

THE TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

for the Study and Preservation of Japanese Swords and Fittings



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APRIL - JUNE 1977

PROGRAMME 96

The meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at the Mason's Arms in Maddox Street, London, W.1., at 7.30 p.m. To get there from Oxford Circus proceed down Regent Street towards Piccadilly Circus, and Maddox Street is about 500 yards on the right.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

Monday July 4th

A talk on Hizen blades led by Vic Harris. Bring along all those Tadayoshi's, as everyone seems to have one!

Monday August 1st

Tentatively set as a 'worst swords' meeting. The idea is that we may be able to help each other avoid buying bad or flawed swords. Everyone should be able to find something to talk about at this meeting.

Editorial

Our June meeting was postponed from Monday 6th to Monday 13th in order to accommodate the Jubilee festivities. I believe there was some confusion amongst members about this and some clarification is obviously called for. Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month, unless this happens to be a public holiday. In that case, the first Monday following is the date. Anyway when we finally 'got it together' for June, John Anderson delivered his long awaited chat on face masks. The meeting was understandably sparse in members but was extremely interesting and the discussion was both lively and informative. The following is taken from the notes John supplied me with, plus a little:

The Japanese warrior has worn a face defence from very early times. It is not known exactly when they were first worn but most probably date from the early Heian period. They were certainly worn in the wars of Hogen (1156) and of Heiji (1159). The earliest form were the Happuri which protected the brow and sides of the face (the lower cheeks) only. It is probable that the Happuri was worn with a simple form of Hanbo which protected the chin. Neither of these were fitted with Yodarekake (throat defences). By the 14th century the Happuri seem to have been in common use and seem to have been made in iron although leather ones were in all probability made. Some seem to have been made, most likely as a personal preference right into the 19th century. The one at the meeting was of this period and made of leather. An interesting point arose when it was pointed out that three horizontal furrows on the brow, with the absence of a vertical line at the top of the nose, was a Buddhist sign showing that the wearer was close to enlightenment, which might also lead one to think that the wearer might have been a monk.

The next development was the introduction of the more usual Mempo or half mask. This covered the lower half of the face and included a nose piece. This style was introduced in the early 16th century by smiths such as Yoshimichi who developed very distinctive styles of their own.

The Yodarekake had by now come into being as a standard piece of equipment. The earliest ones had their lower edges 'cut away' in order to avoid catching on the rest of the armour.

At about the same time as Mempo were being developed the first So-men were made covering the whole face. They were worn but tended to be impractical in combat, as both vision and movement tended to be very restricted. Although most early So-men have a large eye hole, the later ones seem to be rather small, permitting the wearer to only look straight ahead. They were never common and seem to have been reserved for men of rank.

During the Edo period all types of masks were made and developed. Many armourers produced 'Tour de force' masks of one piece or heavily wrinkled, smiths like Ryoye and Murekra excelled in this field.

Masks of the early 15th century were made with the nose riveted in position. This had disadvantages making both breathing and shouting difficult, and so by the end of the century they were made detachable by the use of hinges and pins, and later still by turning pegs.

Although the mask was principally a defence for the face, its secondary purpose was to afford a secure fixing for the helmet cord, which could be tied much more firmly over the mask than over the face. To assist in tying the cord,

the outside of the mask was fitted with hooks or pegs to retain the cord, and prevent it from slipping during violent action (Otayori no Kugi - cord assisting nails) and on some masks flanges at right angles to the cheeks (Hadome) serve the dual purpose of retaining the cord and protecting it.

One distinct disadvantage with masks, was the problem of condensation in cold weather and perspiration in hot. To reduce the collection of fluid and the eventual trickling into the armour, all masks were pierced with a hole beneath the chin (Asanagashi-no-Ana - sweat running hole) or sometimes fitted with a tube charmingly called Tsuyu-otoshi-no Kubo - dew dropping tube.

As with most armours, masks were either left plain iron or lacquered. With the plain russet ones a favourite treatment was to engrave the surface with parallel lines (kiri). Most often the inside is lacquered red, although occasionally black and gold are found. It is said that the red reflects on the face of the wearer, making him look more ferocious.

