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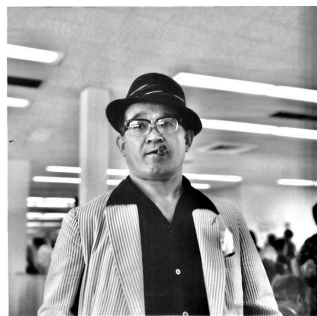
ALBERT YAMANAKA'S NIHONTO NEWSLETTER

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

THE SEIKAIDO

CHIKUGO PROVINCE

Chikugo Province has the Miike School in the early period, and the Oishi Sa group who are the students of Sa Sadayuki.

MIIKE SCHOOL 三池系

MOTOZANE 元真

Shoho Era

TENTA 傳太

Shoho Era

TENTA典太

Shoho Era

MITSUYO 光世

Shoho Era

SANEYO 実世

Oei Era

TSUGUNOBU次信

Oei Era

TSUGUNOBU 続信

Oei Era

MASAKUNI 正國

Tensho Era

MASASADA政定

Kyoroku Era

The best known smiths of this school are Mitsuyo and Tenta. Tenta is known for the famous Meibutsu O-Tenta which for ages has been handed down in the Maeda family. However, prior to the Maeda, it was the family heirloom of the Ashikaga Shogunate along with the Onimaru Kunitsuna. The blade by Mitsuyo which Tokugawa Ieyasu carried is in the Toshogu Shrine in Nikko, and has the inscription "sohaya no tsurugi utsusu nari".

On the whole, blades by the smiths of the Miike School are extremely rare.

MOTOZANE

Worked in the Yamashiro Tradition and Yamato Tradition, approximately during the Shoho Era.

TACHI

Shape and Construction:

Ikubi kissaki tachi style of the mid-Kamakura Period with a torii sori, wide, and with much hiraniku. It is a little thin, the shinogi is high, and the width of the shinogi ji is wide.

There are blades with shin no mune (mitsumune) and so no mune (marumune).

Hi and Carvings:

Hi are very wide and shallow, and this smith is known for this. This, more or less, is the trademark of the Miike Smiths. The tip of the hi is carved well up into the ko-shinogi and square. The lower tip is kakitoshi and carved into the nakago.

The hi itself is very cleanly carved, and there are no faults to be found in them.

It is said that this smith made the hi by hammering them out since it appears that hammer marks are seen in the hi in the nakago.

Hamon:

The hamon is formed in nie and the width is koroai, or in good proportion for the blade. The hamon are suguha with ashi.

Kinsuji and inazuma are seen in great numbers all along the hamon and hakikake and nijuba are also seen.

There are some works that have some midare present in the hamon.

Overall, the nie will have a rough appearance, and they will seem to have something 'missing' in their quality.

Boshi:

The boshi is a small pattern midarekomi and yakizume or with a small kaeri.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The jitetsu is well forged and finely knit, and has been well forged and well knit, resulting in ko-mokume hada. There are abundant ji-nie, and this results in chikei in places.

Nakago:

The nakago is long and has a kurijiri tip. The file marks are sujichigai or higaki.

Inscriptions are MOTOZANE 元真

MITSUYO 光世

TENTA 傳太

TENTA 典太

Other than blades by Motozane, they can be judged as being by dai sagari (successor smiths).

TANTO

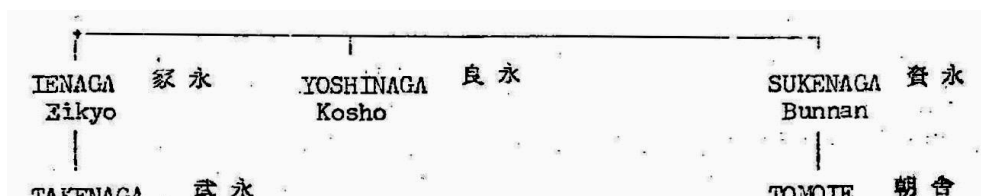
There are some tanto which are from about the Kemmu Era. They will have very little sori, wide, and have wide hi.

The hamon and jitetsu are like those of the tachi.

OISHI SA SCHOOL 大石左系

Yasuyoshi, son of Sa migrated to Nagato Province, and his followers came to be known as Choshu Sa. Yasuyoshi later went to Koharu in Aki Province and the smiths that worked in Koharu came to be known as Koharu Sa or Aki Sa.

Three generations after Yasuyoshi, a student of Sa in Koharu, Ienaga, later went to Chikugo Province and started the Oishi Sa school.



OISHI SA SCHOOL, general comments

These smiths worked in the Soshu Tradition.

The description of their work, in general, resembles closely that of the Sa School of Chikuzen Province, however, those that are relatively better made resemble the works of Hiromitsu of Soshu Province.

Hamon with uniform gunome and with abundant nie are seen on most works. Also, chu-suguha with hakikake at the habuchi resembling the Yamato Tradition are seen.

Shobu tsukuri and unokubi tsukuri work is also seen.

BUZEN PROVENCE

In the Heian Period, there were a number of sword smiths active in this province, all of these are so-called "Ichidai Kaji", that is one generation smiths, and in that sense, they didn't belong to any particular school in the same way we see in other provinces. From about the Oei Era, the descendant of the 3rd Nobukuni of Kyoto, Sadamitsu, worked in this province. Sadamitsu and the descendants of this school worked well into late Shinto Period.

CHOEN 長圓
Eien Era
Originally from Yamato Province

SHINSOKU 神息
Daido Era

Choen, formerly of Yamato Province, was said to be a Buddhist monk and was active around the Eien Era in the late Heian Period. The other Choen, who supposedly was active around the earlier Daido Era (ca. 808), is only known by his name since he has been written about in old sword books, however no works of this smith are known to exist.

SHINSOKU 神息

Worked in the Yamashiro Tradition approximately from the Wado Era to the Daido Era.

TACHI

Shape and Construction:

Tachi style of the Heian Period, but made so very elegantly, that the observer will sense the age of the blade.

