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JAPANESE SWORD SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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Ron Hartmann - Jim Mitchell Co-editors

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CONTENTS

THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS by Bulletin Editors.....Preface

MURAMASA BLADES by Yasu Kizu  
(Courtesy of Japanese Sword Club of Southern Cal.).....1

A COLLECTION OF ARTISTS SEALS (HAN AND KAKIHAN)  
by Martin Kuznitzky (translated by Alan Harvey).....6

THE GENDAITO, A DRAMATIC THAW by Roy Hashioka.....13

TITLES OF SWORDSMITHS by Albert Yamanaka  
(Courtesy of the Nihonto Newsletter).....16

TANTO by Suzuki (INTRODUCTION)  
(Translated by the Japanese Sword Society/U.S.....17

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PREFACE

The editors regret the long delay in the printing of this issue of the BULLETIN plus the fact that it is rather lean in volume as compared to BULLETINS of past years. The problem of accumulating good material in the form of translations, reprints of other sword club articles, and research papers, was compounded this past year by the increased lack of contributors.

However, it is felt that even though the BULLETIN is rather lean, the quality of the contents is most worthwhile and informative. Our thanks to the "Old Guard" contributors who seem to always come through with new efforts to keep our society moving through our publications, the BULLETIN and the NEWSLETTER.

Plans were made to include a most complete report including pictures, oshigata, interviews, statistics, and a wealth of other material accumulated during the recent TOKEN KENKYU KAI sword exhibit and shinsa which took place in Dallas, Texas, this past month. Unfortunately, due to the unexpected over-success of this show and the lack of available time during the show, many of these plans had to be put aside. A full report is still expected to be comprised, but will have to be postponed until a future date.

Anyone who has comments or views which would add to the completeness of such a report should contact the BULLETIN editors as soon as possible. A preliminary report will be included in one of the next society NEWSLETTERS to give those unable to attend this affair, some idea as to the significance and success of this unique undertaking.

The usual plea is applicable here once again, for contributors to the BULLETIN. Anyone with translations, papers, articles of interest, etc., which might fit into the context of future issues should advise the editors of their availability so that future issues can be planned.

Thank You.

The Editors

\* \* \* \* \*

Ron Hartmann

Jim Mitchell

## MURAMASA BLADES

by Yasu Kizu

Reprinted by permission of the Japanese Sword Club of Southern California. Revised by W. M. Hawley.

SENGO MURAMASA 千子村正 the first smith in the Muramasa line worked in late Muromachi times about 1460 and signed with two characters 村正. Later he was given a temple name NYUDO MYODAI 入道妙盛 but never signed it. Number two was his son, also called SENGO and also signed with two characters. Number three, the grandson, signed SEISHU KUWANA JU MURAMASA 勢州桑名住村正.

The blades of all three have the following characteristics:

1. Blades are katana, wakizashi, tanto, with some tachi and a few yari. They are the general shape of Mino blades except for wider, thinner body, longer points, and high shinogi line.
2. Surface grain is itame-masame mixed, that is, itame along the temper line giving way to masame a straight grain along the shinogi line. Surface color is clear dark blue with small nie all over the hada.
3. Temper lines are gonome or medium straight, or notare wave mixed with hakko box shape, many having koshiba or enlargement toward the hilt. In the gonome or notare types, the base of the line extends almost down to the edge sometimes with ashi legs touching the edge. Nioi line is very strong and deep. Yakiba color is clear, crystalline white with a bluish tint.
4. Boshi lines are wavy or Jizo-head shape with small irregular turn-back ending firmly.
5. Horimono carvings are not frequent, grooves occur more often.
6. Nakago is tanago-bara or tanago fish-belly shape.

Most old books give MURAMASA I as the greatest because he was believed to be a student of MASAMUNE. Later books say that the characteristics of Muramasa blades are more like Mino than Masamune's Sosuden. Actually they combine the two. HONOMI KOSON says that the existing blades of MURAMASA II show the greatest excellence.

Mino blades at that time were medium curved koshizori with very good balance but many MURAMASA blades are torii-zori with rather shallow curve. In surface color, Mino blades have a cloudy whitish surface with blackish sub-surface while MURAMASA blades have a clear dark blue hada surface with yakiba color much clearer than Mino.

Due to the Tokugawa prohibition against MURAMASA blades, testers would not record tests and origami were refused or certified as Heianjo NAGAYOSHI from whose blades only experts could distinguish the fine points.

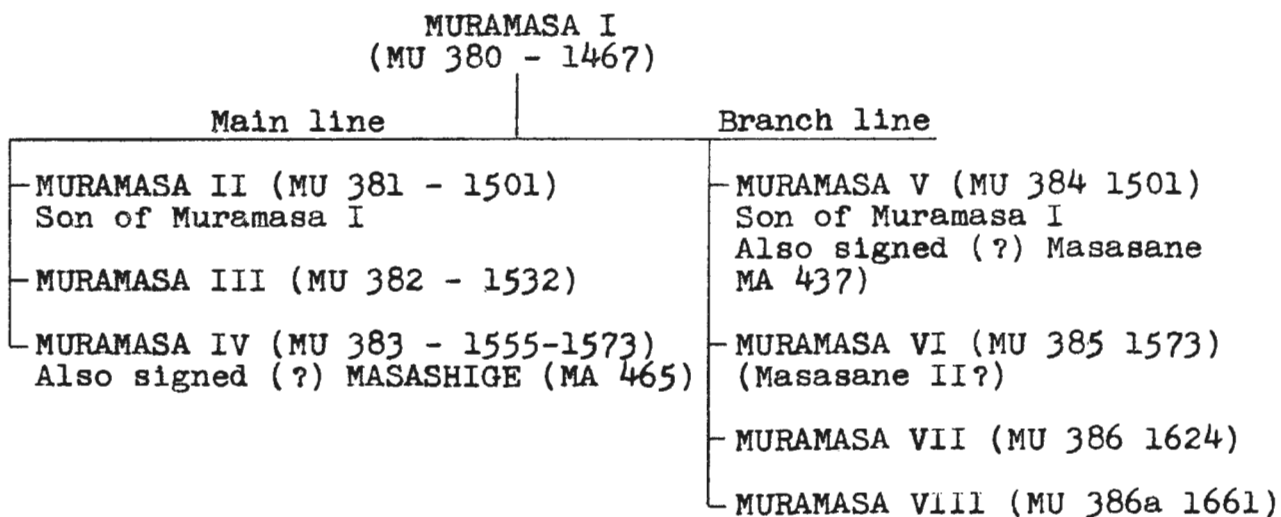
There has always been great uncertainty as to the dates of the Muramasa line. Perhaps this was due to the claim that he was a student of Masamune.

In the recent Japanese books such as the TAIKAN and the JUYO SERIES, new dates have been ascribed to these men mostly due to the fact that only one existing blades signed MURAMASA is dated, and this is attributed to MURAMASA II. It is also said that no swords of MURAMASA I exist today.

If it is true that the first Muramasa was a student of Masamune, we would have to assume that still another existed before Sengo, though no evidence has ever been advanced to indicate this. So, you have three choices - believe in an earlier man; discard the Masamune story; or go back to the old dates but move the dated blade up to the third or fourth generation! So it's still a guessing game!

On page 235 of NIHON TO KOZA Volume 2, is a genealogy diagram that purports to show the line but contains some inconsistencies, such as giving a date for his father as 1356 and a date for his teacher as 1469! One has to be wrong. Ignoring the father name and date makes sense for the new dates, and vice-versa for the old dates.

Based on the new data currently accepted, here is a new chart:



Exploring further we find another chart in KAWAGUCHI'S SHINTO KOTO TAIKAN page 149 of text. This follows the old dates:

MURAMASA I - 1362, II - 1394, III - 1429, IV - 1469, V - 1504, VI - 1532, VII - 1573

MURASHIGE (MU 395 - 1441)  
MASASHIGE I - 1429  
-II - 1469  
-III - 1504  
-IV - 1532  
-V - 1573

FUJIMASA (FU 12 - 1504)

For those who want to follow this up, here are some references:

Old Koza set Vol. 8 part 7 pages 4 to 7 show 10 signitures.  
New Koza set Vol. 2 pages 230 - 237, and photos page 38.  
The complete Juyo through No. 20 shows 18 blades from 1st generation to 4th generations.

Ise no To Ko - Ise Sword Work. 12 pl. photos, 9 pl. oshigata, genea. chart.

