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ALBERT YAMANAKA'S NIHONTO NEWSLETTER

Albert Yamanaka's Nihonto Newsletter was published monthly from January, 1968 to July, 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

MIMASAKA PROVINCE

MASATOSHI SCHOOL 正利系

Masatoshi, a student of Hosokawa Masayoshi of Edo, was a retainer of the Matsudaira Clan of Tsuyama.

The works of Masatoshi and his students are poorer versions of Masayoshi's work.

HOSOKAWA MASAYOSHI 細川正義		
MASATOSHI	正利	Tada Shirozaemon.
MASANORI	正則	Mimasaka Prov.
MASATADA	正忠	Saijo, Iyo Province.
MASAHIDE	正秀	Hamada Masahide, Iyo Prov.
TOSHIDE	利秀	younger brother of Masahide.
CHIKANOBU	親信	Aizawa Chikanobu, Bungo Prov.
MASATOSHI	正壽	Mito Masatoshi, Bungo Prov.
NOBUKATSU	宣勝	Takenaga Nobukatsu, Kumamoto, Higo Prov.
UJITOSHI	氏利	Takenaga Kizaburo, Kumamoto, Higo Prov.
HAGI HIROMICHI	萩公道	Higo Prov.

MASATOSHI 正 利

Worked in the Bizen tradition approximately during the Koka Era. His name was Tada Shirozaemon, he was a retainer of the Tsuyama Clan, and was a student of Hosokawa Masayoshi.

Shape and Construction:

Regarded as being one of the better students of Hosokawa Masayoshi. Worked mostly in the Bizen tradition.

The shape of the blade is very well made, and it will have a strong sori, be thick, and have a high shinogi. The kissaki is short.

Hamon:

The pattern is ko-choji midare, o-midare, or o-choji midare, resembling those of Ko-Bizen or Ichimonji.

The nioi is very dense and there will be nie in addition, and this makes the entire hamon very hanayaka (flamboyant and active)

Boshi:

The boshi is midarekomi with very dense nioi.

Jitetsu and Hada:

There is an o-mokune hada mixed with masame hada. There will be abundant ji-nie.

Nakago:

The nakago is long and has a strong sori. There will be niku on the hira and the nakago is shaped very well. The tip is a shallow kurijiri. The file marks have kesho yasuri

Inscriptions are: SAKUYO SHI TADA MASATOSHI TOTO NI OITA KORE TSUKURU

作陽士多田正利 荻東都造之

And dated.

MASAAKI 正明

Worked in the Bizen tradition approximately during the Koka to Kaei eras. His name was Takemura Tsunejiro and he was a student of student of Hosokawa Masayoshi.

Commonly regarded to as one of the ablest of Masayoshi's students, and is known to have made many of Masayoshi's blades which Masayoshi signed with his name.

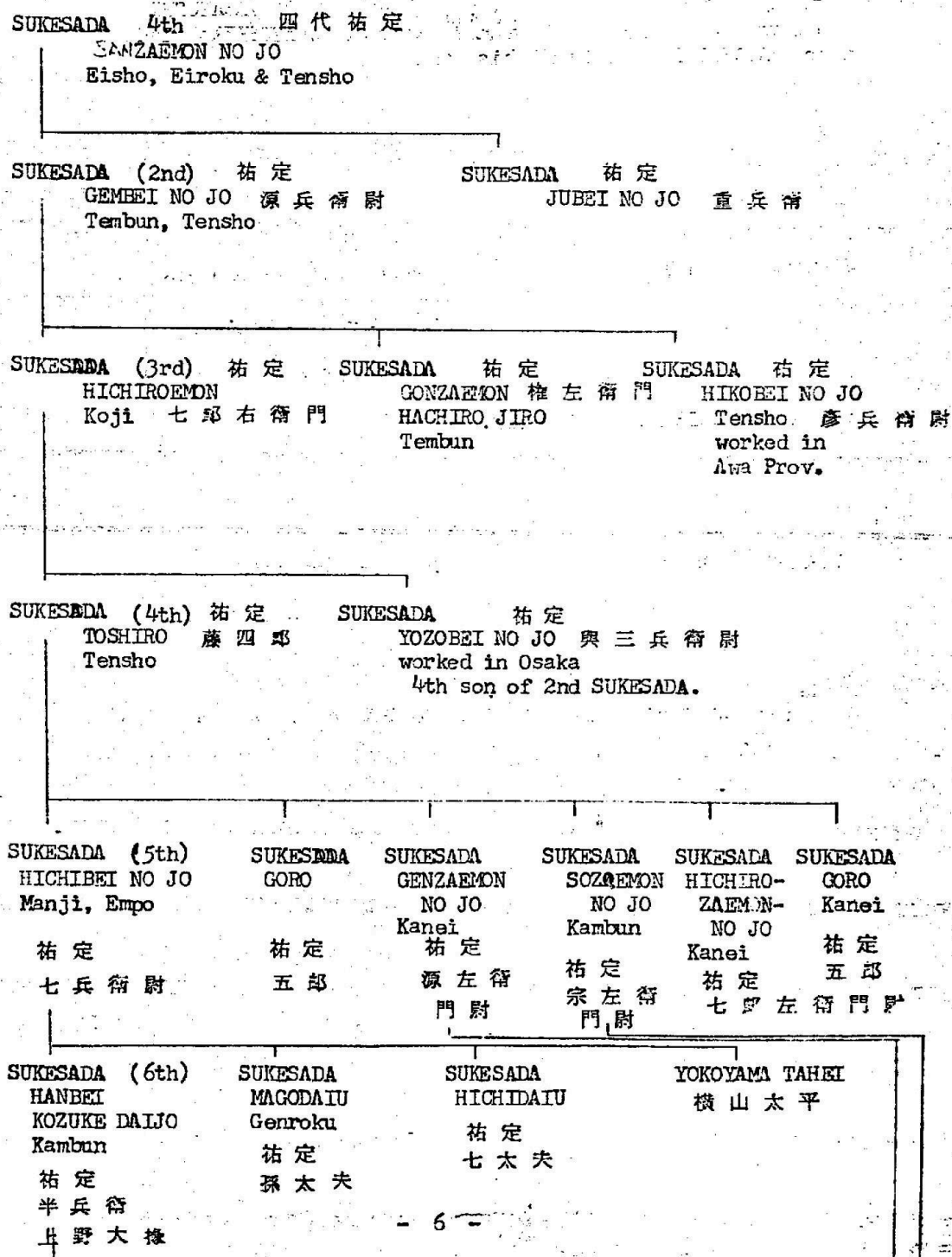
NOBUTAKA 信高

Worked in the Bizen tradition approximately during the Koka to Kaei eras. Was a retainer of the Tsuyama Clan. Was a student of Suishinshi Masahide.

KANESAKI 兼先

Worked in the Yamashiro tradition approximately during the Koka - Kaei Eras. Was a student of Suishinshi Masahide. He made many tanto with a hoso suguha or chu-suguha hamon formed in ko-nie.