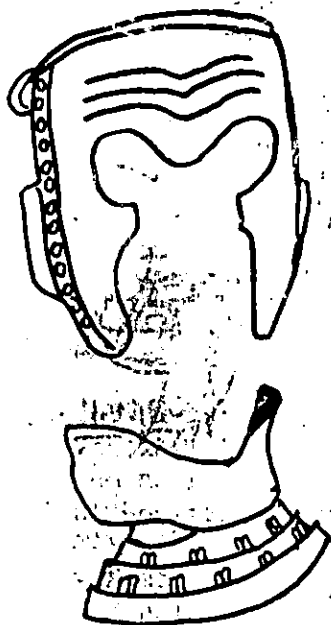
The Yodarekake is in many forms, sometimes Itamone or Kozane or Kitsuke Kozane. They were sometimes hinged vertically and sometimes made of chain mail. The Kaga school sometimes made Yodarekake which were detachable on a slide, and some had extensions that fitted behind the neck for added protection.

Many masks had moustaches as a decorative addition. This was frowned on by many military men. The restriction of downward vision and the reduction of ventilation were given as their reasons. They preferred, as do I the moustache lacquered on, as it in no way obscured the details of craftsmanship.

There were twenty examples of face masks at the meeting, illustrating all the above examples. They included:-

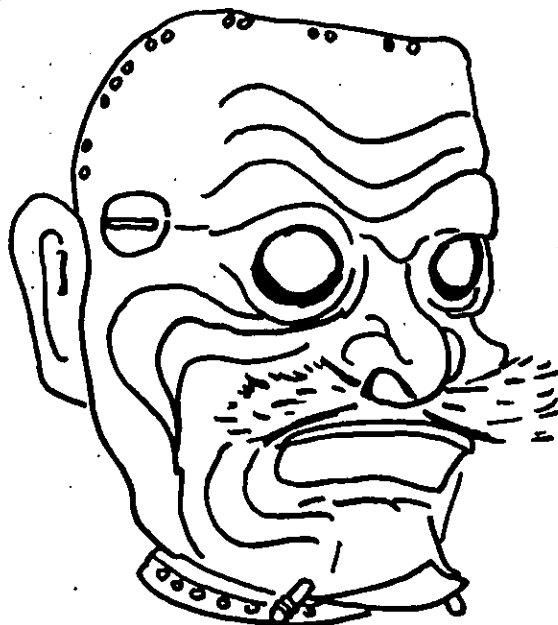
- 1) A leather Happuri, probably 19th century, and made of leather.
- 2) An early Hambo complete with Yodarekake.
- 3) An early Mempo, probably mid 16th century by Yoshimichi, illustrating his distinctive style, and another illustrating many of the Yoshimichi characteristics but probably of later manufacture.
- 4) Four So-men all of top quality including the one I have illustrated overleaf which I will describe more fully:-

The mask is of good shape, has the surface patinated to a dark russet finish, and is signed under the chin, 'Myochin Muneyasu'. Made in three sections, the brow is attached by hinges with removable pins and the nose by turning pins on the cheeks. The brow is embossed with wrinkles, well shaped eyes and arched eyebrows - the edge pierced with small holes which extended down onto the cheek-piece for the attachment of a hood, usually brocade. The broad nose is well rounded, the upper part of the bridge passing under the brow-plate. Beneath the nose, the upper lip is built



HAPORI

HAMBO



SO-MEN

by
MIOCHIN KI NO MUNEYASU
1833 - 1838



MEMPO

by
MIOCHIN KI NO MUNEYASU
1688 - 1735

up with red lacquer above, to which is cemented a hair moustache. The chin and cheek-piece are boldly embossed with wrinkles which curve down to a well crested and cleft chin, and the naturalistic ears are made in one with the mask. Bold otayori-no-kugi (cord assisting nails) which prevent the helmet sliding forward, and the hole for drainage (asa-nagashi-no-ana) are beneath the chin. A good example of the work of Muneyasu, whose masks are more numerous than other pieces.

5) Several Mempo, including the Yoshimichi previously mentioned and the Muneyasu illustrated overleaf of which a fuller description follows:-

A bold russet iron mask, signed under the chin 'Myochin Ki No Muneyasu'. The cheeks are deeply embossed with wrinkles, while the nose is well shaped and rounded. The mouth is large and has no teeth (Uba-ho, literally 'old woman mask') and the ear pieces are naturalistically embossed. Beneath the chin is the hole asa-nagashi-no-ana and on either side are the two cord retaining pegs, otayori-no-kugi. A moustache is indicated by thin strokes of gold, silver and copper lacquer. The yodarekake is of two plates made up with small scales (kozane), gold lacquered inside and out and laced with dark blue silk, the crossed knots on the borders in flame red. Both plates of the throat defence are mounted with fine quality copper fittings, the centre of the top one being fitted with a ring from which hangs a red silk bow.