Kawaguchi - Shinto Koto Taikan - plates 49-53.

Kawaguchi - Token Meijiten - page 235 - 8 examples.

Fujishiro - Nihon Toko Jiten, Kotohen pages 254 - 258, 10 examples.

Fujishiro - Shinsen - page 101, First generation priced 1800 Yen (1938 - 35¢/Yen).

Fujishiro - Shinsen - notes - They made tanto with straight back or sakizori, normal katana, and flat wakizashi. Hada was mokume-itame, hamon - hakko-midare, notare-midare.

Says father of No. I was Seki KANEMURA (KA 807?).

Kakaku Jiten (1971) page 107 gives No. I - 3,300,000 Yen or \$11,000 but how do you price something that no longer exists!

#### SUPERSTITIONS SURROUNDING MURAMASA

As you all have heard, swords made by the three generations of Muramasa have been considered unlucky and evil by many persons especially in the Tokugawa family.

The claim that swords of the Muramasa are second only to Masamune can be disputed but certainly they have been nearly as famous as his blades.

Those made by Muramasa of Ise Province are as sharp as those classified "Supreme Sharpness" by the official tester YAMADA ASAEMON. In fact Kubata Sagana, a kendo teacher of the late Tokugawa era wrote that a Muramasa blade was sharper than a sword made by the famous BIZEN KANEMITSU.

Many lords and samurai chose Muramasa blades of "Supreme Sharpness" for their own use. Among them were TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI, MAEDA TOSHIYE, FUKUSHIMA MASANORI, and SANADA YUKIMURA, and there is no record of any unfortunate happenings to these owners. However, Muramasa swords repeatedly brought evil happenings to the Tokugawa family.

The first such incident happened to MATSUDAIRA KIYOYASU, grandfather of Tokugawa Iyeyasu who was the first Tokugawa Shogun. On December 5, 1535, Kiyoyasu lead his army to Moriyama in Owari Province to attack Oda Nobuhide, father of Oda Nobunaga. Kiyoyasu had a very brave and strong officer named ABE DAIZO SADAYOSHI who distinguished himself with many examples of fanatic bravery but somehow bad gossip about him started spreading.

Sadayoshi became aware of the gossip and was afraid something might happen to him and told his young son about it. Early next morning Kiyoyasu's horse got loose and he shouted "catch him, catch him!". Young Yahichiro thought that his father was about to be killed. He jumped up, grabbed his Muramasa sword almost three feet long, ran up to the Lord and in a flash, cut him from his right shoulder down to the right side! At this moment a samurai named Uyemura Shinrokuro came on the scene and killed Yahichiro. So, Iyeyasu's grandfather Kiyoyasu was killed by a Muramasa blade entirely due to a misunderstanding.

The second incident happened to Iyeyasu's father Hirotada. Hirotada had a gallant vassal named Iwamatsu Hachiya who had lost one eye, hence was known as "One Eye Hachiya". He was such a strong warrior that even his enemies were afraid of him so that they called out "here comes One Eye Hachiya - watch out!" whenever he appeared.

One day he got very drunk and went up to the castle. He found Lord Hirotada taking a nap. Suddenly he drew his Muramasa wakizashi and stabbed at Hirotada but missed his aim and only cut the lord's thigh. He ran out to escape but Hirotada got up and chased him to the gate but was unable to catch him. One Eye Hachiro was killed by the samurai Uyemura Shinpachiro just outside the gate. It is argued as to whether Hachiya was drunk or secretly employed by a neighboring enemy lord. This happened March 20, 1545.

A third incident happened to Iyeyasu's eldest son Nobuyasu. Nobuyasu's mother was a very self-indulgent woman and was trying for the third time to marry Takeda Katsuyori the powerful Lord of Kai Province who was then the enemy of Oda Nobunaga. As one of Nobunaga's daughters was the wife of Nobuyasu, the information reached Nobunaga

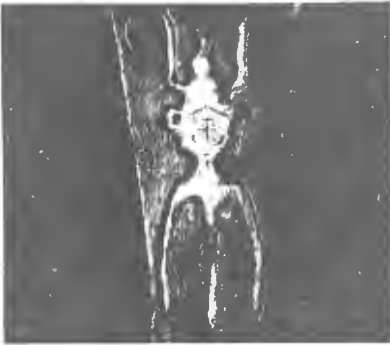
and made him believe that Nobuyasu and the mother Tsukiyama were taking sides with his enemy Takeda.

He promptly sent a protest to Iyeyasu who immediately ordered the mother killed and ordered Nobuyasu to commit harakiri. He appointed Amakata Yamashiro no Kami Michioki and another man as the official seconds for his son's suicide. Michiaki's sword with which he did the grim job was a Muramasa.

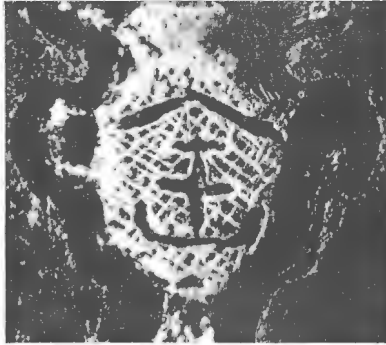
Besides these three incidents, Iyeyasu himself had cut his hand with a Muramasa tanto when he was a young boy. All these ill-fated happenings relating to Muramasa blades caused the superstitious Iyeyasu much worry and he decided to destroy all Muramasa blades owned by his family.

That Muramasa blades were evil to the Tokugawa Shoguna had become known to Lords and samurai all over the country and many of them had disposed of the ones in their possession, however some still kept them secretly because they were such fine blades. Later in Kan'ei times (1625) an ordinance prohibiting possession of Muramasa blades was issued and anyone caught disobeying it was heavily punished. As an example, Takenaka Shigeyoshi, Lord of Funai in Bungo Province, who was serving as Judge of Nagasaki City was given the death penalty after it was found that he was keeping not one or two but 24 Muramasa swords! So the owners of Muramasa blades hastily disposed of by selling, donating to shrines or altering signatures to make the blade appear to be made by someone else.

Tafel XVI



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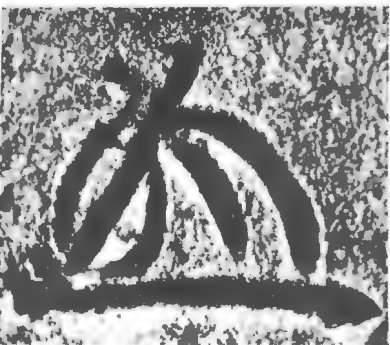
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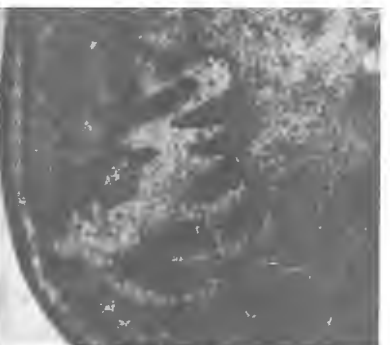
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A Collection of Artists' Seals (Han and Kakihan)

in Microphotographic Reproduction

by Martin Kuznitzky,  
translated from the German  
by Alan L. Harvie.

PLATE XVI

- No. 1. Hide-kuni. Family: Kawarabayashi. On the guard  
2. (iron, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, No. 2463) the  
artist's name, Tenkōdō, is also engraved which (ac-  
cording to Hara) was bestowed on the artist by the  
Emperor Kōmei. Fig. 1 represents the han as such  
(so-called Kōrō-Han), while Fig. 2 gives the more  
strongly enlarged partial photograph containing the  
character of the han, a somewhat modified KIN 金 = the  
first part of Hidekuni's artists' name: Kinryūsha  
(Amiya). Joly, in addition to this centerpiece of  
the han reproduced for Plate XVI, No. 1, brings two  
more kakihan of the same master (p. 13, No. 80).  
Mosle also brings a kakihan of the master (Fig. 1343).  
The data: see Hara, p. 22.
- No. 3. Sei-jō III. Family: Gotō. Student of Seijō II.  
The data: see Hara, p. 170. On the guard (shakudō,  
Staatliche Museen, Berlin, No. 2163) Seijō has en-  
graved, in addition to his name, the statement that  
the tsuba material used consists of an alloy of gold  
and copper: motte kin shidō tsukuru.
- No. 4. Mitsu-yoshi. Family: Hayashi. According to Hara a  
discarded student of Yanagawa Naomitsu. Cf. also,  
moreover, Hara, p. 112. Joly, on p. 59, No. 444,  
gives the same kakihan, to which he juxtaposes an  
(unjustified) "?". Kozuka (shakudō). Kuznitzky  
collection.
- No. 5. Nao-taka. Family: Yanagawa. His teacher was Yana-  
gawa Naotoki. The remaining data given by Hara,  
p. 145. Kozuka (shakudō). Museum für ostasiatische  
Kunst, Cologne, No. 51.
- No. 6. Nari-kata. Family: Umetada. Other data given by  
Hara, p. 148. Joly, on p. 75, under No. 201, gives  
two more similiar kakihan by Narikata. Kozuka  
(shakudō) which, according to the inscription, was  
created by the master at the age of 67. Kuznitzky  
collection.