YOKOYAMA SUKESADA SCHOOL横山祐定系



Continued on

continued on

Continuation of left Side of the Sukesada school

SUKESADA (7th) 祐定
 SUKENOBU later 祐信
 HICHINOSHIN YAMATO DAIJO 七之進 大和大祿
 Shōtoku and Genroku
 5th son of 5th SUKESADA

SUKESADA (8th) 祐定
 TADANOSHIN 忠之進
 2nd son of KAWACHI NO KAMI SUKESADA
 Kyōwa and Enkyō

SUKESADA (9th) 祐定
 HICHIBEI 七兵衛
 TOSHIMITSU 壽光
 Hōreki, Meiwa

TOSHIYOSHI 壽言
 TAKUNISHIN 宅之進
 Meiwa

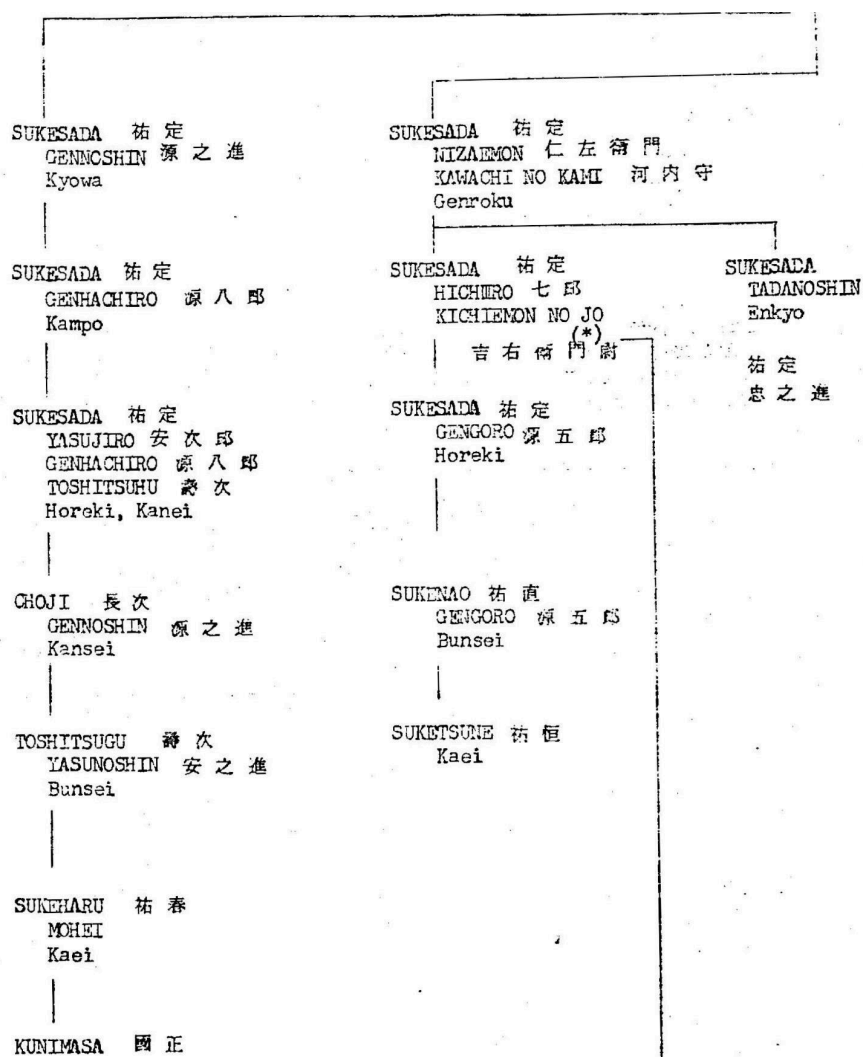
TOSHIMORI 壽守
 HICHIBEI 七兵衛
 Ansei
 2nd son of 8th SUKESADA.

SUKESADA 祐定
 Hichibei 七兵衛
 Kansei

SUKEMORI 祐盛
 HICHIBEI 七兵衛
 Bunke

SUKEKANE 祐包
 Kaei

Continuation of the right side of the Sukesada School genealogy:



Continued from the right side of the previous page:

(*) SUKESADA 祐定
HICHIROEMON 七郎右衛門
Ansei elder brother of GENGORO

SUKESADA 祐定
HICHIROEMON 七郎右衛門
Kansei

SUKEHIRA 祐平
ISE NO KAMI 伊勢守
Bunka student of MOTOHIRA
元平

SUKEMORI 祐盛
later adopted by
HICHIBEI
KAGA NO SUKE
加賀介

SUKENAGA 祐永

SUKEKUNI 祐國

SUKEHIRA 祐平
Narita Chojiro
Awa Prov.

SUKETOSHI 祐利
Otsuki Tone
Bitchu, Mizuta

SUKEYOSHI 祐吉
Yoshida Gennoshin
Wakasa Prov.

TOSHIZANE 時実
Maeda Tetsuji
Matsuyama, Bitchu Prov.

SUKEHIRO 祐廣
Sanuki Prov.

From the late Koto into the Shinto and Shinshinto periods, in the Yokoyama Sukesada lineage, all or almost all of the sword smiths of any note took the name of Sukesada. In addition, there are smiths not included in the lineage who also used the name of Sukesada.

As can be seen from the above chart, the name of Sukenaga, Sukekane, and Sukehira, are seen more often in this lineage during the Shinshinto Period, although there are smiths with the name of Sukesada.

YOKOYAMA SUKEHIRA 祐平

YOKOYAMA SUKENAGA 祐永

YOKOYAMA SUKEKANE 祐包

These smiths worked in the Bizen tradition and Soshu tradition approximately during the Kansei Era.

Sukehira was the younger brother of the 4th Gengoro Sukesada and took the position of the 5th Sukesada. He is a little different from the other Osafune smiths of his time, in that he studied under Oki Motohira of Satsuma Province, and followed the Soshu tradition which Motohira was known for, and after his service under Motohira, he changed his name to Sukehira and received the title of Ise no Kami.

Sukenaga was the second son of Sukehira who received the title of Kaga no Suke.

Sukemori was the elder brother of Sukenaga, and although he never attained the fame of his younger brother, his son Sukekane carried on the family name and fame, and became the representative of the lineage in the Shinshinto or the very late Shinshinto period.

KATANA

Shape and Construction:

The shape of the blade will be like those of the earlier Muromachi Koto period style and the blade is a little narrow, and overall, the shape of the blade is very gentle.

A koshi sori is very evident, and the blade tapers strongly towards the kissaki, which is short, and the blade is thick.

Hi and Carvings:

There are bo hi with tsure hi on some works, although they are not often seen.

Hamon:

The hamon is formed in nioi and the habuchi is very dense. The width of the yakiba is koroai, that is it is just right and not too wide or too narrow.

There are some choji midare hamon like those of the 2nd Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke of Osaka, commonly called Naka Kawachi. This hamon style is commonly called kengyo choji midare, or a choji midare which appears like a clenched fist. However, the choji midare pattern is much smaller than those of Kunisuke.

The yakidashi also is like those on Osaka blades.

Boshi:

Boshi are a small pattern midarekomi with a slight kaeri.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is a very small ko-mokume hada mixed with ohada. Overall, the appearance of the steel gives one a feeling that it is “flat” or uninteresting, despite the fact that it is well forged and has a fine and delicate hada.