A good example of the masks by Muneyasu and his pupils - most notably Muneakira. The deep wrinkles are easily discernable.

(For further information see John's book "Japanese Armour - an illustrated guide to the Myochin and Saotome families from the 15th to the 20th century")

The following is a composite article by your unworthy editor and Bon Dale.

CARVINGS ON JAPANESE SWORD BLADES

Engravings on Japanese sword blades fall into two distinct categories, those on the blade itself and those on the nakago or tang. The first category comes under the heading of:-

HORIMONO: Engravings on the blade (horimono) are very varied. Probably the most simple, and sometimes the most attractive are grooves called hi. Technically the grooves were cut for a purpose, and not just as decoration, as whilst they left the blade strong they lightened its weight, permitting a faster and more accurate stroke. Tachi and Katana blades are usually engraved with

bo-hi (long straight wide groove) which starts from the ko-shinogi and reaches the nakago. They are also called katana-hi and bo-hi is generally the term applied to those in tanto and wakizashi of hira-zukwi form. If the main groove is accompanied by a thinner one the thinner is called soe-hi. Short grooves engraved only part of the way up the blade, nearer to the nakago are called koshi-hi.

Other types of grooves have certain religious significances. For example two short parallel grooves running only part way up the blade (goma-bashi) represent the hashi or chopsticks used on a Shinto altar in a shrine. They may be linked at the bottom by a lotus-shaped form called rendai and may be linked at the top in a pointed shape represented the Ken of Fudo, one of the incarnations of Buddha.

Grooves usually terminate in various ways at some point near the mune-machi. When the groove runs down the full length of the nakago it is called kaki-toshi, and when only part way the way down the nakago, stopping probably under the habaki it is called kaki-nagashi.

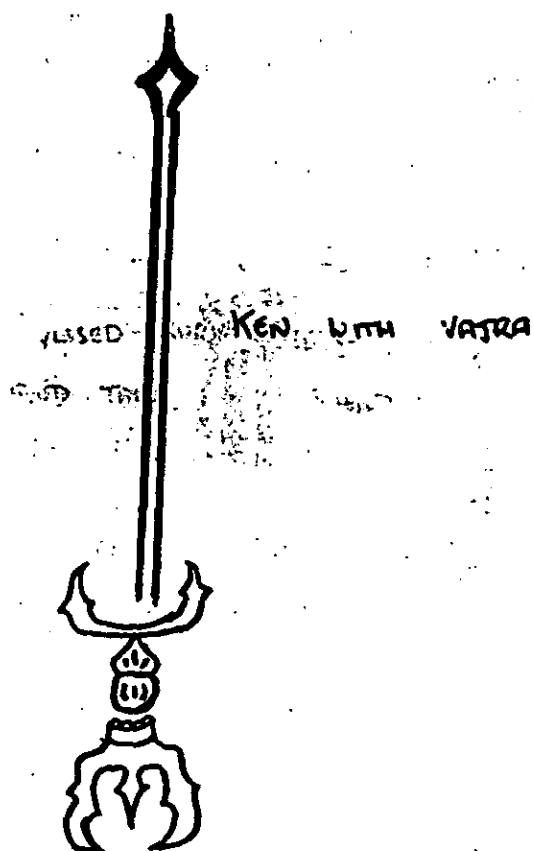
Sometimes engravings called bonji appear on swords. These are Sanskrit characters and are read as Buddhist incarnations, the owner supposedly being under the protection of that particular Buddha. Also they may be in the shape of a ken alone or with its hilt (suton) when the whole is termed vajra, which is the Hindu thunderbolt and therefore again of religious significance.

In addition to the ken there may be included a chain or cord which is Fudo's strangling cord called the Kensaku. Sometimes the ken may also be entwined in a dragon (kurikara) which may possibly imply the opposite forms of good and evil. On the other hand the dragon may be chasing the sacred jewel (tama) or it may have even grasped it. This is called tana-oi-ryu.

