and with simple carvings.

Two) Chukan sori (mu-sori) tanto, also with simple carvings.

Three) Sunnobi (over 8.5 sun) and slightly wide, with sori, and thick, which is the style of the early Soshu Tradition.

Rai Kunimitsu also made unokubi tsukuri and shobu tsukuri blades.

RAI KUNITSUGU 来国 次

Tachi:

Made in the style of the late Kamakura period with hiraniku and a slightly strong sori. They have the feeling or impression of an ikubi kissaki tachi shape.

Tanto:

Made many tanto, but they can be divided into two styles.

One style was a hiratsukuri takenoko sori tanto in a short sunnobi length. There is hiraniku, and roundness at the fukura is lacking. They are a little thick.

The second style is hiratsukuri with a sunnobi length of over 1 shaku. The mihaba is large (i.e. it is wide) and the tanto will have sori. It will be thin, hiraniku will be lacking, and roundness at the fukura also will be lacking.

RAI TOMOKUNI 来友国

Tachi: Rare

Tanto: Seen in greater numbers than tachi. They are hiratsukuri sunnobi with little sori and wide, and thin.

RAI MITSUGANE 来光包

Tachi: Rare

Tanto: hiratsukuri with takenoko sori, but slightly longer than josun, and they are a little thick.

RAI KUNIZANE 来国真

Tachi: Very rare with an original length, but the same can be said for most of the sword smiths of this time. The sori is shallow and the width of the blade is about the same at the machi and yokote.

Tanto: Chukan sori (musori). There are also hiraniku sunnobi tanto with a little sori.

RYOKAI 了戒

Tachi: will look like they were made in a katana shape. They will have fumbari and will taper narrowly towards the kissaki. The shinogi is high. The mune will also be

high. The Sori has a tendency to be koshi sori.

Tanto: Hiratsukuri with josun length and narrow with a little sori. They will be a little thick.
There are also sunnobi and unokubi tsukuri tanto.

YAMATO PROVINCE

CHU SENJUIN SCHOOL 中千手院

SADASHIGE 定重, SANEMUNE 真宗, RIKIO 力王, KUNIYOSHI 国吉

Chu Senjuin refers to the swordsmiths of this school who were active from about the mid-Kamakura period into the early Yoshino period.

Work by these swordsmiths is extremely rare, however, it can be said that they are a “stronger” version of the Ko-Senjuin smiths mentioned in the previous installment.

The Ko-Senjuin school dates from the Heian period into the early Kamakura period and so there will not be too many differences between work of the Chu-Senjuin and the Ko-Senjuin smiths in the early Kamakura period, although there will be noticeable differences from the Heian period work. Tanto, made on rare occasions, were takenoko sori or chukan (mu) sori. There were also wide hiratsukuri sunnobi style tanto.

TAEMA SCHOOL 当麻 系

KUNIYUKI 国行

The Taema School is represented by this smith, Kuniyuki, and although there are other sword smiths listed in this school such as

TOMKIYO, TOSHIYUKI, KUNIKIYO 国濟, TOMOTSUNA 友綱, TOMONAGA 友長,
TOMOYUKI, ARIYOSHI 有法師, and CHOARITOSHI 長有後

Most of these smiths worked from about the late Kamakura period into the early Yoshino period.

Tachi: worked in the tachi style and shape of the mid-Kamakura period. They also made ikubi kissaki Tachi.

Tanto: Hiratsukuri chukan sori (musori) and sunnobi (over 8.5 sun) tanto which were wide.
In either case, they are thick. They also made unokubi tsukuri tanto.

SHIKKAKE SCHOOL 尻系

Norihiro 即 弘 is the founder of this school, but the works of this smith are very rare and his son Norinaga is commonly given credit as being the founder.

Norinaga 則長

Tachi: Tachi are in the shape of the late Kamakura period and are thick and there will be pronounced hiraniku.

Tanto: Josun or sunzumari length, and the sori is takenoko sori and they are thick. They become thinner towards the tip, and can become extremely "withered" looking. On occasion chukan sori tanto are seen.

There were 3 generations after the first Norinaga. Other swordsmiths in this school are Norinari 則 and Norizane 則, although works by smiths other than Norinaga are very rare.

TEGAI SCHOOL 手播系

Kanenaga is commonly regarded as being representative of this school, and there are many excellent examples this swordsmith has left to us.

The Tegai smiths worked for quite a long time, and the last of this group can be seen working in the late Sengoku Period, just prior to the Shinto period.