Nakago:

The shape of the nakago is like those of the late Koto Sukesada smiths. Although the file marks are very distinct and quite deep, the shape is a typical Osafune style, although the nakago jiri varies from one work to the other, most are kurijiri with different angles at the tip.

Inscriptions are also made in quite a variety of styles. Some typical examples are:

YOKOYAMA ISE NO KAMI SUKEHIRA 横山伊勢守枋平

BIYO OSAFUNE JU SUKEHIRA SAKU 備陽長船住祐平作

YOKOYAMA KAGA NO SUKE FUJIWARA SUKENAGA 横山加賀介藤原祐永

ICHI TOMONARI 56 DAI MAGO 一 友成五六代孫

BIZEN OSAFUNE JU 備前長船住

BIZEN OSAFUNE JU YOKOYAMA SUKEKANE SAKU 備前長船住横山祐包作

TOMONARI 58 DAI MAGO 友成五十八代孫

All mei will be dated.

AKI PROVINCE

TERUHIRO SCHOOL 輝廣系

The first Teruhiro, Higo no Kami, was active during the Keicho Era and is the descendant of Mino Seki Kanetsune. Teruhiro worked in Owari Province, and then went to Aki Province where his descendants worked through all of the Shinto and Shinshinto periods.

Those working in the Shinshinto Period were the 12th Teruhiro, active around the Anei Era to the Tenmei Era. The 13th Teruhiro worked during the Kyowa and Bunsel Eras, or the early 1800s. The 14th Teruhiro worked during the Koka-Kaei Eras or the mid 1800s.

Like in any sword smith lineage, the daisagari or successor smith's work became poor, and this lineage is no exception.

However, Hirotaka who descended from the second Teruhiro, and the 5th and 6th Hirotaka of the Bunka-Kaei Eras are a little better than the main lineage.

TERUHIRO 1st Keicho 輝 貞

TERUHIRO 2nd Keicho "

TERUHIRO 3rd Kambun 輝 元

TERUHIRO 4th Empo "

TERUHIRO 5th Kyowa "

TERUHIRO 6th Kenrokū "

TERUHIRO 7th Hoei "

TERUHIRO 8th Shotoku "

TERUHIRO 9th Kyowa "

TERUHIRO 10th Genbun "

TERUHIRO 11th Horeki "

TERUHIRO 12th Anei "

TERUHIRO 13th Kyowa "

TERUHIRO 14th Koka "

HIROTAKA 1st Kambun 廣 隆

HIROTAKA 2nd Hoei "

HIROTAKA 3rd Tenmei "

MUTSU DAIGO

HIROTAKA 4th Kamsei "

HIROTAKA 5th Bunka 廣 隆

ECHIZEN DAIGO 越 前 大 掾

student of OSAKI SUKETAKA

HIROTAKA 6th Kaei "

student of KOMAI KEININ

HIROTAKA 汎隆, 5TH AND 6TH GENERATIONS

Worked in the Soshu and Bizen traditions approximately during the Bunka-Kaei eras.

The 5th Hirotaka was a student of Ozaki Suketaka and received the title of Echizen Daijo. The works of the 5th as well as the 6th generations show a combination of the Soshu tradition with the Bizen tradition. The blades are thick and quite wide, and the kissaki is long. There are the so-called "chu-wakizashi" made in a hiratsukuri style of the Oei Era Bizen Tradition which will have bo hi with tsure hi.

The hamon is gunome midare or o-midare and formed in nioi. Overall, the hamon is very hanayaka or active and flamboyant.

The boshi will be a komaru and the nioi is very dense. The boshi kaeri is strong and ends sharply or suddenly.

The jitetsu and hada are weak, so the steel will seem dark or 'blackish'.

The nakago will have niku on the surface, and will be long. The tip is a shallow kurijiri.

The 6th Hirotaka, having worked or studied under Komai Kenin who was a student of Tomotaka, will have some Yamashiro tradition influence, and this can be seen in the hamon which will be chu-suguha midare with nie.

FUYUHIRO 冬廣

The 2nd son of Fuyuhiko of Wakasa Province went to Hiroshima in Aki Province during the Keicho Era. The lineage then continued on for 9 generations. The smiths in the Shinshinto period are from the 6th generation on. The 6th generation worked during the Termei Era, the 7th generation around the Koka Era, the 8th around the Bunsei and Tempo Eras, and the 9th around the Koka and Kaei eras.

The works of these late Fuyuhiko smiths are poor versions of the earlier Fuyuhiko work from Wakasa Province. The notable point is the hamon which isomidare in most cases, and there will be abundant mura nie, but the hamon appear lifeless.

SUO PROVINCE

GASSAN MASANOBU 月出玉宣

Worked approximately during the Bunka Era. Was a student of Suishinshi Masahide. His hamon will be chu-suguha or choji midare. The steel appears to be very weak.

MORITOSHI 盛俊

Worked approximately during the Genji Era. His name was Iwamoto Seiuemon Unji Moritoshi, and he also used the names Seiryushi and Seiryuken. He studied under Koyama Munetsugu and Chounsai Tsunatoshi, however, his work was inferior to that of these two teachers.

NAGATO PROVINCE

MORI GENTARO MASATOSHI 正俊

Worked approximately during the Kaei Era.

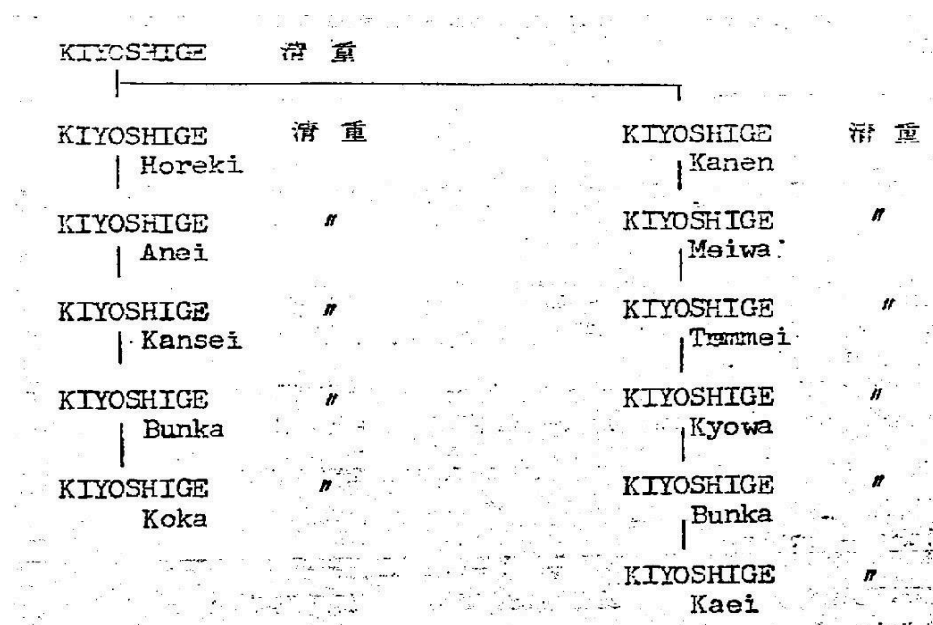
He was a student of Tomotaka of Kyoto, and like those of his teacher, blades by Masatoshi are made quite well. There is a strong sori, the blades are thick, there is a high shinogi and a short kissaki.