There is a strong torii sori, the blade is thick, there is a high shinogi, and the shinogi ji is narrow.

Although the kissaki is a little long, it nevertheless is small in proportion to the size of the blade. The ihori mune is high, and so no mune (marumune) blades are sometimes seen.

Hi and Carvings:

There are bo hi carved on some blades. The hi are quite wide and shallow.

In rare cases, carvings with very simple designs are seen.

Hamon:

Formed primarily in nie with the pattern in suguha with a little midare present, and some ashi. Due to the fact that there are abundant ko-nie, uchinoke are seen at the hamon edge, however, there is very little to be seen inside of the hamon.

Boshi:

The boshi are mostly yakizume with nie kuzure seen in rare cases. Omaru are seen on some works, and the kaeri will be short.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is mokume hada mixed with masame hada. The steel is very well forged.

Nakago:

The nakago are long, and there will be niku on the surface. The tip is a shallow kurijiri, and the file marks are kiri or a shallow katte sagari. Sometimes tsuchime (hammer marks) are seen.

Inscriptions are sometimes "Seishu Banzai".

TANTO

Shape and Construction:

Josun (8.5 sun) hiratsukuri takenoko sori.

Hamon:

Formed in nie with a narrow yakiba. The pattern is chu-suguha with ara-nie and there will be ashi.

Boshi:

Yakizume with nie.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is mokume hada with abundant ji nie.

Nakago:

Long, and tapers strongly towards the tip. There will be niku on the nakago surface.

Inscriptions are "SHINSOKU" 神息.

CHOEN長円

Worked in the Yamashiro Tradition approximately during the Eien Era.

TACHI

Tachi are very rare.

Shape and Construction:

Tachi style of the Heian Period. it will be elegant and graceful. The sori will be a little shallow.

Hi and Carvings:

Carvings of very simple designs are seen on some works, such as a very short suken or bonji right above the habaki.

Hamon:

Formed in nie, and the width of the yakiba is koroai (just right). The nie will be a little rough, and there are some hataraki within the hamon, although the hataraki are not too lively.

Boshi:

Yakizume with abundant nie.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is ko-mokume hada mixed with masame hada. The steel is very well forged and there is uruoi (the steel has a wet or moist appearance) resulting from the abundance of strong ji-nie and chikei.

Nakago:

The nakago is long and will have niku on the surface. The tip is a shallow kurijiri, the file marks are kiri or a shallow katte sagari or tsuchime (hammer marks).

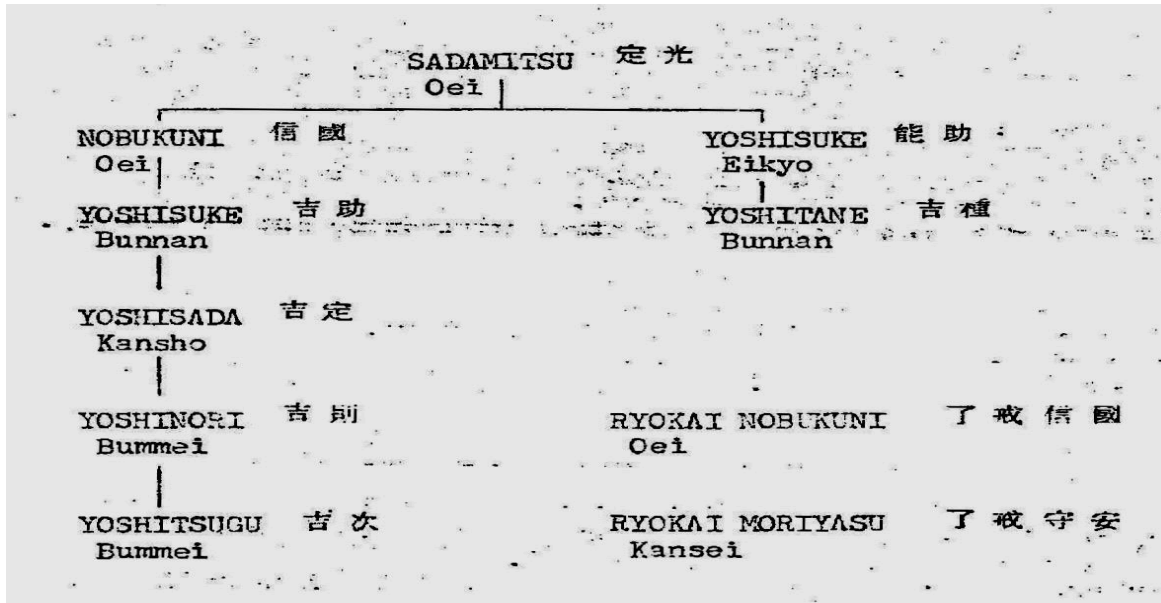
Inscriptions are “CHOEN” 長 円.

The character “en” 円 is not written in the traditional style.

NOBUKUNI SCHOOL信國系

Sadamitsu, the founder of this school was the son of the 3rd Nobukuni of Kyoto. It is recorded that the sword smiths of this school, as well as those of Ryokai, in order to escape the ravages of the Onin War, migrated to this province.

This school is commonly called Usa Nobukuni, or more popularly Chikushi Nobukuni, and most of the smiths of this school signed “----- Nobukuni”, although the early smiths simply signed only their name.



THE NOBUKUNI 信國 SMITHS IN GENERAL

These smiths worked in the Yamashiro Tradition and Soshu Tradition. They worked approximately after the Eikyo Era (1429-1440).

KATANA AND WAKIZASHI

Shape and Construction:

Made in the style and shape of the Muromachi Period. Hontsukuri, shobu tsukuri, and unokubi tsukuri wakizashi are seen in great numbers by the smiths of this school, with no smiths of special note.

The shape of the blade will seem a little weak as though it lacks something.

Hi and Carvings:

Bo hi are seen on some works. Bonji and suken are seen on rare instances.

Hamon:

Midare hamon of the type seen on Bizen blades of about the same period are seen. In addition, suguha hamon such as those seen in work by Nobukuni of Kyoto are sometimes seen.