- No. 7. Hiro-toshi 廣利 . Family: Yoshioka (Amiya). Nothing is known about teacher and school affiliation. Residence: Hiroshima, capital of the Province of Aki, whose other name, Geishū, is given on the guard as the artist's home. Active around 1830. Not mentioned by Hara. Tsuba (iron). Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 11,41.
- No. 8. Ari-yoshi. Family: Uyesugi. Belongs to the Ōtsuki School. His teacher was Aritsune (Amiya). On the guard (Staatliche Museen Berlin, No. 3180) his name is cursively engraved. See Hara, p. 4, for a detailed description of this guard from which the microphotograph XVI, No. 8, is derived.
- No. 9. Yoshi-aki. Family: Kurozawa. (Cf. Hara, p. 241). Joly, p. 122, No. 100, brings, in addition to the kakihan here microphotographed, a second somewhat differing kakihan. He also lists the name Kōsekidō 光后堂 and Kōroken 香盧軒 . Fuchi (iron). Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 100.
- No. 10. Yoshi-nori. Family: Seki. Nothing is known about his teacher. Amiya feels that Seki Yoshinori, while assigned by several people to the circle of the Nara School (see also Hara, p. 252: "influenced by the Nara School"), was related to none of the known schools on account of his own quite peculiar style. Joly, on p. 128, No. 243, gives, in addition to the kakihan here microphotographed which, according to Amiya, is a reshaped form of the character for YOSHI 義 , two additional similiar kakihan of the master and two han. One of these two han has also been reproduced by Mosle (in Fig. 1645). Tsuba (iron). Daruma head in copper in lowered high relief. Kuznitsky collection.
- No. 11. Nobu-yuki. Family: Hiroki. Cf. Hara, p. 156, and Joly, p. 78, No. 270; the latter shows, in addition to the kakihan here microphotographed, a second similiar one. Kozuka (shakudō). Kuznitsky collection.
- No. 12. Teru-hisa. Family: Kuwamura. Cf. Hara, p. 202. Fuchi (iron). Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 7.

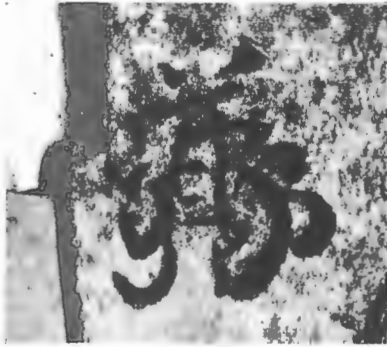
**CORRECTION:** By a regrettable accident the illustrations of Figures 4 to 9 have been confused. The numbers should be corrected as follows: Instead of No. 4, the text number is 6 (Okitsugu); instead of No. 6, the text number is 4 (Tomonobu); instead of No. 7, the text number is 9 (Yoshimitsu); instead of No. 9, the text number is 7 (Katsuhira). In addition, Figures 4-9 should be righted.

Zu: Kuznitsky, Sammlung von Künstlersiegeln

Tafel XVII



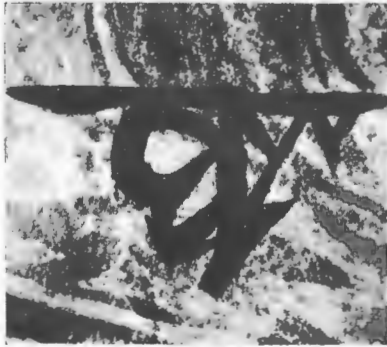
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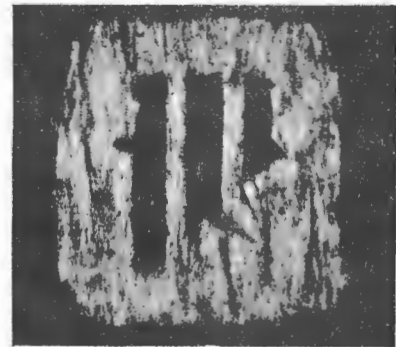
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## PLATE XVII

- No. 1. Nao-michi. Family: Sōda 宗田 (Amiya). Hara reads (p. 143): Muneta. Both Joly and Mosle also read the family as Muneta. Name: Matabei. Son and student of Sōda (Muneta) Norinao. (Ichinomiya School.) According to Amiya he was active in Kyōto around 1830 (Hara: Ōsaka). Joly (p. 72, No. 118) gives two similiar kakihan of his. Cf. also Mosle, Figure No. 1370, whose kakihan differs a little from the two reproductions of Joly as well as from our own microphotograph. Fuchi (shakudō). Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 50.
- No. 2. Naga-aki. Family: Sekine (Amiya). Cf. Hara, p. 135. The guard, from which the kakihan reproduced here is derived (iron, Kuznitzky collection), formerly belonged to the Naunton collection in whose catalog it is reproduced on plate LXX and described under No. 2294, but the name is shown as Toshiaki.
- No. 3. Tomo-nao. Family: Kageyama. Cf. Hara, p. 213. Fuchi (iron). Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 71.
- No. 4. Tomo-nobu. Family: Someya. Student of Someya Masachika, whose style, however, he did not adopt in his own works (landscapes) (Amiya). For the rest cf. Hara, p. 213. Joly brings, in addition to a han sketch which corresponds to the microphotograph No. 5, two additional, different han (p. 107, No. 235). The microphotograph No. 4 stems from the guard No. 61 (shakudō) of the Fahrenhorst collection. In microphotograph No. 5 there is reproduced the han of the guard, No. 68/2347 (shakudō), of the Staatlichen Museen Berlin. On both tsuba the identical meiji are engraved in sōsho script. The difference between the two han is accounted for by their creation in different working periods of the master.
- No. 6. Oki-tsugu. Family: Takahashi. Student of Takahashi Masatsugu. However, he does not really belong to any school in particular since his style is quite a personal one (Amiya). His principal working period, according to Amiya, is around 1830. For the rest cf. Hara, p. 160. Joly brings, in addition to the kakihan here reproduced, a second, somewhat different, kakihan (p. 81, No. 12), and also the mei which is engraved on the guard in sōshu script. Cf. also Mosle, No. 1524. Tsuba (in mokume technique). The Staatlichen Museen Berlin, 69/23/3.

- No. 7. Katsu-hira. Family: Hagiya. Cf. Hara, p. 52. Joly produces mei and kakihan, which is identical with the one reproduced here, under No. 65 on p. 29. Kozuka (shakudō). Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 10. 16.
- No. 8. Yoshi-kuni. Family: Kōno (Amiya). Cf. Hara, p. 247. Joly produces, in addition to the kakihan by Kōno Yoshikuni reproduced here, a second, somewhat different one (p. 125, No. 174). Fuchi (shakudō). Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 95.
- No. 9. Yoshi-mitsu 美光. Family: Yamamoto. Student of Unno Yoshimori (Kümmel). Active in Mito around 1830. Not mentioned by Hara. Produced by Joly on p. 126, under No. 203, with a kakihan almost completely identical with microphotograph No. 9. Fuchi (shakudō), with chidori in strong, high relief made out of silver. Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 10. 10.
- No. 10. Jo-chiku. Family: Murakami. The guard, whose kakihan is reproduced in our microphotograph, has been described in detail by Hara, p. 42. In contrast to Hara, Amiya does not read the residence inscription 武陽 simply as Musashi Province; instead, the first sign MU武 stands for the complete designation MUSA-SHI, while the second sign YŌ陽 means: capital. Hence, the whole thing: capital of Musashi, i.e. Edo. The guard (Staatlichen Museen Berlin 68/2368) stems from Jochiku's earlier working period.
- No. 11. Aki-chika. Family: Ōishi. Student of Kōno Haruaki. For the rest cf. Hara, first page of the catalog of masters. Joly, on p. 1, No. 4, exhibits a nearly identical kakihan of the master. The three kakihan on Mosle's Figures 1181, 1182 and 1183 are completely congruent with our microphotograph. Fuchi (shakudō). Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 1. Dated: 1854, in spring.
- No. 12. Haru-toshi 晴壽. Family: Komori (Amiya). Nothing is known of his teacher and school affiliation. The artist name, Tōusai, is cursively engraved on the guard (shakudō) of the Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, No. 302. Active in Edo around 1830 (Amiya). Not mentioned by Hara.