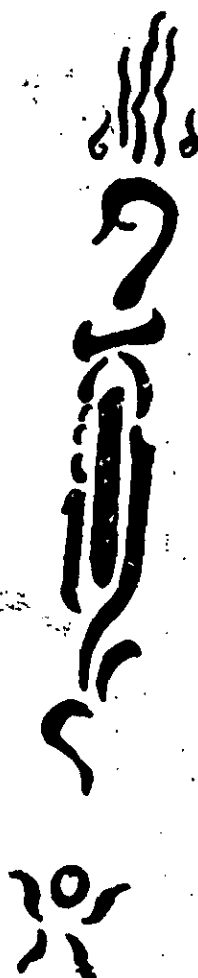
Typically in the shinto period, engravings became more ornate and intricate, and from the 17th century onwards, horimono tended to become simply decoration. Subjects such as flowering plum branches were used, although it must be stated that some authorities argue that these too have some religious significance.

A number of famous artists specialised in making those engraved designs although it was more usually made by the actual swordsmith himself. When this was the case the fact may be engraved on the blade as hori-dosaku, which means the smith made both blade and horimono. Except for this, the name of the engraving artist seldom appears on the nakago although an exception to this rule was Munenagu of Hizen. Although carvings on the surface of the blade are by no means uncommon, many swords have engravings on the nakago and of great interest are signatures or mei.

MEI ON NAKAGO There are a surprising number of different kinds of signatures that are listed below:-



STYLED KEN WITH VAJRA



STYLED KURIKARA AND TAMA

HORIMONO



DAIKOKU - TEN



FUDŌ
MIŌ - Ō



MARISHI - TEN

BONJI

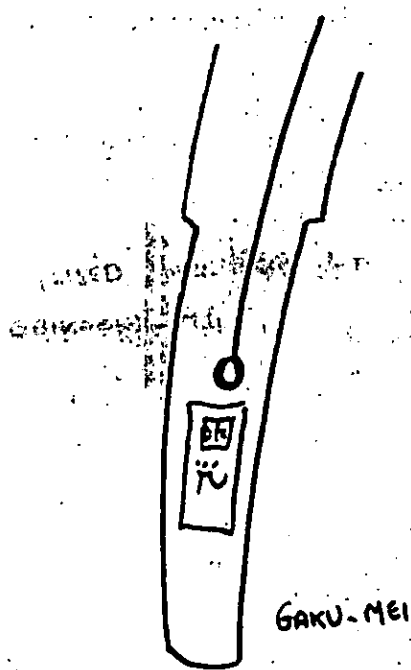
- 1) Tachi-mei: Mei on the outer side of the nakago when the sword is worn slung with the cutting edge downwards.
- 2) Katana-mei: Mei on the outer side of the nakago when the blade is worn with the cutting edge uppermost.
- 3) Niji-mei: A two character signature such as simple Nagamitsu.
- 4) Kakikudashi-mei: The name of the swordsmith and the date of manufacture on the same side of the nakago, the former followed by the latter. (They are usually on opposite sides of the nakago.)
- 5) Zuryo-mei: Titles awarded by the court such as Shinano-no-kami Kunihiro.
- 6) Orikaoshi-mei: Signature folded back onto the opposite side of the nakago when the tang has been shortened, thus preserving the original mei.
- 7) Gaku-mei: Signature cut from original nakago and inserted in the shortened nakago.
- 8) Shu-mei: Appraiser's inscription, in red lacquer, attributing the sword to a smith. This was usually done by one of the Honnami family.
- 9) Kinzogan-mei: Similar to the above, although the inscription is inlaid in gold and often on a shortened nakago.
- 10) Saiden-mei: Inscription, usually in gold inlay, showing the record of a cutting test of the blade.
- 11) Kimpun-mei: The same as Gaku-mei except in gold and not red lacquer.
- 12) Dai-mei: Signature executed by a substitute such as an immediate student or fellow student.
- 13) Mumei: No signature.
- 14) Gi-mei: False mei.