There will be slightly rough nie and sunagashi in addition.

Boshi:

Komaru midare with a togari tip are seen. The kaeri is strong and long and there will be rough nie in the kaeri.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is mokume hada mixed with masame hada. Overall, the hada will appear rough.

In some works, the hada will stand out distinctly.

Nakago:

The nakago is wide and broad with much niku, and it is short. The file marks are kiri or suji chigai.

The tip is kurijiri or kengyo.

TANTO

Tanto are hiratsukuri takenoko sori and very graceful. Carvings are done very intricately and are well executed, and there are some very outstanding tanto by the various smiths of this school.

Other particulars are about the same as those of the longer blades.

BUNGO PROVINCE

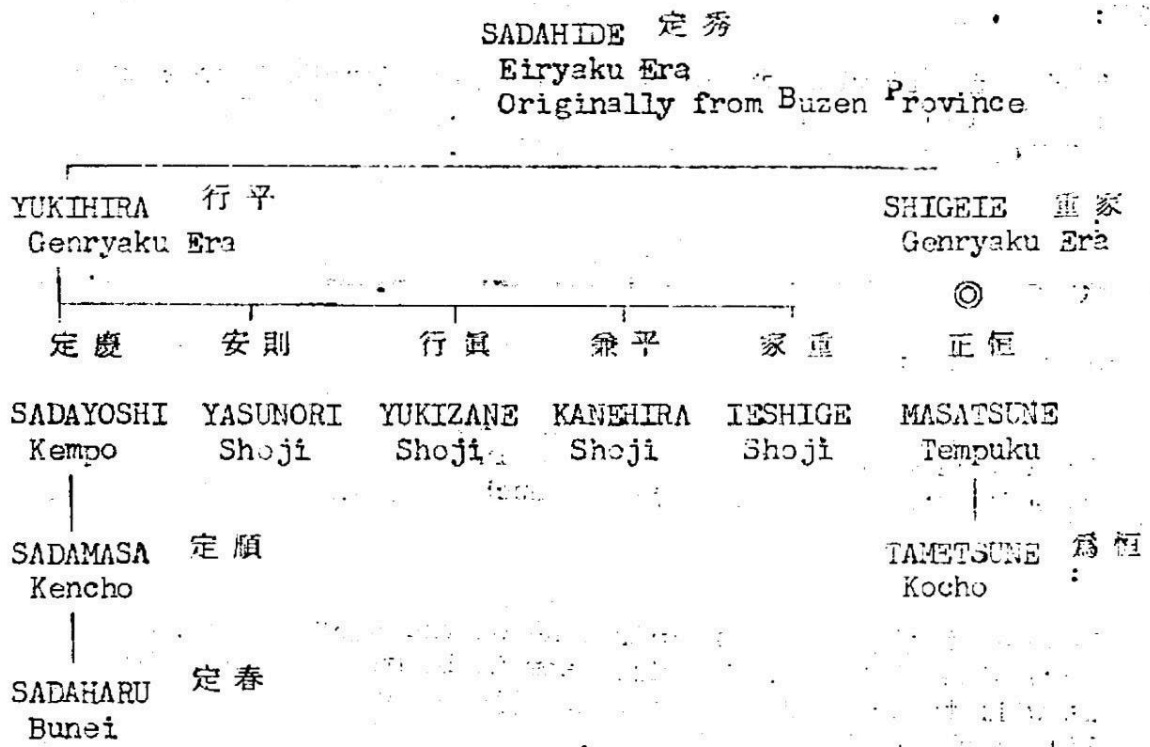
In this province, as in Buzen Province, there are only a few sword smiths who worked in the Heian Period in the Sadahide School, and from this school we see outstanding smiths such as Yukihiro and Masatsune along with the founder.

The founder Sadahide was a priest-turned-sword smith and the son of Yukihiira who served the cloistered Emperor Gotoba.

Both Sadahide and Yukihiira are known for the excellent carvings they made on their swords.

It is said that Yukihiira was banished four times during the course of his lifetime, and on one of these times, he was banished to Iijima of Sagami Province, and that while he was there he had two sons, Taishinbo Yukei and Yukimitsu. The art of carving which Yukihiira took such pride in was left to Yukimitsu, and later to other Soshu smiths. Although this may be an imaginary tale, it certainly sounds most convincing.

It seems that Yukihiira must have kept himself quite busy wherever he was, for we see quite a number of his works today.



SADAHIDE

Worked in the Yamashiro Tradition approximately during the Eiryaku Era (1160-61).

TACHI

Shape and Construction:

Tachi style and construction of the Heian Period. They appear very lively and with much elegance and grace. There is strong fumbari at the machi which tapers strongly towards the point and a ko-kissaki.

The blade is thin and there is very little hiraniku. There is a high shinogi and the shinogi ji is narrow. The ihori ridge is high.

Hi and Carvings:

Bo hi are seen on some works. The hi are wide, and very well executed. Carvings with simple designs are seen above the machi, such as a cherry blossom carved in the center, or the character “katsu” 勝.

Hamon:

Hamon are formed in nie and the yakiba is narrow. The pattern is Suguha hotsure mixed with ko-midare. Inazuma, kinsuji, and uchinoke are seen all along the hamon.

Boshi:

The boshi are komaru or yakizume with yaki kuzure.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The steel which has been exceptionally well forged has a ko-mokume hada mixed with o-hada in places.

Chikei will be seen in places, and there will be abundant ji-nie.

Nakago:

The nakago are a little short, and there is niku on the ji. The cutting edge side of the nakago will seem to be a little thick.

The nakago will taper towards the tip which is kurijiri. The file marks are kiri or tsuchime. Inscriptions are “Bungo no Kuni Sadahide saku” 豊後國定秀作.

YUKIHIRA 行平

Worked in the Yamashiro Tradition approximately during the Genryaku Era (1184-1185). He was one of the Goban Kaji.

TACHI

Shape and Construction:

Tachi style and construction of the Kamakura Period, and the shape was very graceful and elegant.