KANENAGA 包永

Tachi: Made in the tachi shape from the early Kamakura period which were thick and had a high shinogi. However, the mune is thin. Many of the swords will have a koshi sori.

Tanto: Hiratsukuri takenako sori with a short sunnobi length. Also, chukan sori (no sori), thick and slightly wide.

Other sword smiths in this school were:

KANEKIYO 包清, KANEYOSHI 包吉, KANETSUGU 包次, KANETOSHI 包俊, KANEMITSU 包光, KANENAGA 包長, and KANEZANE 包真

The works of these sword smiths very closely resembles that of Kanenaga, but the sori will be slightly shallow.

Kanenaga moved to Mino Province and changed his name to Shizu Saburo Kaneuji. He studied under Masamune in Soshu Province and is counted as one of the Masmune Jittetsu.

Work that Kaneuji made while still in Yamato Province is regarded as being Yamato Shizu.

KANEUJI 包氏

Tachi: Has shapes from the mid to late Kamakura period.

The sori is shallow, the blade is wide, and thin. The blade will lack hiraniku. The shinogi will be high and the width of the shinogi ji will be narrow. The kissaki will be long and roundness at the fukura will be lacking.

Tanto: Most of the tanto by this smith will closely resemble those of Kanenaga.

RYUMON NOBUYOSHI 竜門延吉

Works by this sword smith are rare, however, if they are found, they are made in the tachi style of the mid-Kamakura period. They are thick, the shinogi is high, and the sori will be strong.

HOSHO SCHOOL 保昌系

SADAMUNE 貞宗

Tachi: Tachi shape of the late Kamakura period with a shallow sori. The width of the blade does not differ too greatly between the machi and the tip. Hiraniku will be lacking, the shinogi will be high, and it will be thick.

Tanto: Hiratsukuri takenoko sori with a slight sunnobi length. Also made chukan sori style tanto. In either case, the overall appearance of the shape of the tanto provides an impression that it is very firm or strong. The blade is wide and thick. Sword smiths of this school other than Sadamune are:

SADAYOSHI 貞吉, SADAZANE 貞真, SADAKIYO 貞清, SADAOKI 貞奥, SADAYUKI 貞行, and SADAMITSU 貞光.

EXHIBITS: MEIBUTSU NIHONTO TEN

An exhibit of swords listed in the Kyoho Meibutsu Cho, which we have been covering in the Newsletter, was held at a department store exhibit hall in Shinjuku, Tokyo in November.

It can be said that this was the only time in the history of sword exhibits, that such a large number of swords from the Meibutsu Cho were assembled together under one roof.

The swords exhibited were:

SHINANO TOSHIRO

ASAKURA TOSHIRO

GOTO TOSHIRO

MIDARE TOSHIRO

KOMATSU MASAMUNE

SOMA MASAMUNE

KANAMORI MASAMUNE
HYUGA MASAMUNE
ICHIAN MASAMUNE
HOCHO MASAMUNE (Sukashi)
HOCHO MASAMUNE
TAROSAKU MASAMUNE
NAKATSUKASA MASAMUNE
ISHIDA KIRIKOMI MASAMUNE
MUSASHI MASAMUNE
TOMITA GO
NAKAGAWA GO
NABESHIMA GO
KUWANA GO
MURAKUMO GO
MIKAZUKI MUNECHIKA
TORIGAI KUNITOSHI
IKEDA RAI KUNITOSHI
SHIOKAWA RAI KUNITOSHI
HESHIKIRI HASEBE
AKITA RYOKAI
KANBE TAEMA
KUWAYAMA HOSHO GORO
UJIE SADAMUNE
TOKUZEN-I SADAMUNE
MONOYOSHI SADAMUNE
TAIKOGANE SADAMUNE
FUTASUJI HI SADAMUNE
SATO YUKIMITSU
AIZU SHINTOGO
OKURIKARA HIROMITSU
INABA SHIZU
MASUDA TOSHIRO
MAEDA TOSHIRO
MORI TOSHIRO
MAEDA MASAMUNE
FUSHIMI MASAMUNE
KUKI MASAMUNE
BUNGO MASAMUNE
FUDO MASAMUNE
HOCHO MASAMUNE
KOTEGIRI MASAMUNE
GOTO MASAMUNE
IKEDA MASAMUNE
OGAKI MASAMUNE
KITANO GO
SAMIDARE GO
MATSUI GO