Tanto will be thick and have a takenoko sori. The hamon is chu-suguha or hoso suguha and there will be nijuba with abundant ko-nie. The boshi will be komaru. The jitetsu is very fine and well forged.

KIYOSHIGE 清重

The founder of this group is said to have come from Yamato Province, although exactly when is not stated.

The works of the smiths of this group resemble those of late Mino Province Seki works with the better made works resembling those of Naoe Shizu or Zenjo Kaneyoshi.



The blade is thick, and the width is narrow. There is a high shinogi and a short kissaki. The hamon will be a small toran or hako-midare or gunome togari. The boshi is midarekomi and the tip is sharp or pointed. The kaeri ends very abruptly.

The hada is ko-mokume hada mixed with masame hada, and there will be a strong blackish tint in the steel.

The nakago is long and narrow, and the tip is a shallow kurijiri.

MASASHIGE正重, 1st and 2nd generations

Worked approximately during the Bunsei to Kaei eras.

Students of Suishinshi Masahide. Both generations are considered to be quite good, and their work resembles that of their teacher.

The works of the 2nd Masashige are seen more those those from the 1st generation. The 2nd generation Masashige's hamon will be chu-suguha, choji midare, o-midare, or o-notare, and there will, be abundant ara nie on the hamon.

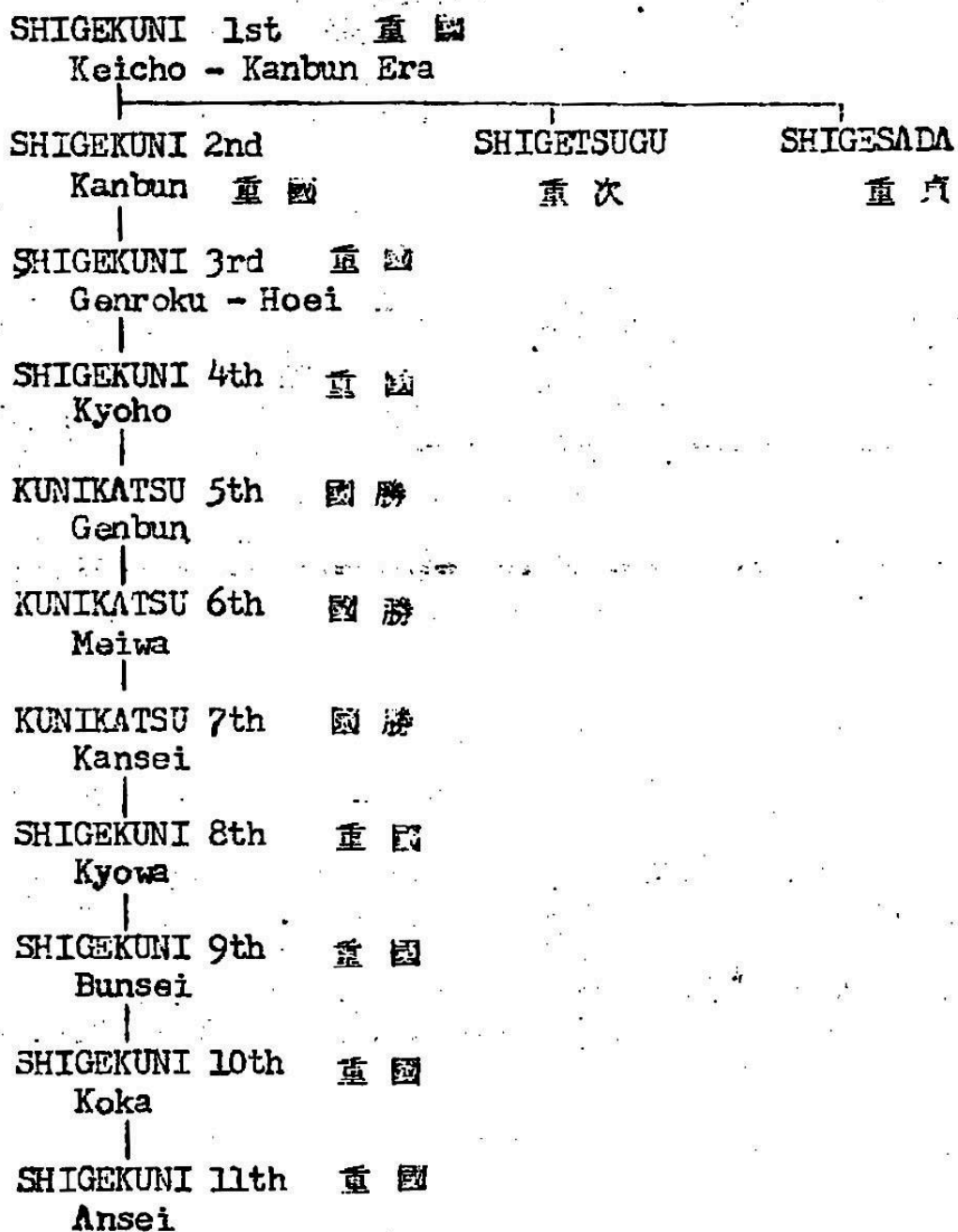
NANKAIDO HIGHWAY

KII PROVINCE

SHIGEKUNI SCHOOL重國系

The Shigekuni lineage continued for 11 generations, and those that worked during the Shinshinto period were the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th generations.

The 5th, 6th, and 7th generations worked under the name of Kunikatsu. However, from the 8th generation on, the name Shigekuni was used again.



The works of the dai sagari or successor Kunishige smiths are very poor versions of the earlier Shigekuni smiths, some so much so, that there is no resemblance to the earlier works. Many are very long and have hardly any sori at all, and feel like a club in one's hand.

Kotengu 小天狗

Worked approximately during the Koka Era.

Was a student of Gassan Sadayoshi, and his work resembles that of Gassan, but are somewhat inferior in all respects.

AWAJI PROVINCE

SUKEHIRA 祐平

Worked approximately during the Bunsei Era.

Was a student of Yokoyama Sukenaga of Bizen Province.

AWA PROVINCE

MUNETOSHI 宗利

Worked approximately during the Kansei Era.

Was a student of Suishinshi Masahide.

Munetoshi's works have very well made shapes. There is a strong saki sori, and a short kissaki. Both nie and nioi and are seen in the hamon, and the nioi is especially well made and is very dense.

MASANAO 正直

Worked approximately during the Kansei Era.

He was a student of Suishinshi Masahide. His work resembles that of the above Munetoshi although it is somewhat inferior.

MASAKOTO 昌言

Worked approximately during the Bunsei Era.

Was a student of Ozaki Suktaka of Osaka. His work resembles that of Suketaka, and the hamon are mostly gunome.

MASAMORI 正守

Worked approximately during the Kyowa Era.

Was a student of Suishinshi Masahide. His work resembles that of Munetoshi of the same province.

MASAMORI 正守

Worked approximately during the Bunsei Era.

He was a student of Ozaki Suketaka and the son of the above Masamori. His work resembles that of Suketaka.