It will be thick and there will be a strong fumbari which tapers strongly towards the kissaki.

There is niku on the hira, the shinogi is high, the width of the shinogi ji is narrow, and the ihori ridge is high.

The mune is shin no mune (mitsumune).

Hi and Carvings:

Bo hi are seen on many works, and within the hi or within a hitsu (frame), there will be a relief carving. In the case of carvings within the hi, they are made right above the machi in a very small size.

Carvings within a hitsu are made on the shinogi ji above the machi, and in this case also, the length of the hitsu is short. The types of carvings found within the hitsu or hi are kurikara, fudo, bonji, and figures of men. They usually are very plainly carved, but in this simplicity, there is a high quality.

In certain cases, there are bonji and ken carved on the ura.

Hamon:

The hamon are formed in nie, and the yakiba is narrow. However, in this narrow space, there will be many variations. The nie are rough and strong, however there will not be the liveliness one would expect.

The pattern will be suguha or notare mixed with ko-midare. Inazuma and kinsuji are found in large numbers.

There are certain works in which the entire hamon is formed in nie.

A characteristic of this sword smith is in the yakidashi; the yakidashi starts from about one or two sun above the machi and this feature is referred to as yakiotoshi. Yakiotoshi is commonly found on blades which have been retempered, however, that

is not the case with this sword smith. Although it has been written in an old text that Yukihiro tempered the blade once, and then retempered it on purpose to attain this effect.

Boshi:

The hamon entering the kissaki area becomes nie kuzure, and changes to yakizume. Some blades will have kaeri.

Also, there are some boshi that are midarekomi. There are still others that are made in the Ichimonji style, and some like those seen in the work of Yamato Tegaï Kanenaga or Go Yoshihiro of Etchu.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The hada is very finely forged resulting in ko-mokume hada mixed with o-hada in places.

Ji-nie which are quite rough are seen, and this results in chikei in places.

The steel, due to the fact that it has been "overworked" (or forged too much), will be a little dull.

Nakago:

The nakago are narrow and long, and the indentation at the machi is very high. Whether this is good and the blade has not been polished too much, or whether Yukihiro made it this way on purpose is difficult to tell.

The nakago will have a strong sori, there will be strong niku, and it will taper strongly towards the tip. The tip is a shallow kurijiri. The file marks are in sensuki, suji chigai, or tsuchime.

Inscriptions are Bungo Kuni Yukihiro saku” 豊後国行平作.

This is quite rare for a blade from this period.

TANTO

Shape and Construction:

Hiratsukuri takenoko sori in small sunzumari lengths (less than 8.5 sun). The fukura lacks roundness.

Hi and Carvings:

Relief carvings within a hitsu are made at the machi. There are reportedly some with sukashi bori (pierced carvings or carvings which go through the blade).

Hamon:

Same as seen in tachi.

Boshi:

Same as seen in tachi and most have an Ichimonji kaeri.

Jitetsu and Hada:

Same as seen in the tachi.

Nakago:

Long and narrow with niku.

MASATSUNE

Worked in the Yamashiro Tradition approximately during the Tempuku Era (1233-1234)

His tachi had the style and shape of the early Kamakura Period, and on the whole, will be somewhat inferior to those by Yukihiro.

The hamon is formed in nie, but the quality of the nie will be lacking, and the pattern will be suguha with ko-midare. Somewhere in the hamon there will be hako midare ko-gunome (box shaped gunome) present.

The boshi will be omaru ending in yakizume.

The jitetsu is very finely forged resulting in ko-mokume hada mixed with o-hada in places. Due to the appearance suggesting that the steel has been overworked, it will seem dull.

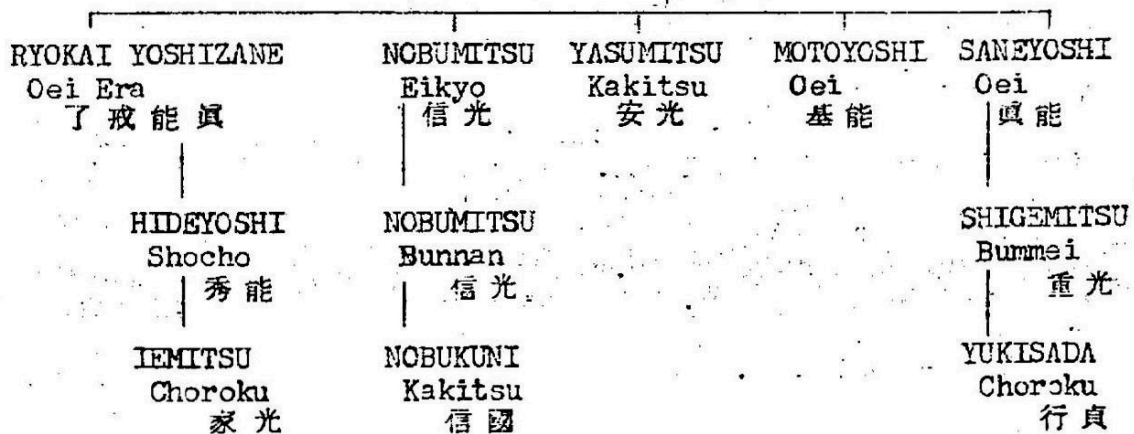
The nakago is long and narrow with much niku, and it will taper strongly towards the tip. The nakago will have much sori, and the tip is kurijiri. The file marks are suji chigai or sensuki or tsuchime.

Inscriptions are “Masatsune” 正恒.

RYOKAI SCHOOL

The descendants of the Ryokai school in Yamashiro Province migrated to Bungo Province, and came to be known as Chikushu Ryokai or Bungo Ryokai.

There are quite a number of sword smiths in this school with the majority of the smiths using the character “Yoshi” 能.



RYOKAI 了戒 SMITHS IN GENERAL

Worked in the Yamashiro Tradition and Yamato Tradition approximately during the post-Oei Era. Tachi are rare.

KATANA AND WAKIZASHI

Shape and Construction:

Style and the shape of the Muromachi Period. They appear to be graceful and a little weak.