## THE GENDAITO....A DRAMATIC THAW

by Roy Hashioka

The samurai sword has been and is an object of art indigenous only to insular Japan. Being pure, rare and valuable, they were venerated as fit votive presentation for the gods. To this day a first class Nihonto continues to command profound respect and admiration.

Early in the Showa Era, the rise of the militarists brought back the use of the sword to "stiffen the spine". The ill produced lackluster Showa GI swords had turned-off serious collectors and all but doused the few remaining embers. The samurai sword aside from a chumon and utsushi uchi (made-to-order and reproductions) had reached a new low ebb. True, the patient suffered hardening of the arteries but the patient was still alive and smiths such as AKIHIDE, TOSHIHIDE, YASUNORI, SADATSUGU, MASAKAZU and SHIBATA KA, to mention a few, kept the embers alive in the best tradition.

Following Hiroshima, the occupation authorities (SCAP ....Supreme Commander Allied Pacific...more specifically, General MacArthur) issued an edict (ultimately included in Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution) banning the manufacture and possession of all weapons. The door was slammed shut. A small but ardent group of smiths who were mainly disciples of smiths of the Meiji period and/or proud descendants from a long line of smiths ruefully banked their fires. It was not until Showa 28 that the ban was lifted and the smoldering embers aggressively fired up with new forcefulness by such smith as....SADATSUGU, AKIHIRA, TOSHIMITSU, SHIGETSUGU, KUNITOSHI, KUNIIYE, SADAKAZU and MASAMINE who emerged from the deep-freeze to put their best foot forward.

Starting in Showa 30, the Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kai (NBTHK) inaugurated an annual exhibit and contest of newly made swords and fittings. This coupled with the national recognition as living national treasure has been an Everest-like stimuli. With each annual NBTHK sponsored exhibit of gendaito, we are pumping the bellows to perhaps a new golden era of Nihonto. Hopefully, an endless panoply of treasure swords will emerge with the tatara producing iron in the time honored method. Experiencing a renaissance following a long period of slumber, this era, like the golden Kamakura Era, can restore the art which was all but moribund. The gendai toko, although burdened by the overwhelming masterpieces of the titana of Kamakura, nonetheless, hopefully can once again establish special relationship with the gods and attain that degree of excellence which was approached by masters such as Shinto KUNIHIRO Shinshinto KIYOMARO.

Today, with approximately three-hundred smiths at work or treble that prior to WWII and with at least two hammerman to each and if the young "sweeper" is also included, the ranks swells to a thousand plus strong. There are a number of decidedly good smiths just one step below the level of the greats of the Shinto and Shinshinto era and many more in the middle ranks. So, hopefully, we can look for a bright new future for the desire and demand is there and because skill or lack of skill can not be determined by any single era.

Presently, with innovations, savvy and determination, beautiful blades are being created. A few of which can properly be termed meito and even approach some of the better Shinshinto blades. All this has not passed by the board and today a great majority of the collectors in Japan (approximately 85%) include fine gendaito in their collections. The gendaito is approaching a stage wherein they are much like the Shinshinto resurgence under the MASAHIDE School. While the gendaito lack the glamour and romance of the old time-tested blades, knowledgable collectors everywhere recognize the substantial qualities of a blade by a master gendai smith. Again, like fine art in any field, skill or lack of it can not be consigned to any one time slot. The gendai meito will open your eyes.

The future is bright indeed. The fine gendai meito have taken their rightful place along side with their illustrious ancestors. There is a new birth certificate which surely will produce promising gains. In particular, with the proposed revival of the ancient tatara method of smelting iron from native alluvial ore, the smith will have the raw material so necessary to approach the golden eras of yesteryear. The shortcomings of the Shinto blades, aside from shape and at times opulent gingerbread, can be traced primarily to the introduction of namban tetsu. Utilizing ancient iron hardware as raw material, the gendai meito exhibit fine jitetsu which in turn also enhance the "brushwork" in the yakiba.

To those of us who have carried on a love affair with the Nihonto, we can perhaps be a bit more kind to the less glamorous gendaito. With open mind we can take a hard look at the workmanship and acknowledge and appreciate the superior qualities in a fine gendaito. As a collector, isn't it far better to have a crisp full-steam gendaito rather than a tired has-been koto blade? There really isn't much joy in collecting old nakagos. Gendaito are available, are in relatively good condition and best of all priced within the reach of the working man and hungry young collector. In many instances, the gendaito is a CHUMON or UTSUSHI UCHI or both. As sword lovers, we can help keep the art alive by appreciating the gendaito and perhaps add a few fine examples to our collection. Today, there are



many excellent smiths and all that is needed is that spark of genius to approach or even surpass SA YUKIHIDE, KIYOMARO and company. Perhaps the national treasure of the future will manifest itself during our life-time.

Following WWII, a defeated nation could no longer indulge in the once proud sword for it seemed to be a symbol of all that went wrong. The ban on weapons further damped sword enthusiasm. Then, the current economic boom engendered a new fever of nationalism and with it a renewed appreciation of the sword as a symbol of bushido. The late author and ultra nationalist, YUKIO MISHIMA, was one who stirred the restive samurai tradition which still further added fuel to the sword fever in Japan. With swords becoming scarce, orders for gendaito increased many fold. The government restriction of two blades per month per smith, together with necessary certification as object of art and not a weapon plus the lack of good iron, has been a real bottleneck and thus a major factor in the spiraling cost.

Looking back as well as ahead and with the revival of the tatara method of iron production which is basic to the creation of blades as in the heydays of Kamakura, the smith today with zeal, perseverance, discipline and a proud heritage are well on the road to better swords. What is needed is a catalyst enhanced and galvanized by experience. Once again blades must not only be objects of art but also the ultimate edged weapon; one can not be separated from the other. The fine blade, the total picture and acid test, is one of grace and sharpness wedded together.

The gendai smith need to further experiment with the more difficult Soshu style and such other facets as overall balance, more care into the nakago and investigate the elusive and baffling phenomenon of the utsuri all of which add up to the total sword. The collector-patron is most linkely to "live on" if one could have one of the leading gendai smith produce a chumon uchi with ownership inscribed on the nakago. Then, some future collector will realize that during the Showa Era the blade was made to order for a namban ai-to-ka (sword lover).

Perhaps we are witness to a gendai or "Shin"Shinsinto era. Many are venturing forth getting their toes wet and there is new muscle and the smell of optimism in the air. That sword making has experienced a rebirth is ample proof that the Nihonto is an art form which has and continues to withstand the test of time. That high minded men continue to appreciate and perpetuate this art is to man's credit.

## TITLES OF SWORDSMITHS

by Albert Yamanaka

Reprinted in part from an article in the Nihonto Newsletter - 1968

For quite some time now, we have noticed that in some of the writing done in the West, many sword names and titles are "misread". The latter especially so. We list here a few of those that are obvious.

Titles with the character "KAMI" are all read with the word "no" between the province name and the word Kami, that is Izumi no Kami, though the actual writing is written Izumi Kami. This comes from the old Japanese usage of when an official from the central government was dispatched to a certain province to rule there, his title became "ruler of . . . .", Kami referring to "rule". However, in other titles such as Dewa Daijo Fujiwara Kunimichi we note that this is quite often misread Dewa no Daijo as is Kawachi Daijo which is often misread as Kawachi no Daijo. When there is KAMI at the end of the title, this is always read with "no" . . . . Yamato no Kami, Sagami no Kami. If the title is DAIJO, when the "no" is left out.

However, then there is the title with "JO", such as Iga no Jo, this is always read as Iga no Jo, or Iyo no Jo, or whatever. . . no Jo.

If the title has "SHOKEN", then this is read without the "no". Simply Sakon Shogen as in the case of 2nd Nagamitsu. The title with the "SUKE" is read with a "no". Osumi Gon no Suke, Kaga no Suke, Kazusa no Suke.