SANUKI PROVINCE

MITSUNAGA 光長

Worked approximately during the Kansei Era. Was a student of Ozaki Suketaka. His work is an inferior version of Suketaka's. The hamon will have rounded peaks on the gunome, and also there will be abundant mura nie.

MITSUTERU 光照

Worked approximately during the Bunsei Era. He was the son of the above Mitsunaga.

MITSUTAKA 光隆

Worked approximately during the Koka Era. Was a student of Ozaki Masataka (son of Suketaka). Used the art-name of Tenryushi天童子. His work resembles that of Masataka, and is a poorer version of Suketaka's work.

TAKASHIGE 隆重

Worked approximately during the Bunka Era. Was a student of Ozaki Suketaka.

TAKASHIGE 隆重

Worked approximately during the Kyowa Era.

Was a student of Kuroda Takanobu 黒田鷹謙. Used the art-name of Ryusokin. Takashige was followed by the 2nd Takaharu and the 3rd Takakiyo.

IYO PROVINCE

NAGATSUGU 長次

Worked approximately during the Kyowa Era. Was the son of the 7th generation Kobayashi Izumi Daijo Kuniteru 小林和泉大掾國輝.

KUNITERU 國輝

Worked approximately during the Ansei Era.

Was the 7th generation Kobayashi Ise no Kami Kuniteru 小林伊勢守國輝 of Osaka.

NAGAHIRO 長弘

Worked approximately during the Bunsei Era. He was the son of the above Nagatsugu and used the art-name of Banryushi. He was a student of Toshizane of Inaba Province.

NAGAYUKI 長之

Worked approximately during the Koka Era. Was the son of Nagahiro (above) and a student of the 3rd Inaba Province's Hamabe Toshiyuki 浜部 寿行.

KUNIYOSHI 國吉

Worked approximately during the Kansei Era. Was a student of Ozaki Suketaka. Worked in the Soshu tradition, and his hamon were o-midare with sunagashi and ara nie.

KUNIYOSHI 國吉

Worked approximately during the Tempo Era. Was a student of Suishinshi Masahide. His hamon were mostly chu-suguha.

KUNIMASA 國正

Worked approximately during the Temmei Era. Was a student of Suishinshi Masahide. His hamon were mostly chu-suguha.

MASAKUNI 正國

Worked approximately during the Kaei Era. Was the son of the above Kunimasa.

KUNIMASA 國正

Student of the 7th Hizen Omi Daijo Tadayoshi. Worked approximately during the Kaei Era.

KUNIMASA 國正

Worked approximately during the Kaei Era. Son of the above Kunimasa. Studied under Bizen Yokoyama Sukeharu. Made many tanto.

NOTE: the above two last two smiths were students of Hizen Tadayoshi and Yokoyama Sukeharu, and are different smiths from the earlier Kunimasa who was a student of Suishinshi Masahide.

TOSA PROVINCE

SA YUKIHIDE 左行秀

Worked in the Shinto tradition approximately during the Koka-Kaei eras.

Considered as one of the greats of the Shinshinto period smiths. Yukihide's lineage goes back to the Kongobei School, and he is the grandson of one of the last Kongobei smiths, Moritaka. Yukihide worked in Tosa Province as well as in Chikuzen Province, and in Edo. Since he is of the Kongobei School, it can be thought that he is originally from Chikuzen Province, however, popularly, he is included among the Tosa Province smiths as it seems that he was most active in Tosa.

Honami Koson related to us a conversation that he had with Hayama Enshin, one of the late Shinshinto to Meiji and Taisho period smiths, and Enshin said he was strongly influenced by Yukihide's sword making abilities.

There are many who praise Yukihide as being an equal of Go Yoshihiro and Rai Kunitsugu of the Koto Period, and Kotetsu and Inoue Shinkai of the Shinto Period.

KATANA AND WAKIZASHI

Shape and Construction:

Katana are long, the sori is shallow, and there is a long kissaki. Also, there are blades which are about 2 shaku 3 sun long with a slight saki sori tendency, and a chu-kissaki. The mune are shin no mune (mitsu mune) in most cases. Wakizashi are very rare.

Hamon:

The yakiba is wide, and the pattern is hiro-suguha or notare formed in nie. The nie are very hanayaka (active and flamboyant) and there is much to be appreciated in the nie.

Gunome ashi enter into the hamon with the nie clustering around the nioi, and the color of the ashi is very strong.

The nie at the habuchi are also extremely well formed.

This characteristic is often compared to that of Nagasone Kotetsu of Edo.

Omidare with nie kuzure and sunagashi are also seen.

There are also blades made in the Soshu tradition which will have abundant mura nie hataraki within the hamon.

In some works, there will be pointed or sharp edges in the hamon in places.

Boshi:

Boshi are o-maru sagari (sagging down towards the edge) and there will be gunome-ashi and abundant activity. Ichimai boshi ate also seen.

Jitetsu and Hada:

There is a very fine ko-mokume hada mixed with o-hada in places. The steel as a whole will have a slightly overworked or over forged feeling in that there is a lack of liveliness.

Nakago:

The nakago are long and very well shaped. The file marks are kesho, and the tips are kurijiri.

Inscriptions are

CHIKUSHU JU SA YUKIHIDE 碗 所名差行秀

SA YUKIHIDE 左 行 秀

TOSA HANSHI SA YUKIHIDE KORE TSUKURU 土 佐 醬 土 左 行 券 造 え

TOSA NI OITE SA YUKHIDE KORE TSUKURU 於土佐左行秀造之

Most mei are dated.

YUKIHIIDE	行秀
MORIYUKI	Suruga Prov. 守之
TOSHIHIDE	Tosa Prov. 俊秀
SUKENAO	also studied under OZAKI SUKETAKA. 助直
HIDEHIRO	Tosa Prov. 秀弘
UJIYASU	Tosa Prov. 氏遠
YOSHIMITSU	Tosa Prov. 吉光
SA YUKINAO	Tosa Prov. 左行直

KUNIMASU SCHOOL 国益系

Kunimasu, originally from Kawachi Province settled in Tosa Province around the Genroku Era. He was followed by Hisakuni, Morikuni, Kunimichi, Kuniyuki, and Kunitoshi.

The last three smiths, that is Kunimichi, Kuniyuki, and Kunitoshi, were active during the Shinshinto period.

KUNIMASU - Genroku Era 國 益
| KOZUKE DAIJO - studied under YAMATO NO KAMI YOSHIMICHI
and TAMBA NO KAMI YOSHIMICHI

HISAKUNI - Empo Era 久 國
| KOZUKE DAIJO 上野大掾
studeid under OMI NO KAMI HISAMICHI

MORIKUNI - Enkyo Era 設 國
| KOZUKE DAIJO 上野大掾

KUNIMICHI - Kyowa Era 國 道
| studied under SUISHINSHI MASAHIDE
title - KOZUKE DAIJO 上野大掾

KUNIIYUKI - Tempo Era 國 幸
| title - KOZUKE DAIJO 上野大掾

KUNITOSHI - Kaei Era 國 利
| title - KOZUKE DAIJO 上野大掾
studied under CHOUNSAI TSUNATOSHI

The works of these three smiths varies from one to the other, and there is no set pattern to be found. They worked in the Shinto tradition in styles such as those used by the Suishinshi group, or the Chounsai Tsunatoshi group.