Hamon:

Although the hamon are formed in nie, they will lack nie, and the pattern is chu-suguha mixed with ko-midare and there will be hakikake and nijuba.

Boshi:

The boshi is komaru.

Jitetsu and Hada:

The steel will be very weak appearing (light colored) and the hada is ko-mokume hada mixed with masame hada, and the steel will have a whitish effect overall (utsuri).

Nakago:

The nakago is short and the tip is a wide kurijiri (and unsightly). The file marks are kiri or katte sagari.

Inscriptions, in contrast to the poor shape of the nakago, are made in a very stylish manner.

TANTO

Takenoko sori with saki sori. Some are sunnobi (over 8.5 sun). The shape is poor. Other details of the tanto are about the same as those of the longer blades.

TOKUGAWA JIKKI

PART XVII

KAMBUN 8, 1668

February

On this month, an edict is issued that due to numerous outbreaks of fire, extreme caution is to be observed in its control.

Gifts and offerings in meeting the Shogun and in assuming hereditary fiefs are to be confined to tachi, cash for a horse with a value of 1 mai gold, or 5 mai of silver, or 3 mai of silver, or 1 mai of silver and 100 rolls of cotton, depending on the position of the person making the gift.

For Daimyo with provinces and elder sons taking over the fief, the offerings are to be kept as previously set, however, additional gifts are not necessary.

Gifts on the event of Tango no Sekku (boy's day festival) and other occasions are to be prohibited.

March 15

Merchants, although they may have permission (from the Shogunate), are to be restricted in their right to carry swords. However, those with special permission are excepted.

April 26

Honami Kosatsu and Ichiroemon are ordered to polish the swords kept in Horaiji Temple.

May 4

Carrying swords by Sarugaku musicians, drummers, and other instrument players, as well as story tellers is henceforth prohibited.

August 25

Arima Senshiro Yorimoto, as a legacy from his father Gemba no Suke Yoritoshi, presents a wakizashi by Shintogo Kunimitsu新藤 五國光

Mizuno Nakatsukasa Shou Tadanao, as a legacy from his father Dewa no Kami Tadamoto, presents a Katana by Yoshifusa 吉房.

Nambu Budaiu Naomasa, as a legacy from his father Saemon no Suke Naofusa, presents a katana by Sairen.

Watanabe Etchu no Kami Masatsuna, as a legacy from his father Tango no Kami Yoshitsuna, presents a Katana by Nagamitsu長光.

Horibe Shikibu Shou Naokage presents a katana by Enju.

September 25

Princes, nobles and abbots meet the Shogun, and each presents a tachi with its catalog.

October 11

Matsudaira Tango no Kami Mitsunaga, as a legacy from his father Tango no Kami Mitsushige, presents a katana by Sa Kunihiro.

December 23

Ando Aki no Kami Shigetsune, as a legacy from his father Iga no Kami Shigemoto, presents a katana by Sa Yasuyoshi左安吉.

Kutsuki Gonnosuke Tomotsuna's son, Sadatomo, as a legacy from his father, presents a wakizashi by Yukimitsu 行光.

Sometime during this year.....

The fourth generation Hizen Tadahiro肥前忠吉四代 is born.

Goto Tatsujo後藤達乘 is born.

March

Merchants and townspeople are forbidden to carry swords.

KAMBUN 9, 1669

January 7

Kii Chunagon Mitsusada, in appreciation for the advance in his rank, presents a tachi by Nobukuni.

March 7

Matsudaira Geki Tadanobu presents a wakizashi by Hasebe Kunishige 長谷部國童.

March 15

Seboku Echizen no Kami Masatoshi presents a ko-wakizashi by Soshu Yukimitsu 相州行光.

March 18

Princes and nobles meet the Shogun, and each presents a tachi with its catalog.

March 24

On this day, princes and nobles are to visit the temple and shrine at Nikko, and accordingly, through messengers, each presents a tachi with its catalog.

April 9

Owari Chunagon Mitsutomo presents 15 kogatana made in his province.

May 12

Hoshina Chikuzen no Kami Masayuki, in appreciation for being allowed to assume his father's fief, presents a tachi by Sukeuji.

Higo no Kami Masayuki, in appreciation for his being given a post, presents a ko-wakizashi by Rai Kunimitsu 来国光.

June 28

Matsudaira Tosa no Kami, in appreciation for being allowed to assume his father's fief, presents a katana by Ichimonji 一文字.

Tsushima no Kami Tadatoyo presents a ko-wakizashi by Sa Yasuyoshi 左安吉.

Inoue Kawachi no Kami Masatoshi presents a katana by Nobukuni.

July 11

Izawa Santoku Nyudo Masanobu presents a wakizashi by Choshu (Sa) Yasuyoshi.

July 21

Honda Magotaro Nagakazu, as a legacy from his father Kuranosuke Masanaga, presents a katana by Joshu Kuniyuki (Rai) 城州國行. Masanaga served in Echizen.

July 26

Togawa Gemba Nobuyasu, as a legacy from his father Tosa no Kami Masayasu, presents a katana by Chikakage 近景.

September 12

Kira Kozuke no Suke is ordered to pay homage at the Grand Shrine in Ise, and is given leave and an offering of a Mihara Ichijo 三原一乗 for the inner shrine, and a tachi by Enju Kuniyoshi for the Outer Shrine.

September 25

Kuki Sennosuke Takanori, as a legacy from his father Nagato no Kami Takamasa, presents a katana by Bizen Nagamitsu 備前長光.

Hori Matsunosuke Naonori, as a legacy from his father Hizen no Kami Naoteru, presents a wakizashi by Hojoji.

October 23

Todo Izumi no Kami Takahisa, in appreciation for being allowed to assume his father's fief presents a katana by Ichimonji. His father Daigaku no Suke Takatsugu presents a katana by Sadamune on his retirement.

Matsudaira Wakasa no Kami Yasunobu, on his retirement, presents a katana by Bizen Kanemitsu 備前兼光.