The title "HOGAN" is read without the "no", Aki Hogan etc. The title "DAIMOKU" or "TAIMOKU", is read with a "no", Hitachi no Daimoku. The title "SHO" or "JO" is read with a "no", as in Mondo no Sho.

Other than this, (Mr. Yamanaka went on to list many of the titles), in the Koto period, there were other types used which are not found during the Shinto period. They are the "JYO" title used quite often by the late Bizen smiths, such as Yozozemon no Jo Sukesada, Gen no Jo Sukesada, etc.

During the time of Emperor Gotoba, few of the smiths that went to the emperor's villa to attend him in sword making received titles; Fukuoka Ichimonji Norimune had the title Bizen Daiyu and Kyobu no Suke; Ichimonji Sukemune had Shuri no Kyo, etc. These titles other than having their respective position in the sword world also had some social standing as well in their own respective communities, for the swordsmiths' position in the Samurai society was regarded as pretty high.

## TANTO

by Suzuki

INTRODUCTION (Translation by the Japanese Sword Society/U.S.)

### KAMAKURA PERIOD

Tanto existed, needless to say, during the Heian Period; but there were few famous blades, and the tanto, unlike the tachi, was actually an article for practical use. Then, given the natural rate of consumption and the effect of time, the number of works surviving to the present is very small.

There is very little difference between the nakago of the tanto and that of the tachi, but nakago types such as the furisode are not seen in the latter. These were designed to fit into the so-called "tsuka magari" style mountings, and were probably used primarily as metezashi. The tang ends seen in the work of Yamato Hōshō are ichimonji; those of Senjuin and Tegai are Katasogi; while in Masamune and Sadamune we find the kengyō type.

In the early Kamakura Period we have the works of Awataguchi Hisakuni and Yukihiro of Bungo. These are usually the common uchi-zori type, but among them we find some with slight sori.

When we enter the middle of the period we find an abundance of devoted dagger craftsmen throughout the country, many of whose famous works remain today. Their blades are for the most part small, hirazukuri style with uchizori; but in Yamato and Kyoto we occasionally see the construction known as Kammuri otoshi zukuri.

In the late Kamakura the style was a rather long hirazukuri type with no sori. We also find works with broad blades, some of which have slight sori. This change in daggers reflects the fact that the early Kamakura Period was still strongly influenced by Heian culture; but from the middle Kamakura on the martial spirit of simplicity and courage, along with the necessity born of close combat on the battlefield led to a move away from refined elegance to a bright strong style.

The carving we find on some blades is less a matter of decoration than it is the symbol of religious faith. The dragon and ken derived from the worship of Fudō Myō-ō. At the end of the period we find a new faith, that of Hachiman, and carvings of such phrases dedicated to dieties as "Namu Hachiman Dai-Bosatsu" appear. This is also the period of the great carving specialist Daishinbō, the disciple of Shintōgo Kunimitsu; and from this time on we see combined carvings of hi, bonji, ken, etc.

In the making of tachi the outstanding virtue had always been the quality of steel and the excellence of forging. Needless to say this was to prevent the blades from breaking even when struck together. In the case of tanto, however, as there was less worry of their breaking, the smiths of the Heian Period probably did not devote as much time or attention to forging. In the Kamakura Period there was a strong demand even for tanto to be forged of high quality steel with soft center steel (shin-gane); and thus each school developed a correct forging technique.

The hamon of tanto is also quite like that of tachi, but we do not see in tanto the choji midare type, popular at this time in Bizen. Rather, the gonome midare and sugu ha of Nagamitsu and Kagemitsu are perhaps representative Bizen types. In the tanto of the Ichimonji Group, though admittedly these are quite rare, there are almost no choji.

The Yamashiro blades skillfully carry on the original sugu ha hamon, but in some cases, like that of Rai Kunimitsu, we also find the midare type. These are exceptions, however, as is clearly shown by the fact that we have such a blade by Tōshirō Yoshimitsu which is identified as Midare Tōshirō.

Then there is the tradition of Yamato, based on the sugu ha with gonome and hotsure. In Sōshū we have the great master Shintōgo Kunimitsu, and in the same line Kunihiro, as well as such fine dagger craftsmen as Yukimitsu, Masamune and Norimune. Kunimitsu was a specialist in the sugu ha (there is a single famous tanto with the name Midare Shintōgo), but in the shape of his blades as well he ranks along side Awataguchi Yoshimitsu as one of the two great masters. Yukimitsu and Masamune, while they occasionally produce sugu ha like their master, for the most part make the midare type, based on the notare hamon. Their works have a wonderfully attractive sense of serenity. Norishige blades feature the uchizori style with straight edged point (fukura kareru) known as takenoko zori, a type unique in this period. Also unusual is his use of choji, and we find no sugu ha.

Prominant tanto smiths of the Kamakura Period:

- I. Yamashiro.  
Awataguchi Group: Hisakuni, Arikuni, Norikuni,  
Kuniyoshi.  
Rai Group: Kunitoshi, Kunimitsu, Kunisane, Mitsukane,  
Kunihaga, Kunitsugu, Ryōkai.
- II. Bizen.  
Yoshioka Ichimonji Group: Sukemitsu, Sukeyoshi.  
Osafune Group: Nagamitsu, Kagemitsu, Chikakage.  
Kanemitsu Group: Kanemitsu, Yoshimitsu.  
Motoshige Group: Motoshige.  
Ukan Group: Unji.  
Hatakeda Group; Morishige.
- III. Yamato.  
Senjuin Group: Senjuin.  
Shikake Group: Norinaga.  
Taema Group: Kuniyuki, Tomokiyo.  
Hōshō Group: Sadamune, Sadakiyo, Sadayoshi, Sadaoki,  
Tegai Group: Kanenaga, Kanekiyo, Kanetsugu.
- IV. Mino.  
Shizu Group: Kaneuji.
- V. Sōshū.  
Awataguchi Group: Shintōgo Kunimitsu, Kunihiro.  
Yukimitsu Group: Yukimitsu, Masamune, Sadamune.  
Sadamune Group: Takaki Sadamune.
- VI. Various Provinces.  
Ōshū. Hōju Group: Hōju.  
Etchū. Gofukugo Group: Norishige.  
Bitchū. Naka-aoe Group: Yoshitsugu.  
Suwo. Niō Group: Kiyotsuna.  
Chikuzen. Ryōsai Group: Ryōsai, Sairen, Sanea, Sa.  
Bungo. Sadahide Group: Sadahide, Yukihiro.  
Higo. Enju Group: Kunitomura, Kuniyasu, Kuniyoshi,  
Kunisuke, Kunitoshi.  
Chikugo. Mike Group: Mitsuyo.

## NANBOKUCHŌ PERIOD

When the Kemmu Restoration of Emperor Godaigo was destroyed by the rebellion of Ashikaga Takauji, the Godaigo fraction fled to Yoshino in the south, where they continued to oppose the Northern Court in Kyoto, which was supported by Ashikaga Takauji. Thus until the consolidation of the two courts, there was more than sixty years of incessant warfare throughout the country.

This war torn period of the Northern and Southern Courts (Nanbokuchō) brings with it a new style in swords. Works of the previous period had been elegant, and even when bold and vigorous, retained a certain refined dignity; but now we find a move toward a more exaggerated grandeur, and the appearance of imposing ōdachi, nodachi (a long and heavy field sword, slung on the back with the hilt over the left shoulder) and large naginata. Their blades are broad and thin with shallow sori.

The tanto of the period also reflect this trend. They are generally broad and over forty centimeters in length, with a thin blade and slight sori. This style is seen in Akihiro and Hiromitsu of the Sōshū tradition started by Masamune, and it was popular throughout the country. Very rarely we come across in the tanto of Samonji and others an extremely small type not found before this time; but these also represent merely a miniature version of the type of wakazashi mentioned above, and they retain the broad thin blades and slight sori.

There are many master craftsmen throughout the provinces during this period. Bizen particularly flourished, and saw the emergence of new styles, and such smiths as those of the so-called "Sōden Bizen" school of Kanemitsu, as well as Nagayoshi, Yoshikage, Ōmiya Morikage and others.

If the sugu ha type hamon expresses stillness (sei), we may say the midare type represents activity (dō). Until the end of the Kamakura Period the "stillness" of the sugu ha blade predominates; but in the Muromachi the dominant style is midare based on the notare hamon, and we see the appearance of "active" blades that are bold, ambitious and direct.

Prominent tanto smiths of the Nanbokuchō Period.