KOTEGIRI GO
AIZEN KUNITOSHI
URAKU RAI KUNITOSHI
ARAMI RAI KUNITOSHI
TERAZAWA SADAMUNE
SHUHAN SADAMUNE
SAIMURA SADAMUNE
FUSHIMI SADAMUNE
FUDO YUKIMITSU
MUTSU SHINTOGO
WAKEBE SHIZU
NIKKO ICHIMONJI
DOYO ICHIMONJI
TOTOMI NAGAMITSU
KUWAYAMA MITSUGANE
O KANEMITSU
FUKUSHIKA KANEMITSU
KO AOE
HIDA AOE
O MIHARA
SAYO SAMONJI
OTENTA MIIKE
IWAKIRI KAIFU
NANSEN ICHIMONJI
NATAGIRI NAGAMITSU
MIDARE MITSUGANE
NAMIOYOGI KANEMITSU
NIKKARI AOE
CHO SAMONJI

SHOSHIN NO BU: BLADES WHICH HAVE BEEN IN A FIRE

ICHIGO HITOFURI
NAMAZUO TOSHIRO
EBINA MUNETSIKA
KOJIRI TOSHO SHINTOGO
YANONE YUKIMITSU
WAKAE MASAMUNE
SHISHI MASAMUNE
AWATAGUCHI YOSHIMITSU

COPIES OF BLADES MADE BY SWORD SMITHS IN LATER PERIODS

HORIKAIZA KUNIHIRO: UTSUSHIMONO OF:
SUKASHI HOCHO MASAMUNE
SUKASHI HOCHO MASAMUNE

ECHIZEN YASUTSUGU: UTSUSHIMONO OF:

WAKAE MASAMUNE

OYAKO TOSHIRO

HONEBAMI TOSHIRO

EBINA MUNETAKA

BAICHIKU SADATUNE

KIREHA SADAMUNE

SHISHI SADAMUNE

ECHIZEN YASUTSUGU, SECOND GENERATION:

UTSUSHIMONO OF AKITA SADAMUNE

CHIKUZEN NOBUKUNI SHIGEKANE

UTSUSHIMONO OF FUDO KUNIYUKI

KOYAMA MUNETSUGU

UTSUSHIMONO OF KORYU KAGEMITSU

In addition to the blades from the MEIBUTSU CHO, there were other swords regarded as meibutsu in different Daimyo collections which were also included in this exhibit:

AKITA TOSHIRO

Collection of Akita Josuke, who ruled the Akita area from about 1570 to about 1600.

BUZEN GO

History regarding this blade is not known.

HABAHIRO SADAMUNE

Has long been famous as part of the Maeda collection in Kaga province.

ISHIDA SADAMUNE

Famous as one of the blades which once belonged to Ishida Mitsunari.

TAKAGI NAGAMITSU

From the Uesugi Kenshin Collection.

SANCHOMO

Ichimonji blade which belonged to Uesugi Kenshin and his son Kagekatsu, both of whom treasured this blade very highly.

HIMEZURU ICHIMONJI

From the Uesugi collection.

NIHONGO

famous Yari which measures 2 shaku 6 sun 1 bu 5 ri. Sometimes referred to as Nomitori no Yari.

KOSETSU SAMONJI

Given to Kishu Yorinobu by his father Ieyasu.

IKOMA MITSUTADA

Owned by Ikoma Sanuki no Kami, retainer to Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

O-NAGINATA

by Aoc Ietsugu of the Ikeda clan of Okayama.

TOMBOKIRI

Belonged to Honda Heihachiro of the Tokugawa forces.

This yari along with the Nihongo and the Ikkoku Nagayoshi are known as
The Nihon Sanso.

KOMAZURU MITSUTADA

Belonged to Kobayakawa Takakage of the Toyotomi forces.

KATO SAMONJI

Belonged to Kato Kiyomasa.

KINOSHITA MASAMUNE

Nothing is known about the history of this blade.

O-AOE TSUGUNAO

Belonged to the Maeda of Kaga Province.

All in all, the exhibit was a very large one, from the standpoint of the number of swords exhibited, and the large number of people attending were very much impressed in seeing so many famous blades in one hall.

We always feel that not to be able to hold these blades in one's hand greatly defeats the purpose of looking at swords. But then one can only expect just so much from an exhibition, that is to be able to look at a sword through a glass show case. Besides one doesn't allow every Tom, Dick and Harry to handle the family treasure.