Works of Kunimichi are probably seen more than those of other two. The hamon will be suguha in most cases, and there will be ko-nie, but they will lack quality.

YOSHIMITSU SCHOOL 吉光系

Tosa Yoshimitsu's works of the late Koto period have often been converted into works by Awataguchi Yoshimitsu. Yoshimitsu continued to work into Shinto and Shinshinto period. The smiths who worked during the Shinshinto period are the 8th, 9th, 10th, and the last, the 11th generation.

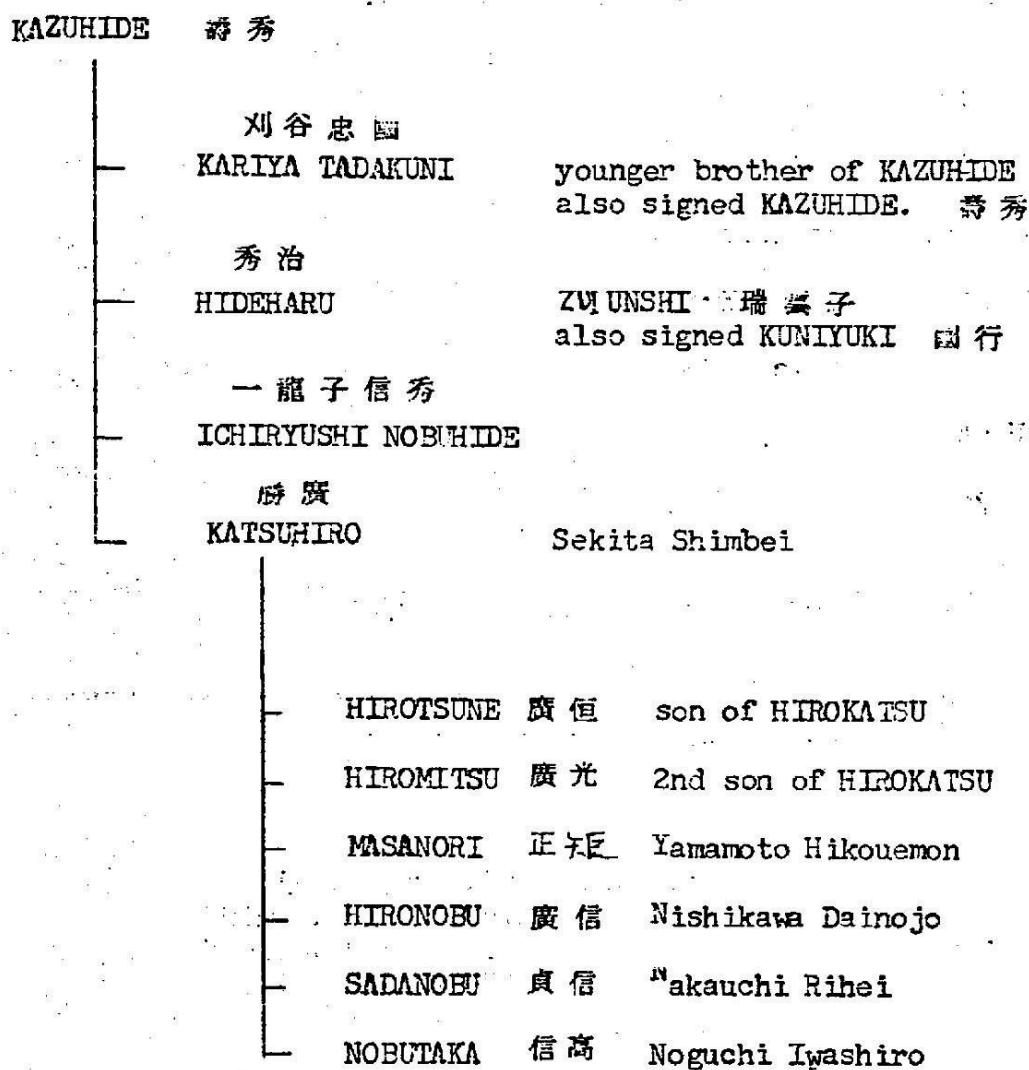
The 8th generation worked under the name of Ujiyuki, the 9th, under the name Yoshinaga, the 10th generation under the name Yoshimitsu, and the last generation under the name Yoshimasa.

吉 光			
YOSHIMITSU	1st	Kano Era	
YOSHIMITSU	2nd	Oei Era	
YOSHIMITSU	3rd	Kyotoku Era	
YOSHIMITSU	4th	Taiei Era	
YOSHIMITSU	5th	Keicho Era	
YOSHIMITSU	6th	Shoo Era	
YOSHIMITSU	7th	Horeki Era	
氏 行			
UJIYUKI	8th	Horeki Era	Fujimoto Ujinojo
吉 永			
YOSHINAGA	9th	Bunka Era	Fujimoto Shimpei
吉 光			
YOSHIMITSU	10th	Koka - Kaei Era	Fujiwara Keinojo student of SA YUKIHIDE also worked under the name of YOSHIYOSHI 敬 吉
吉 正			
YOSHIMASA	11th	Kaei Era	Fujimoto Kinbei

Most of the smiths of this school concentrated in making tanto and short wakizashi, similar to the work of the earlier Yoshimitsu. The characteristics are also about the same as seen in the early works. The later smiths are known to have made arrow heads (yano-ne) as well as ken.

KAZUHIDE SCHOOL 俊秀系

Kariya Kazuhide, a student of Suishinshi Masahide used the name Tadakuni, and then after his time with Suishinshi, changed his name to Kazuhide. He used the art-name of Shikoshi.



The works of Kazuhide are very gentle appearing, and the blade is narrow. The blade is also thick and has a graceful torii sori. The width tapers strongly going towards the kissaki. The hamon is suguha with gunome midare mixed with choji, and there will be a very dense nioiguchi. Some hamon will resemble those of early Bizen Ichimonji or Ko-Bizen works. The steel is forged so finely that it seems as though it is muji, or has no visible hada. Works by his students will be somewhat inferior to that of Kazuhide.

Note: the character 俊 or “kazu” is commonly read as “toshi”, but at times, the pronunciation “kazu” is used, as in this case.

KYOHU MEIBUTSU CHO

享保名物帳

BOOK III, ADDENDUM

OKATANA YOSHIMITSU

Owner: Osaka Gyobutsu

Length 2 shaku 3 sun 3 bu

Yamanaka Note

This is the same blade as the Ichigo Hitofuri Yoshimitsu which was coved in Book III, item no. 1. The length differs a little, and this is the original length as the blade came from Osaka Castle, and therefore the blade was retempered by Echizen Yasutsugu.

KOMIDARE YOSHIMITSU

小乱吉光

Owner: Osaka Gyobutsu

Length: 7 sun 2.5 bu

Yamanaka Note: nothing is known about this blade as it was 'lost' long ago.

KITANO YOSHIMITSU

北野吉光

Owner: Osaka Gyobutsu

Length: 8 sun 2.5 bu

Yamanaka Note

This is another blade whose history is not known. However, old records state that this blade was given by Oda Nobunaga to his brother Nobukatsu in July of Tensho 9 (1581), and that the mekugi ana has the shape of a “hyotan” gourd.