- I. Bizen  
Kanemitsu Group: Kanemitsu, Tomomitsu, Motomitsu,  
Masamitsu, Shigemitsu, Yoshikage, Tomomitsu.  
Nagayoshi Group: Nagayoshi, Nagashige, Kaneshige,  
Nagamori, Kanenaga.  
Ukan Group: Unjū.  
Ōmiya Group: Morikage, Morishige.  
Yoshii Group: Kagenori, Tamenori, Sanenori.  
Kagehide Group: Nariie.  
Moromitsu Group: Moromitsu.
- II. Yamashiro.  
Nobukuni Group: Nobukuni.  
Hasebe Group: Kunishige, Kuninobu, Kunihiro.  
Heianjō Group: Mitsunaga, Nagayoshi.  
Rai Group: Tomokuni, Hidetsugu.
- III. Yamato.  
Tegai Group: Kanenaga, Kaneyoshi, Kanesane.
- IV. Mino.  
Shizu Group: Kanetomo, Kanetsugu.  
Kinjū Group: Kinjū, Kaneyuki.
- V. Sagami.  
Masamune Group: Hiromitsu, Akihiro.
- VI. Various Provinces.  
Omi. Sadamune Group: Kanro Toshinaga.  
Etchū. Yoshihiro Group: Tametsugu.  
Tajima. Hōjōji Group: Kunimitsu.  
Bitchū. Aoe Group: Tsuguyoshi, Tsugunao, Moritsugu.  
Bingo. Old Mihara Group: Masahiro, Masamitsu.  
Ichijō Group: Ichijō, Kaneyasu.  
Chikuzen. Sa Group: Sa, Yasuyoshi, Yukihiro, Kunihiro.  
Bungo. Takata Group: Tomoyuki, Tokiyuki.  
Iwami. Naotsuna Group: Naotsuna, Naoshige.  
Kaga. Fujishima Group: Tomoshige.



## MUROMACHI PERIOD

The Northern and Southern Courts, both exhausted by years of fighting, eventually began to move toward reconciliation. After three generations of Ashikaga Shōguns (Takauji, Yoshiakira and Yoshimitsu) the Southern Emperor, Gokameyama, returned to Kyōto; and the re-unification of the court was finally established on the principle of an alternating succession of the Northern and Southern lines. The Ashikaga Shōgunate lacked a firm base; and while it was able to maintain itself for fifteen generations, the 240 years of its rule witnessed constant factional disputes and succession struggles among the various clans and powerful retainers. Nevertheless, against a background of political confusion and social unrest, the reign of the Shōgun Yoshimitsu stands out as a golden age of culture and art. This period of refined aesthetics gave rise to the Kitayama Culture, expressed in the splendid Kinkaku (Golden Pavilion) of Rokuonji.

The eighth Shōgun, Yoshimasa, had little taste for politics, and sought escape through devotion to a like of culture. With his circle of connoisseurs he created the Higashiyama Culture, and built the Ginkaku (Silver Pavilion) at Jishōji. This Higashiyama Culture was strongly influenced by the Ming Dynasty, whose culture was entering Japan at this time through commerce with China.

Be this as it may, for swords this Muromachi Period represents a low point. From the Ōnin War on there incessant fighting; and hence we have a period of mass production, and the consequent outpouring of low quality works known as kazu-uchi mono or tabogatana (forged in numbers, bundles of swords). In contrast to these, there are the so-called chūmon-uchi, (blades made to order) given special care. On the tang of these works we find personal names, official titles, and in some cases the name of the person ordering the work. These works are highly prized by sword lovers.

Until the Muromachi Period the word katana generally referred to tanto, long blades being called uchikatana. The koshigatana was a katana worn at the waist: from the Kamakura Period on it was used along with a tachi as a sashizoe when armor was worn, and had aikuchi mountings with no tsuba. Thus the blade used for the koshigatana was a tanto, and beginning in the Nambokuchō Period, of course, what we now call a wakizashi was also used.



Small tanto carried concealed in the robes were also called futokoro katana; (breast or busom swords) they also used aikuchi koshirae, with round kojiri, and of course no origane (kaerizuno- hooks to hold them in sashes). Tachi and uchigatana were forged primarily to cut with a swinging blow, while tanto and wakazashi were originally forged for stabbing. But among Muromachi works we find some that emulate the middle Kamakura style, with uchizori blades of seven or eight sun, and others with the Nambokuchō sun-nobi blade of one shaku, two or three sun. Nevertheless, while the length of the blades are the same, the basic principle of this period is a narrow blade with shallow sori. After the middle Muromachi there appear many rather broad, strongly saki-zori blades of less than one shaku, and along with them a new style, the ryōbazukuri. It is interesting that among the hirazukuri and ryōbazukuri works created in this period small blades of less than five sun were popular. These were probably used as futokoro katana.

This period sees the greatest number of smiths working throughout the country. Bizen has an overwhelming majority Mino is next, and there are not a few in Bungo, the Northern Provinces, Mihara, Yamato, Sōshū and elsewhere. The Aoe Group, however, which had prospered in Bitchū until the Nambokuchō Period, for some reason completely died out.

In this age when great smiths were rare there is a group called Ōei Bizen, which flourished during the Ōei Era at the beginning of the Muromachi. The two great figures of this group are Yasumitsu and Morimitsu, both excellent smiths with famous works. Skilled Bizen smiths beginning in the middle Muromachi include Norimitsu, Suke-mitsu, Katsumitsu, Munemitsu, Sukesada, Tademitsu and Kiyomitsu. In Mino at Akasaka there is Kanemoto, famous for his sambonsugi hamon; and at Seki good smiths include Kane-sada and Kanetsune. In Ise, Muramasa and Masashige are famous; and in Bungo we have Taira Nagamori. Among smiths of the Northern Provinces famous figures include Tomoshige and Yukimitsu of the Fujishima Group.

Prominent tanto smiths of the Muromachi Period.

- I. Bizen.  
Yasumitsu, Morimitsu, Tsuneie, Iyesuke, Norimitsu,  
Sukemitsu, Toshimitsu, Katsumitsu, Norimitsu,  
Tadamitsu, Kiyomitsu, Sukesada.
- II. Yamashiro.  
Heianjō Group: Yoshinori, Nagayoshi.  
Nobukuni Group: Nobukuni.
- III. Yamato.  
Tegai Group: Kanenaga, Kanenaga, Kanesane, Kaneyoshi,  
Kanetsugu, Kanetoshi.  
Kanabō Group: Masasane, Masakiyo, Masasane.  
Shikkake Group: Norinaga.
- IV. Mino. (Divided according to the seven lines of Seki)  
Kanesada Group: Kaneyoshi, Kanefusa, Ujifusa.  
Sanami Group: Kanesada (Nosada), Kanenori, Kanesada,  
Kanetsune, Kanemoto (Magoroku).  
Nara Group: Kanetsune.  
Muroya Group: Daimichi.
- V. Sagami.  
Hiromasa Group: Hiromasa, Masahiro.  
Hirotsugu Group: Hirotsugu, Fuyuhiko, Tsunahiro.  
Odawara Group: Yasuharu, Fusamune, Yasukuni.
- VI. Various Provinces.  
Suruga. Shimada Group: Yoshisuke, Sukemune, Hirosuke.  
Ise. Sengo Group: Muramasa, Masashige.  
Dewa. Gassan Group: Chikanori.  
Etchu. Uda Group: Kunifusa, Kunimune, Kunetsugu.  
Echigo. Kanro Group: Momogawa Nagayoshi.  
Yamamura Group: Masanobu.  
Kaga. Fujishima Group: Tomoshige, Yukimitsu, Kiyomitsu.  
Kaga Aoe Group: Iyetsugu, Iyemasa.  
Hōki. Tsunahiro Group: Hiroyoshi.  
Bingo. Ichijō Group: Ichijō.  
Suō. Niō Group: Kiyotsuna.  
Nagato. Sa Group: Yasuyoshi, Akikuni.  
Kii. Iruka Group: Kunitsugu.  
Tosa. Yoshimitsu.  
Chikuzen. Kongōbyōe Group: Moritaka, Morishige.  
Chikugo. Mike Group: Mitsuyo.  
Oishi Sa Group: Iyenaga, Yoshinaga.  
Bungo. Taira Takata Group: Nagamori, Saneyuki.  
Hizen. Hirado Sa Group: Hiroyoshi, Moriyoshi.  
Satsuma. Namihira Group: Yukiyasu, Hisayasu.