October 29

On the event of announcing the marriage of the daughter of Kii Chunagon Mitsusada, the previous Minister of the Right, Prince Morisuke presents a tachi with its catalog.

November 1

On the occasion of the announcement of introducing the daughter of Matsudaira Mimasaka no Kami to the court, he is given leave and is given the title of Jijyu. Shinagawa Shikibu Daiu Takamoto is ordered to accompany him and is given leave. Accordingly, a tachi by Awataguchi Kuniyasu is given to the court, a tachi to each of the cloistered Emperors, and a tachi to Prince Takatsukasa Kampaku Fusasuke are given by the Shogun.

December 9

Matsudaira Kamechiyo is included in the ranks and is given the title of Ju Yon I Shita Shojo, and changes his name to Mutsu no Kami Tsunamoto (and later changes his name to Tsunamura) and is given a wakizashi by Shintogo Kunimitsu 新處五國光. He presents a tachi by Kanenaga.

December 21

Matsudaira Uemon no Suke's son, Kuroda Manchiyo, is included in the ranks and given the title of Ju Yon Shita, and changes his name to Matsudaira Chikuzen no Kami Tsunayuki, and receives a wakizashi by Sa Yoshisada 左吉貞.

He presents a tachi by Masatsune.

KAMBUN 10, 1670

January 9

The wife of Kii Chunagon Mitsusada, Yasumiya, along with her eldest son, Nagafuyu, visits the castle. Nagafuyu meets the Shogun for the first time, and receives a wakizashi by Rai Kunitoshi. Nagafyu presents a tachi and 10 mai of gold.

February 23

The Mito (Tokugawa), as a legacy from Shojo Tsunakata, presents a katana by Sa Hiroyuki.

February 27

The Chief of the Overseers is ordered to issue the following rules:

Those with a new fief, those with an increase in their fief, and those included in the ranks, or heirs meeting the Shogun for the first time are to present a tachi and cash for a horse, or suits of clothing and cash for a keg (sake). This order was not included in the one previously issued in Kambun 8 and is hereby added to the Kambun 8 order.

March 12

Princes and nobles meet the Shogun to present felicitations from the court for a marriage, and give a tachi from the court, as well as a tachi from each of the three cloistered emperors.

Prince Temporin and the previous Minister of the Right Kimitori, in appreciation for the gifts, give a tachi, cash for a horse, and 5 rolls of brocade.

April 13

Mizuguchi Kinsuke Masayoshi, as a legacy from his father Tosa no Kami Masakatsu, presents a wakizashi by Nobukuni.

Ikeda Jizaemon Shigenori, as a legacy of his brother Matahachiro Kuniteru, presents a wakizashi by Bizen Nagamori.

May 1

Takagi Kageyu Masatoyo, as a legacy from his father Mondo no Sho Masamori, presents a ko-wakiashi by Sa Kunihihiro 左國 弘.

June 19

Gifts for the editing of the Honcho Tsukan are given. Nagai Iga no Kami Naotsune, the Kyoto Magistrate, for his efforts, is given a wakizashi by Enju Kunisuke 延商國資.

June 25

Okubo Dewa no Kami Tadatomo, as the legacy of his father Iga no Kami Tadatsune, presents a katana by Bizen Tomonari 備前友成.

August 21

The magistrate of Momijiyama, Abe Bungo no Kami Tadaaki, for his work, receives a katana by Nobukuni信国.

October 19

Hoji Hisataro Ujihara, on his retirement, presents a katana by Bizen Kagemitsu 備前景光.

December 18

Hachisuka Senmatsu is elevated into the ranks and receives the title of Ju Yon I Shita, and changes his name to Matsudaira Awa no Kami Tsunamichi, and presents a tachi by Bizen Yoshizane. He receives a wakizashi by Sa Yasuyoshi.

Naito Tatewaki Tadaoki, on his retirement, presents a katana by Rai Kuniimitsu 来国光.

Okada Buzen no Kami Yoshimasa, likewise presents a katana by Sa Kunihiro 左国弘.

December 25

Okubo Gemba no Suke Tadanari, on his retirement, presents a katana by Washu Kanetoshi.

Sometime during this year

Mondo no Sho Masakiyo of Satsuma is born 主水正正清 is born.

The first generation Yasuchika安規初代 is born.

Yokoya Somin is born.

KAMBUN 11, 1671

January

Matsudaira Suzen no Kami Katsushige's son Hanbei Katsuyasu, as a legacy from his father presents a katana by Bizen Motoshige.

March 11

Imperial messengers meet the Shogun. Hino Shuin and Hino Dainagon each present a tachi and cash for a horse.

March 22

Asano Takumi no Kami Naganao presents a katana by Washu Kanenaga 和州包永.

Nagai Hyuga no Kami Naokiyo presents a katana by Bizen Kanemitsu 備前兼光.

June 6

Lord Saisho Mitsukuni's adopted son, Uneme, meets the Shogun for the first time and presents a tachi by Unji. Also, as a legacy from his father, he presents a tachi.

Abe Bungo no Kami Tadaaki, on his retirement, presents the katana (Meibutsu) Takagi Sadamune.

August 2

The shrine at Kawagoe, the Semba Shrine, is elevated to a First Class shrine, and a tachi by Tomonari is offered (this blade was made a kokuho).

August 6

Toda Uneme no Sho Ujimasa, on his retirement, presents a wakizashi by Yukimitsu.

Mizuno Kemmotsu Tadayoshi is ordered to pay homage to the Shrine at Takiyama in Mikawa Province since it has been promoted to a First Class Shrine. He is to present a tachi.

November

Ikeda Buzen no Kami Masachika, as a legacy from his father Matsudaira Bingo no Kami Tsunemoto, presents a katana by Rai Kunitoshi 来國俊.

December 15

Kofu Saisho Tsunashige's oldest son visits the palace for the first time, and presents a ken.

December 25

Uneme, the adopted son of Mito Saisho Mitsukuni, is included in the ranks and receives the title of Sho Yon I Shita Shojo and changes his name to Tsunanaga Ason, and presents a tachi by Bizen Tomonari 友成.