NABETOSHI MASAMUNE

鎚通正宗

Owner: Osaka Gyobutsu

Length: 8 sun

There is a carving of ken on the omote and bo hi on the ura.

Yamanaka Note

The only thing that is known about this blade is that on March 28 in Keicho 16 (1611), Tokugawa Ieyasu met Toyotomi Hideyori at Nijo Castle, and Ieyasu gave this blade to Hideyori.

SHINOGI

鎬

Owner: Given to Uemon by Lord Kaga

Length 2 shaku 1 sun 2 bu 9 ri

Koei “found” it and it was appraised by Koshitsu.

Yamanaka Note

Koei refers to one of the branch Honami. Koshitsu is the 10th generation in the main Honami lineage. Lord Kaga refers to the Kaga Province Maeda.

Uemon is ???

KOKICHI GO

小吉江

Length: ?

Gifu Shunagon was named Kokichi during his infancy, and this blade was owed by him at that time.

Yamanaka Note

Gifu Chunagon refers to Oda Chunagon Hidenobu, son of Oda Nobutada and grandson to Nobunaga.

Nothing is known of this blade. However, since the blade is by Go Yoshihiro, it can be assumed that the blade was a katana.

AIZU SADAMUNE

會津貞宗

Length: 1 shaku 4 bu

There are katana hi on the omote and ura.

Yamanaka Note

Another blade with no history or details.

NAGAOKA SADAMUNE

長岡 定宗

Length: 1 shaku 4 bu

There are carvings of a ken and bonji on the omote.

Yamanaka Note

Another blade with no history or details.

BUNGO RAI KUNITSUGU

豊後來国次

Length: 8 sun 9 bu

Given by Lord Hideyoshi to Otomo of Bungo.

During the Bunroku Era, Lord Ieyasu purchased it for 20 mai and then gave it to Lord Hidetada. After Sekigahara, Lord Toshinaga received it at Fushimi Castle. Lord Toshitsune gave it to Honda Kozuke no Suke.

Yamanaka Note

Otomo Yoshimune received this blade from Hideyoshi, however during the Hideyoshi Korean campaign, the Otomo forces were not very active in fighting the enemy forces, and for this behavior, Otomo was judged to be a coward, and his fief was confiscated by Hideyoshi. At that time, the Otomo sold this blade to Ieyasu.

Maeda Toshitsune is Maeda Toshinaga's son.

TAWARAYA RYOKAI

俵屋了戒

Length: 8 sun 9 bu

Value: 500 kan

Owned by Tawaraya Sotatsu who presented it (to the Shogunate). Lord Daitoku gave it to Kashi Hida no Kami.

Yamanaka Note

Tawaraya Sotatsu or Nomira Sotatsu is the famous painter of Kanazawa in Kaga Province who later went to Kyoto. Sotatsu also is known as a master of tea.

Daitoku-In refers to the 2nd Tokugawa Shogun after his retirement from the Shogunate seat. Kashu Hida no Kami is Maeda Toshitsune's 3rd son, Hida no Kami Toshiharu whose fief was at Toyama in Etchu Province.

MATSUURA NOBUKUNI

松浦信園

Owner: Lord Owari

Length: 2 shaku 1 sun 9 bu

This blade is also known by the name of Nobori Ryu. Koho has said that this is a wakizashi.

Yamanaka Note

This blade is presently in the Owari Tokugawa Reimeikai Foundation Collection.

NOBORI RYU NOBUKUNI

昇り龍信国

Owner: Lord Owari

Length: 1 shaku 9 sun

There is a carving of a kurikara within a hitsu on the omote. There is a nobori ryu and a sagari ryu with a tama in between on the ura. This is the work of Nobukuni in the Oei Era. It had an old appraisal of 1,000 kan.

Yamanaka Note

This blade is in the Owari Tokugawa Reimeikai Foundation, and the nakago has an inscription:

Omote: GENZAEMON NO JO NOBUKUNI

Ura: OEI 21 NEN 2 GATSU HI

Since Honami Koho (some texts have it as Koritsu) said that the previous blade, Matsuura Nobukuni, was a wakizashi, he may have confused this blade with that one. The length of Matsuura is 2 shaku 1 sun 9 bu.

The Osaka Gyobutsu Oshigata Scroll has this blade listed in it and it has notation as being presented by Hosokawa Toichiro to Hideyoshi. After the Toyotomi, this blade went to Ieyasu, as did all of the Osaka Castle treasures, and then they were given to the Owari, where this blade has been since. The carving on this blade is extremely well done.

O KUNIYOSHI

大国吉

Owner: Okubo Kaga no Kami

Length: 1 shaku 7 sun 5 bu

This is a hiratsukuri wakizashi which is very well made. It is by Sayoe no Jo Kuniyoshi and has a date in Koan.

Yamanaka Note

This blade is supposedly by Awataguchi Kuniyoshi since the Koan date is the time in which this smith was active.

NIKKO NAGAMITSU

日光長光

Length: 2 shaku

It came from Ono Gendaiu, the temple priest family in Nikko Shrine.

Yamanaka Note

The Tokugawa Jikki for Kanei 10 (1633) on September 24th states:

Horio Yamashiro no Kami Tadaharu's son, as a legacy from his father presents the Nikko Nagamitsu.

MUTSU SHINTOGO

陸奥新藤吾

Owner: Mutsu no Kami.

Length: ?

It is not a meibutsu, but is a good blade.

Yamanaka Note

Matsudaira Mutsu no Kami refers to the Date Family of Sendai. There were two blades by Shintogo in the Date Collection, one a tachi 2 shaku 5 sun 1 bu long, and the other a tanto 7 sun 3 bu long. Which of these two the text refers to is not known as no measurement is given. Probably it is the tanto, as Shintogo is famous for his tanto.

YANOME YUKIMITSU

矢目行光

Owner: Satake Shuri Daiyu

Length: 9 sun 1 bu

Said to have been given by Lord Kishu.

Yamanaka Note

The blade was owned by the Satake of Akita for great number of years, and it parted company with the Satake shortly after WWII. The blade was so named, as there is a mark made by an arrow-head.

NARUSE YUKIHIRA

成瀬 行平

Owner: Naruse Hayato of Owari

Length: ?

It is not a meibutsu, but is a very good blade.

Yamanaka Note

Naruse was a retainer of the Owari Tokugawa, and each family head took the name of Hayato.

TOKUGAWA JIKKI

葱川実紀

PART XXXII

HOREKI 3, 1753

February 11

The Dainagon, having recovered from smallpox, has a party and gives a katana by Masamune to the Shogun.

April 18

Matsudaira Iyo no Kami Munemasa, having been permitted to carry on his family's rule of their hereditary fief, receives a katana by Joshu (Rai) Kuniyuki from the Shogun in honor of the event.

Matsudaira Aki no Kami Munetsune receives a katana by Bizen Kanenaga.

June 5

Matsudaira Kaga no Kami Toshiaki presents a katana by Bizen Kagemitsu 備前景光 on the event of his inheriting the rule of his fief after his father.

June 11

The Shogun himself gives a katana by Aoe Sadatsugu 青江有次 to Hotta Sagami no Kami Masasuke for his efforts in having supervised repairs at Nikko Shrine.