## MOMOYAMA PERIOD

In 1568, Oda Nobunaga entered the capital with the fifteenth Ashikaga Shogun Yoshiaki. Pushing on toward his goal of unifying the entire country, he first destroyed his immediate enemies Asakura Yoshikage of Echizen and Asai Nagamasa of Omi. He then moved on to defeat Takeda Katsuyori at Nagashino. This great victory was achieved by the use of guns.

Guns were first introduced to Japan at the island of Tanegashima by a Portuguese ship in the 12th year of Temmon (1543). In the style of fighting prevalent since the Gempei War cavalry had played the major role; but with the appearance of guns warfare was revolutionized, and there emerged new tactics based on the infantry, which could slip through mountainous regions or marsh land and make lightening attacks on any kind of terrain. Thus the ordinary soldier became the basis of military strength.

In 1582 Nobunaga left Azuchi to help Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was besieging the army of Mōri Terumoto at Takamatsu Castle. On the way he stopped at Honnōji in Kyōto, where on the eve of his successful unification of the country he was betrayed and killed by his vassal Akechi Mitsuhide. Hideyoshi immediately made peace with Mōri, and returned directly to the capital. He engaged Mitsuhide at Yamazaki and killed him at the battle of Tennōzan. Then Hideyoshi himself took over Nobunaga's long struggle, and brought the unification of the country to reality. In the 11th year of Tenshō (1583) he built the Osaka castle and took up residence there. Two years later he was made Regent, and in the following year, Chancellor of the Realm, thus reaching the highest pinnacle of success. But in the 3rd year of Keichō (1598) at Fushimi castle he passed away, leaving behind the poem,

Like the dew I appear

And vanish.

And all that glory was

The dream of a dream.

Thus, with Hideyoshi's death, the stage was set for the final decisive struggle at Sekigahara. The army of the West included Ishida Mitsunari, Shimazu Yoshihiro, Yoshikawa Hiroie, Mōri Hidemoto, Ankokuji Ekei, Chōsokabe Morichika, etc. The army of the East had Tokugawa Ieyasu,

Kurota Nagamasa, Hosokawa Tadaoki, Katō Yoshiaki, Ii Naomasa, Fujidō Takatora, Fukushima Masanori, Yama-no-uchi Kazutoyo, Asano Yukinaga, Ikeda Terumasa, etc. A furious battle ensued, ending in a great victory for the Eastern forces. Tokugawa Ieyasu held complete power. In the 8th year of Keichō (1603) he was made Shōgun; and setting up his military government in Edo, he laid the foundation for 300 years of Tokugawa rule.

Historically, the period of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi is known as the "Azuchi Momoyama Period." Culturally, however, this period is considered to extend down to about the Kanei Era (1624-1644), during the reign of the third Tokugawa Shōgun, Iemitsu. Sword historians use the term, "Momoyama Period," to the period from the Keichō Era (1596-1615) to about the Kanei Era. Swords from the Momoyama are called "Shinto" (new swords), as distinguished from prior works known as "Koto" (old swords).

The Momoyama marks a major turning point in the history of Japanese swords. A hundred years of wars had led to a great increase in the demand for swords, and thus to crude, mass-produced works. But the unification of the country by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, and the establishment of peace under Ieyasu brought an end to these mass-produced swords; and there developed a new demand for artistic blades of rich beauty and solid strength reminiscent of the masterpieces of the golden age of Kamakura and Muromachi.

This period saw the decline of the tachi, and the rise to popularity of the uchigatana worn at the side. With the change in fighting style this blade became the principal weapon, and the feudal lords and samurai cut down their long blades to this convenient uchigatana form, regardless of whether the blades had signatures or not. These blades are as Tenshō suriage (1573-1591) or Keicho suriage (1596-1615).

Early works of the shintō period are modeled on these suriage blades. They did not follow the style of the Muromachi Period: rather, their strong point lies in the fact that they took as their ideal the style of the Kamakura and Nambokuchō Periods which produced the greatest number of famous smiths. These blades gave birth to the characteristic shape and style of the shintō.

Tanto in the Momoyama show a great decline in numbers. This reflects a decline in demand resulting from the fact

that the ordinary samurai now wore only the daishō (paired long and short swords), and thus no longer need other blades.. To be sure, the need for tanto did not disappear altogether, for the high samurai, lords, and retainers to the Shōgun did wear a light tanto when at home: but even this need was probably met for the most part by famous old tanto. Thus there was no need to make new blades.

Umetada Myōju of Nishijin in Kyoto is considered the founder of shintō. He came from a long line of goldsmiths who had served the Ashikaga Shōguns, and he called himself the grandson of the 25th generation descendent of Sanjō Munechika. He followed the style of the Shizu school of Mino Province. While he is a fine smith, he is also known for his tsuba (which may be considered his forte), as well as for his skill in carving. Both his katana and tanto have excellent horimono.

At about the same time as Myōju we have Hirokuni of Ichijō Horikawa in Kyōto. His school includes such skilled smiths as Dewa Daijō Kunimichi, Kuniyasu, Echigo no Kami Kunitomo and Osumijō Masahiro, and in the last days of the school, Izumi no Kami Kunisada and Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke. In this Horikawa Group, Kunihiro and Dewa Daijō have many especially outstanding tanto. Izumi no Kami Kunisada, who moved to Osaka, also produced some famous tanto, his special strong point being copies of Sadamune.

In Edo there was the Shōgun's smith, Yasutsugu, skilled in the use of nambantetsu (southern barbarian iron), and also Ono Shigeyoshi. In Sendai there was Yamashiro Daijō kunikane, who revived the Hoshō tradition. In Owari there was Sagame no Kame Masatsune, the second generation Mino no Kami Masatsune, and Hida no Kami Ujifusa. In Kishū Shigekune produced works of exceptional excellence in both his traditional Yamato Shikkake style and also his favorite Etchūgō style. In Kaga we have Kanewaka and his school; while in Echizen, in addition to the above Yasutsugu, there were such smiths as Yamashiro no Kami Kunikiyo and Higo Daijō Sadakuni.

In Kyūshū we find the flourishing school of Tadayoshi, the disciple of Umetada Myōju and smith to the Nabeshima family of Saga in Hizen. There was also the school of Dōtanuki, who worked for the Hosokawa family. In Kagoshima there were Izu no Kami Masafusa and others.

In this way, places like Bizen, Yamato, Kamakura and Mino, which had flourished during the kotō period, now went

into complete decline; and in their place arose and developed new centers based in the castle towns of the six provinces of Settsu, Musashi, Yamashiro, Echizen, Hizen and Satsuma. In other words, the prominent smiths now flourished around the castles of the great feudal lords - in Hideyoshi's headquarters of Kyōto and Osaka, in Ieyasu's seat of Edo; and elsewhere under the Maeda family of Kaga, the Date of Sendai, and the Nabeshima of Hizen; and in Nagoya under the Owari family, in Wakayama under the Kishū family, in Fukui under the Echizen, etc.

Prominent tanto smiths of the Momoyama Period:

- I. Yamashiro.  
Umetada Myōju, Kunihiro, Iga no Kami Kinmichi, Kunimichi, Kunitomo, Etchū no Kami Masatoshi, Kuniyasu, Hiroyuki.
- II. Settsu.  
Izumi no Kami Kunisada, Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke.
- III. Musashi.  
Yasutsugu, Shigeyoshi.
- IV. Echizen.  
Yasutsugu, Yamashiro no Kami Kunikiyo, Higo Daijō Sadakuni.
- V. Hizen.  
Tadayoshi, Munetsugu.
- VI. Aki.  
Higo no Kami Teryhiro, Harima no Kami Teruhiro.
- VII. Owari.  
Sagami no Kami Masatsune, Mino no Kami Masatsune, Hida no Kami Ujifusa.
- VIII. Kishū.  
Shigekuni.
- IX. Ōu (Mutsu & Dewa).  
Kunikane.

## EDO PERIOD

The Momoyama may be called an age of revival, in that it turned back to the great kotō works of the Kamakura and Nambokuchō. This was succeeded by the period known as Edo, a term which refers here to the more than 150 years between the Shōhō and Bunka Eras (1644-1804).