Ota Bitchu no Kami Tsugumune, on his retirement, presents a katana by Rai Kunimitsu.

January 11

Kii Tikugawa Yorinobu dies at the age of 70.

Sometime during this year.....

The 4th generation Echizen Kunikiyo receives the title of Yamashiro Daijo.

The third generation Hirata Norihisa 平田就久 dies.

The founder of the Yanagawa Kinko school, Masatsugu, is born.

Kambun 12, 1672

February 8

Honda Nakatsukasa Daiu Masanaga, as a legacy from his father Naiki Masakatsu, presents a katana by Yasutsuna 安網.

February 21

Sasaki Ukyo Daiu Yoshitane, in appreciation for receiving his fief, presents a tachi by Toshitsune, and as a legacy from his father Shuri Daiu Yoshitaka, presents a katana by Nagamitsu 長光.

Matsudaira Saigunosuke Nobuteru, as a legacy from his father Kai no Kami Terutsuna, presents a katana by Sa Yasuyoshi 左安吉.

During this month.....

An edict is issued that in the event of a fire, when there is a strong wind, those living in rented homes in the direct line of the fire on the windward side are to immediately evacuate their homes, and during such an evacuation, yari, naginata, and swords are not to be drawn from their saya.

March 14

Ii Hoki no Kami Naotake, as a legacy from his father Mimbu Shou Naoyoshi, presents a katana by Bizen Kanemitsu.

Kanamori Kansuke Yorinobu, as a legacy from his father Hida no Kami Yorihiro, presents a katana by Shintogo Kunimitsu新藤五國光.

Nagafuku, the eldest son of Kii Chunagon Mitsusada, is included in the ranks by receiving the title of Hitachi no Suke, changes his name to Tsunanori, and presents a tachi by Tomomitsu 倫光. He is given a ko-wakizashi by Rai Kunitoshi来国俊.

Matsudaira Danjo Shou Tsunanori, in appreciation of being allowed to assume his father's position and fief, presents a tachi by Yukihide. His father on retiring, presents a ko-wakizashi by Masamune.

June 9

Matsudaira Iyo no Kami Tsunamasa, in appreciation for being allowed to assume his father's position and fief, presents a tachi by Yukihiro. His father, Shintaro Masamitsu, on his retirement, presents the katana (Meibatsu) Wakasa Masamune.

August 15

The abbot of Nishi Honganji Temple, Kojo, through a messenger, presents a tachi and cash for a horse on the event of his receiving the title of archbishop.

September 28

Mizuguchi Izumo no Kami Nobunao, on his retirement presents a katana by Rai Kunimitsu.

October 28

Okadaira Kojiro Masaaki, as a legacy from his father Daizen no Suke Masayoshi, presents a katana by Kunimune 國宗.

December 15

Toda Awaji no Kami Ujitsune, on his retirement, presents a katana by Bizen Kagemitsu 備前景光.

Sometime during this year.....

Mishina Tango no Kami Kanemichi 三品丹受宇兼道 dies at age 70.

Inoue Izumi no Kami Kunisada 井上和泉守国貞 changes his name to Inoue Shinkai 井上真改.

The second generation Sendai Kunikane dies at age 61.

KYOHU MEIBUTSUCHO

INSTALLMENT 34

O-KANEMITSU

大兼光

Owner: unknown

Zogan mei

Length: 2 shaku 7 sun 9 bu

Value: 60 mai

It was so named, due to the blade being long. As the legacy of Lord Hideyoshi, it was left to Todo Sado no Kami and presented at lord Toshiie's residence.

There is a chu-kissaki. There are hi on the ura and omote.

On the nakago omote, there is a Honami kakihan.

On the ura, there is a zogan mei "Bizen Kuni Kanemitsu" made by Koon.

Yamanaka Note

The fact that the blade was left to Todo Sado no Kami Takatora as a legacy from Toyotomi Hideyoshi is known. However, during the Kyoho Era, when the Meibutsu Cho was compiled, the whereabouts of the blade had not been established by the Honami. Some records say the blade was in the Shogunate collection at about the end of the Tokugawa Period, and therefore, the exact whereabouts of the blade was unknown for a good many years. However, the blade presently is in the Sano Sword Museum in Mishima in Shizuoka Prefecture.

The description of the blade is exactly as given in the Meibutsu Cho, except for the fact that the length is about 3.5 Bu shorter. The Sano is said to have acquired the blade from a descendant of the Shogunate after WII.

KANEMITSU OR SOMA KANEMITSU

大兼光or 聡馬兼光

Owner: Okubo Kaga no Kami

Zogan mei

Length: 2 shaku 7 sun 5 bu

Value: 60 mai

A man by the name of Hichirozaemon, who the head of the Soma Clan owned it.

The zogan mei was put on by Kotoku (Honami).

It was with Okubo Kaga no Kami before, and came to us (Honami) from Hosokawa Etchu no Kami for appraisal, and the value was set as above.

There are hi on the omote and ura.

Yamanaka Note

Absolutely nothing is known about this blade. The Soma Clan ruled in Mutsu Province for many generations. The Okubo ruled at Odawara in Soshu Province during the Tokugawa period.

Hosokawa refers to the Hosokawa of Higo Province.

The text lists the blade as being owned by the Okubo at the very start, however towards the end it refers to it as being sent to the Honami from the Hosokawa, and therefore, during the Kyoho Era, the ownership is not clear. It is not likely that the Okubo sent the blade through the Hosokawa to the Honami.

NAMIOYOGI KANEMITSU

浪およぎ兼光

Owner: Tachibana Hida no Kami

Suriage

Length: 2 shaku 1 sun 0.5 bu

value: 1,000 kan

At a river bank, a man who was fleeing was cut with this sword. He swam across the river, and then as he reached the distant shore, he split into two, hence the name of the sword.

There are futatsuji hi on the omote and a bonji at the tip of the nakago.

There are bo hi on the ura, under which there is a Sagari ryu and a ken.