In the Kuroki Library, Matsudaira Awa no Kami Muneshige receives a Katana by Aoe 青江 for his service to the Court.

June 12

Matsudaira Kaga no Kami Toshiaki presents a katana by Bizen no Kuni Morimitsu 備前盛光, receives a character from the Shogun's name, the title of Sho Yon I Shita, and the title of Sakon E Gon Shojo, and changes his name to Shigeharu. During the exchange of cups of sake during the banquet after the ceremony, he receives a katana by Rai Kunizane.

June 15

Hotta Sagami no Kami Masasuke receives a mitokoromono by (Goto) Sojo for his efforts on the construction project in Nikko Shrine.

July 28

Matsudaira Kaga no Kami Shigeharu is given permission to go to his fief for the first time after he assumes the rule of the fief after his father. He receives a katana by Iesuke 家助, a horse, and a falcon.

October 19

Lord Owari Chunagon Munemitsu's eldest son Kumagoro receives a wakizashi by Morimitsu.

November 1

Satake Kyuma Yoshiaki presents a katana by Kunizane after having been permitted to inherit the rule of his family's hereditary fief.

HOREKI 4, 1754

February 11

Lord Uemonnosuke Munetake receives Toshimaru who is the messenger for Nishio Iki no Kami Tadanao, and who presents a katana by Mihara Suehiro for his lord in appreciation for having been permitted to assume the hereditary post.

March 15

Matsudaira Kenjiro presents a katana by Bizen no Kuni Kanenobu in appreciation for his being allowed to assume the rule of his family's hereditary fief.

April 15

Matsudaira Kenjiro has his coming-of-age ceremony before the Shogun, receives the title of Sho Yon I Shita Shojo, receives a character from the Shogun's name, changes his name to Kaga no Kami Shigenori, and receives a katana by Bizen Tomomitsu. Shigenori presents a katana by Mihara Masanao 三原正直.

June 1

Hachisuka Shima no Kami Chikanaka, in appreciation for being allowed to assume the rule of his hereditary fief, presents a katana by Masahiro, 5 mai of gold, 30 rolls of silk, and a horse.

July 1

Ii Kamon no Kami Naosada presents a katana by Hoju, 5 mai of gold, 20 rolls of cotton, and a horse in appreciation for his having been permitted to assume the rule of his family's hereditary fief.

September 15

Hachisuka Oi no Kami Masatane presents a katana by Sanemitsu, 5 mai of gold, 30 rolls of cotton, and a horse for his having been permitted to assume the rule of his family's hereditary fief.

October 15

The chief abbot of Chion-In, Prince Sonho-o, gives a tachi, a scroll, and a box of konbu (sea weed) to the Shogun on his assuming the post of abbot.

November 25

Hachisuka Oi no Kami Masatane receives the title of Ju Yon I Shita, and changes his name to Matsudaira Awa no Kami Shigeyoshi when he receives a character from the Shogun's name. He then receives a katana by Hirotsugu and presents a Katana by Yoshinori (this is noted as Jumyo in the castle registry).

December 1

Whenever a marriage ceremony is held in the West Castle, those attending are to have the tsuka of their tachi wrapped in a megi (green) cord.

December 2

Hotta Sagami no Kami receives a katana by Yoshimitsu.

December 4

The Dainagon goes to the castle and receives a katana by Niji Kunitoshi 二字國後 and then presents a tachi.

During this year.....

February 16

The Choshu tsuba smith, the 7th generation Kawaji Tomotomi Yahei dies.

Sometime during this month the 8th generation Masachika Yasuemon 八代正周 assumes the leadership of the family after his father, and continues to receive the same allowance as his father, i.e. 26 koku.

April 14

The Choshu kinko Okada Nobuhide changes his name Sobei to Hikozaemon, 彦在街門.

April 29

The Choshu tsuba smith Okamoto Tomotsugu Tozaemon dies at the age of 80.

July 10

The 8th generation Sendai Kunikane dies at the age of 23.

Sometime during this year...

The Aizu sword smith Sumi Motooki 角元興 is born. He is the 3rd son of Aizu Goroemon.

THOUGHTS AT RANDOM

It is now that time of the year in Japan when sword activities come to an abrupt halt due to the weather. It is very humid now which is not considered too good for katana.

A theft was recently reported in Tokyo. A burglar broke into the Meiji Shrine Museum and stole 4 important swords, all of which are reported to be ones which the Emperor Meiji often carried. One is a Juyo Bunkazai by Bizen Yoshifusa.

Talking about thefts like this goes back some years. During the US Occupation of Japan, a great number of swords were 'removed' from various temples and shrines as well as from

private collections, police custody, etc. We wrote about this some issues back and also in an article for a magazine on missing Kokuho and Juyo Bijutsu.

Word has reached us through the grapevine that one of these missing Kokuho recently turned up in Southern California. This was the one which was missing from the Tamashima Shrine in Saga Prefecture in Northern Kyushu. Japanese records show that the shrine submitted the blade to their local police as ordered by the US Occupation, and then the blade was turned over to the occupation forces from where it somehow found its way to the US. This blade is a tachi measuring 2 shaku 4 sun 3 bu and inscribed Bishu Osafune Iesuke, and dated Oei 21 nen 2 gatsu hi.

An Oei blade this long is very very unusual. We sincerely hope that the owner takes very good care of the blade so it does not get rusted or damaged.

PUBLICATION:

The NBTHK publishes a monthly journal, the Token Bijutsu, and the current issue for July, 1972 is No. 186.

The NBTHK has announced that they will republish the Token Bijutsu in a bound book format, and it is expected to fill 15 volumes covering issues no. 1 through no. 133. The cost will be 3,000 yen per volume, and Vol. 1 is expected out in late August of this year (1972), and then a volume will be released every other month thereafter.

The Japanese have been termed “economic animals”. In the West in recent years this character seems to be showing in various circles: they are “gobbling up” a great number of art works at various auctions in Europe. They are also buying fittings and swords as well from all parts of creation. There is even talk about a tour to go to Europe on a sword buying expedition.

This “animal-like” tendency is not only directed towards Westerners, but happens here in Japan amongst the Japanese all of the time.

There is a phrase in Japan, from ancient times that “all sword merchants are crooks”, and one dealer lived up to this very well. This dealer brought back swords from “some place outside Japan”, and a great number of Kinko tsuba, and they were sold at very high prices to the unsuspecting public, mostly Johnny-come-latelies to the collecting circle, and these people got hooked. The sales talk of this dealer states that, if the buyer does not want the item, he will take it back anytime at a 20% discount below the sales price.

One of the tsuba went back, but the dealer refused to take it back, even when he was reminded of the condition of the sale. The tsuba was sold at 1,000,000 yen and was a very late Myochin work with a very poor shippo of a dragon, and was probably a very late Edo or early Meiji period work, and it was advertised to be a Kanbun period Hirata. I wouldn't even have given 100,000 yen for that one.

This reminds us of something which we wrote in some issues back: "sword dealers who sell are not necessarily unscrupulous, the limit of a dealer's scruples are in direct proportion to the buyer's cupidity", and there ARE dealers like the one mentioned above.

Kozan

Tokyo, July, 1972