Upon the death of Ieyasu, who may be said to represent the end of the warring states period, Hidetaka became the second Tokugawa Shōgun. He devoted himself to solving the various problems of the newly founded government, and to the successful establishment of the Genna Era (1615-1624) political organization. He further appointed three advisors, Sakai Tadayo, Doi Toshikatsu and Aoyama Tadatoshi, to assist the third Shōgun, Iemitsu, a move which strengthened the hereditary system of the Shōgunate. Then, once Iemitsu took over as the third Shōgun in the year of Genna (1623) a governmental structure was set up around Councillors (rōjū), Advisors (wakadoshiyori) and Commissioners (sanbugyō) and the system of administration by council was brought to completion. With the establishment of the Tokugawa political system a new period in Japanese history is ushered in.

In the history of swords, as well, the peace and tranquility of this age brought about a great change. There was a move away from the style of the ō-suriage works of the Momoyama, and the appearance ofshintō with a slender new shape combining slight sori motohaba (base width) with narrowed sakihaba (point width). The number of tanto produced in this period is still less than in the preceding period. As mentioned, the feudal lords wore the tanto when at home, or as a koshigatana when wearing armor, but otherwise it now had almost no use. With the stabilization of the society, trade brought the development of transportation throughout the country. The samurai became accustomed to the benefits of peace, and gradually began to show signs of extravagance and weakness.

Hamon of this period show a florid richness unseen in the previous period. There was first of all the gorgeous, billowing tōran (wave rampage), created by Tsuda Echizen no Kami of Osaka. Inoue Shinkai produced excellent suguha of deep nioi and nie. Kotetsu of Edo, while originally an armor maker, turned to sword making in his middle age, and perfected the gonome hamon called juzuba, with its even pattern of rounded heads. Hamon like these opened up a unique new world and won great acclaim.

Never-the-less, with the continuing peace the real demand for military use inevitably waned, and from the Genroku Era (1688-1704) on the sword industry went into a steady decline. The urban smiths, supported by wealthy Merchants, continued to eke out a living producing swords; but when by government order all blades except wakizashi were proscribed it brought about a great crisis in the sword world.

Prominent Tanto smiths of the Edo Period.

- I. Ymashiro.  
Higashiyama Yoshihira, Izumo Daijō Yoshitake, Masahiro, Kunikiyo, Kinmichi, Yoshimichi, Masatoshi, Hisamichi, Toshinaga, Nobuyoshi, Tadakuni.
- II. Settsu.  
Kuniteru, Kanemichi, Kunisuke.
- III. Musashi.  
Yasutsugu, Kotetsu.
- IV. Echizen.  
Yasutsugu, Shigetaka, Sadatsugu, Kanenori, Kanetaka.
- V. Hizen.  
Tadahiro, Masahiro, Tadakuni, Tadayoshi.
- VI. Satsuma.  
Masafusa, Masakiyo, Yasuyo, Masayoshi.



## LATE EDO PERIOD (BAKUMATSU).

While swords from the Keichō Era on are called shintō, those from the Bunka-Bunsei Eras on are known as fukkoto (revised old swords) or shin-shintō (new-new swords). The term fukkoto expresses the fact that these new blades emerged out of a movement which, dissatisfied with the swords of the previous period, urged a return to the old works of the Kamakura and Nambokuchō. This emphasis on a return to the old was at one with the development of movements in the society which, opposing as unjust the Tokugawa feudal structure, advocated a revival of imperial rule, and which rejected the Chinese classics in favor of the Japanese tradition.

In the sword world, Suishinshi Masahide, swordsmith of Akimoto-han in Yamagata, took the lead in advocating fukkotō; and then Nankaitarō Chōson of Tosa joined him. Just at this time the revival movement was becoming nationwide; and Masahide, feeling the time was ripe, went to Edo in an effort to translate his views into action. There he was joined by smiths from throughout the country. Thus the sword world gained new life, reversing the decline of the previous period, began to flourish once again.

The Bunka-Bunsei (1804-1830) period represents an age of foment in Japanese history. Old traditions based on the feudal structure handed down from Ieyasu had reached a dead end; and new developments, which would lead eventually to the imperial restoration, were in the process of emerging. The Shōgun Ienori, who was said to be addicted to a life of constant extravagant pleasure, planned reforms intended to re-open a path for the old regime. To stabilize prices he sought to improve the system for the distribution of goods, and in order to maintain political stability he established a Kantō regional police force and set up a unified village system according to districts. However, nothing came of his plans, and moreover they were opposed by the Mito and Owari branches of the Tokugawa family. Thus without the anticipated results, Japan moved into the Tempō and Ansei Eras (1830-1860): and finally, after a series of disturbances, both internal and foreign, on the 14th day of October in the 3rd year of Keiō (1867), the 15th Shōgun, Yoshinobu, proclaimed the Restoration of Imperial Rule. Thus, the 300-year reign of the Tokugawa Shōgunate collapsed, and the Meiji Restoration was ushered in.

In the shin-shintō period tanto are more numerous than in the previous period. Their style represents a

revival of the Kamakura and Nambokuchō rather than of the Momoyama. Never-the-less, we also find many very small and ryōbazukuri tanto like those seen in the late Muromachi.

Prominent tanto smiths of the Late Edo Period:

- I. Yamashiro.  
Kinmichi (later generation), Chōson, Arisuke.
- II. Settsu.  
Masataka, Sadayoshi, Sadakazu.
- III. Musashi.  
Yasutsugu (later generation), Tsuguhira, Masahide, Naotane, Masatsugu, Naokatsu, Masayoshi, Masaaki, Tsunatoshi, Munetsugu, Korekazu, Munehiro, Kiyomaro, Nobuhide, Masaō, Kiyohito, Enshin, Kanenori, Naganobu, Hisayoshi, Shigetsugu, Taneyoshi, Taneaki.
- IV. Satsuma.  
Motohira, Masayuki, Mototake, Motohiro, Masayuki.
- V. Hitachi.  
Tokurin, Sukemasa, Tokukatsu.
- VI. Iwashiro.  
Kanesada (later generation), Sumi Motooki.
- VII. Tosa.  
Yukihide.
- VIII. Shinano.  
Saneō.
- IX. Mino.  
Nagasada.

## MEJI PERIOD TO THE PRESENT

In the 9th year of Meiji (1876) the government abolished the wearing of swords. Thus the Japanese sword, with its long, proud tradition, was rendered useless; and its future seemed completely black. There followed, however, a series of wars: the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the Boxer Rebellion, the Russo-Japanese War, and then the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-41 and the Pacific War. Thus, the utility of the Japanese sword was once again recognized and made use of by the military.

In the 24th year of Shōwa (1949) the greatest tragedy since the Meiji abolition order struck the Japanese sword world. In that year the order prohibiting the production of all weapons was promulgated. The Japanese sword was branded by the Occupation Forces as a weapon, and at one point all blades were in danger of being destroyed. However, through the desperate entreaty of Drs. Satō and Homma, present directors of the Society for the Preservation of Artistic Japanese Swords (Zaikoku hōjin Nihon bijutsu tōken hozon kyōkai), the Japanese sword was recognized as an art object. Then, in the 28th year of Shōwa (1953) the law was revised the permit the free production of swords under permission from the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Treasures (Bunkazai hogo iinkai).

Furthermore, in order to train and improve the art of modern smiths, in 1954 the Preservation Society set up the Sword Technology Exhibition (Sakutō Gijutsu Happyōkai), and established a system of judging, selection and awards for new works. Two of the winners of these awards - the late Takahashi Sadatsugu of Matsuyama in Iyo, and Miyairi Akihira of Sakaki in Nagano - have been designated "Important Intangible Cultural Properties", a fact which may be said to auger well for the future of the Japanese sword. In addition, Sumitani Masamine of Ishikawa-ken has received honorary recognition from the Society, and is presently at work on a study of the Bizen tradition, especially on its utsuri.

In Osafune in Bizen, a place long associated with the Japanese sword, Imaizumi Toshimitsu continues to devote himself to sword work, despite his advancing years. In Tottori at Sanin we have Kawashima Tadayoshi; and elsewhere throughout the country there are many smiths at work polishing their skill. Thus, year by year we are seeing steady technical improvement. In recent years

there has been a growing recognition of these new swords by sword lovers, and happily the demand for them has been on the increase.

The work of these present-day smiths of course includes the production of some tanto. In a short work like the tantō not only the good points but also the weaknesses are particularly apparent; and for this very reason the making of a tanto is a truly exhausting labor. Now we eagerly await the day when from these new smiths there will once again appear great tanto like those of Shintōgo Kunimitsu and Awataguchi Yoshimitsu.