On the nakago omote there is an inscription, "Namioyogi Matsudai no ken Kanemitsu nari".

On the ura of the nakago there is a zogan mei "Hashiba Okayama Chunagon Hideaki Shoji".

The appraisal was done on Empo 4 (1676).

Yamanaka Note

There are several versions as to how the name came to be attached to this sword. One is that Kampaku Hidetsugu cut a man at a river bank who jumped into the river to escape, and he reached the other shore where he fell apart.

The other version is that during Hideyoshi's Korean Campaign, Tachibana Muneshige's retainer cut a retreating Korean who was just about to jump into the river to escape the Japanese invaders. He swam across the river then fell into two pieces.

Whichever is true, it seems a little farfetched, but it gives an example of how keen the Kanemitsu blade, is and why many of the generals in the Sengoku Jidai carried blades by Kanemitsu.

In the records of the Tachibana Clan, this blade is listed as being 2 shaku 1 sun 4 bu, with the inscription as stated in the text, and that it has an orikami with a value of 50 mai.

The blade was formerly in the Uesugi Collection, and at that time it was known as Azuki Kanemitsu. Uesugi Kagekatsu gave it to Hashiba Hideaki and it came to be known as Namioyogi.

Hashiba Okayama Chikuzen no Kami was a nephew of Hideyoshi's wife Kodai-In who was adopted by Kobayakawa Clan, and he changed his name to Hideaki (from OkayamaToshiro).

The Tachibana Clan ruled in Yamagawa in Chikugo Province in Kyushu. On the Zogan Mei on the omote it says "Namioyogi Matsudai Ken Kanemitsu nari", and the 2nd and 3rd words "Matsudai ken" are a little difficult to understand. It could mean that the "ken" was added later, or it could mean something entirely different, and the exact meaning of this is not explained in any of the old texts that we have looked into.

The blade was nominated to Juyo Bijutsu prior to WWII and is currently in a private collection.

TAKAMATA KANEMITSU

Owner: unknown

Length: 2 shaku 8 sun

Value: unknown

Takemata Mikawa no Kami, a samurai of Etchu Province, owned this a long time ago.

There are carvings of unokubi on the omote, a ken with dokko in uki bori within a hi on the ura, and carvings of bonji on the hira on both the omote and ura.

It has a long signature and is dated in the Embun Era.

Yamanaka Note

The inscription on the blade is: on the omote, Bishu Osafune Kanemitsu (備州長船兼光). On the ura the inscription is "Embun 5 nen 6 gatsu hi" (延文五年六月日).

It was recorded in the great Shimazu Register around the latter part of the 18th Century.

The blade has also been recorded in the Kotoku Katana Ezu, and the record of the blade by those who have seen it in recent years (prior to 1940) shows that there is no unokubi carving on the blade, therefore when the Honami compiled the Meibutsu Cho, they must have written about this blade from memory, for the Meibutsu Cho clearly states that the ownership is not clear, that is the whereabouts of the blade was unknown.

Actually, the blade has hi on both the omote and ura and there are carvings of ken with dokko on both sides within the hi in relief, and also there are bonji carved on the hira on both sides of the blade.

The tale regarding this blade is very interesting. A farmer in the domain where Takemata ruled owned it, and the keen cutting edge of the blade soon came to be known, so Takemata probably confiscated it, and gave it to his lord, Uesugi Kenshin. Uesugi Kenshin, in one of the numerous battles he had with Takeda Kenshin of Kai Province, cut a man in the Takeda forces who was aiming at Uesugi with a hinawaju (matchlock) and the blade cut through the sode (sleeves) of the yoroi and cut through the gun barrel too. The blade was left to Kagekatsu, Kenshin's adopted son, and sometime during the Keicho Era, when Kagekatsu went to Kyoto, he had it

polished, and when the blade came back after polishing it was found to be a substitute which one of the Uesugi retainers realized because he remembered details of the blade, and that at the habaki, there was a small hole through which one could pass a hair through. However, no such hole was evident on the blade which came back from the polisher.

Takemata Mikawa no Kami was sent to Kyoto and tried to trace the blade, and with the aid of Ishida Mitsunari (Toyotomi Hideyoshi's top aide) the whole of Kyoto and its surrounding area was searched, and at Higashiyama, eleven bandits who were supposedly the culprits were caught and hanged, and the blade was returned.

Then Hideyoshi took interest in the blade, and it was given to him, and at the time of the Osaka Battle, it was "lost".

The fake or substitute blade which the polisher gave to Uesugi Kagekatsu was supposedly made by Etchu no Kami Masatoshi, although when the bandits were apprehended, Masatoshi had fled Kyoto.

The blade was in the Shimazu Collection, and it was known by the name of Ryuku Kanemitsu, although how this name came to be attached to the blade is not known.

The Shimazu sold this blade along with most of their collection in 1933, and the present location is not known. It is said that it was "lost" during the US occupation of Japan after WWII.

KI-NO-I

Owner: Matsudaira Chikuzen no Kami

Mumei

Length: 2 shaku 2 sun 3.5 bu

Value: unknown

Lord Kuroda Nagamasa, at Ki-no-I cut a man, and it cut very well. The blade has been handed down from ancient times as being an O-kiremono.

Yamanaka Note

Kuroda Jyosui ruled at Nakatsu in Buzen Province, present day Oita Prefecture.

Utsunomiya Shigefusa ruled at the Castle at Ki-no-I and he was planning an uprising against Kuroda, and Kuroda knowing well about Utsunomiya and his fighting abilities, invited him to a feast at a wedding where Jyosui's son Nagamasa was to take Utsunomiya's daughter for his wife. Utsunomiya not knowing that this was a trap came willingly to the feast, and at the banquet, Nagamasa (not Jyosui) cut Utsunomiya in one stroke. At this time, Kuriyama Bingo and Goto Matabei, well known swordsmen of the time helped cut down the rest of the Utsunomiya's retainers, and the blade thereafter came to be known as Ki-no-I Kanemitsu.

The blade was with the Kuroda until quite recently, however it seems that they no longer own it today.