The last of these, Gi-mei leads nicely onto Bon's part of the article:

(Clive Sinclair)

COUNTERFEIT SIGNATURES ON NAKAGO:

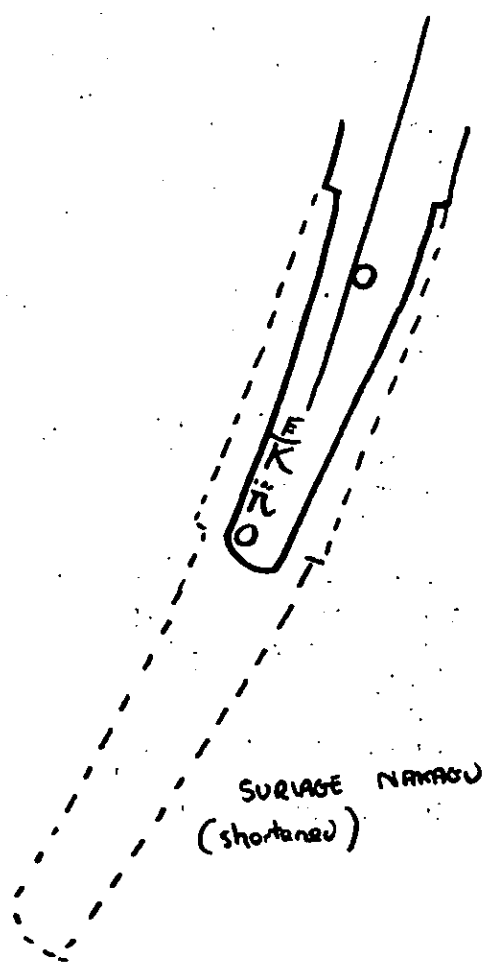
Ignoring any psychological reasons which may exist in the mind of the forger, the main incentive of forgery is financial gain. Thus a sword blade of unknown authorship, or one from which a lesser name has been removed, once it has been equipped with a suitably well known signature, may leap in value ten or a hundred times. The reason for these early deceptions was probably purely financial.



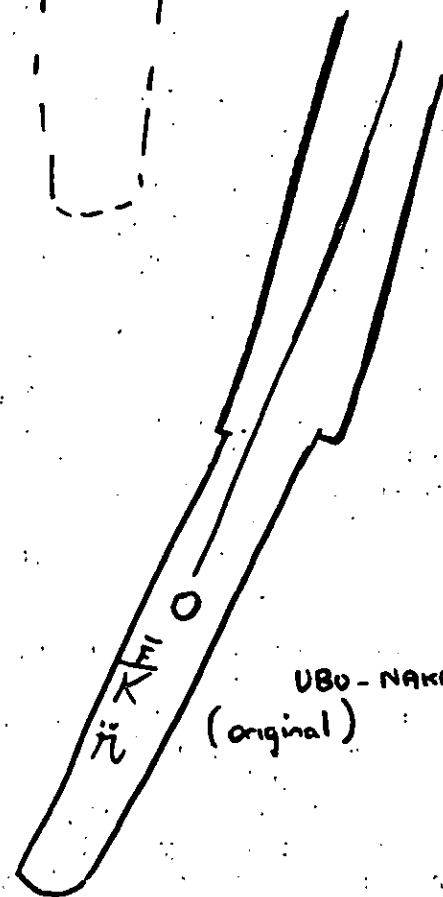
GAU-MEI



ORIKASHI-MEI



SURAGE NAKABO
(shortened)



UBU-NAKABO
(original)

The active samurai would always be aware of the value of a good sword, and those who could afford to, and in particular men of higher rank would desire to possess a blade by a master sword-smith.

In times when books were almost non-existent and blades by famous swordsmiths were as rare as they still are today, the eventual victim might only know of the makers' name by reputation. The discriminating purchaser would expect to find work in the blade which was equivalent to the name on the tang. The more discriminating would know what school characteristics to expect, the real expert would in fact not be deceived by the forgery, he would read the blade and not rely alone on the nakago. But both the undeceived expert and the dupe would not often be aware of the appearance or the handwriting of the swordsmith in question. Many blades, some good, can be seen with signatures of 14th, 15th and 16th century swordsmiths which show little resemblance to genuine inscriptions by the men whose names they bear. Indeed it may also be true that the earlier forger had none or perhaps very few references to draw upon for his work.

To come immediately to the present, the collector might be tempted to think how much more fortunate is his position. With almost unlimited references to check on a signature, with numerous books of photographs of rubbings of genuine nakago, usually full size, what could be more simple? How could he possibly be deceived, with perhaps a dozen or twenty examples to compare with the signature on his latest possession.

But, let not the collector be too complacent. Let him remember that the forger also has all this wealth of reference material available to aid him in his work.

About 40 years ago there lived in Japan one Ken Sano, he was an expert file maker and engraver, and he collected Japanese swords. About that time he became very skilful at engraving, cutting is perhaps a better word, fake inscriptions on swords. He forged signatures on many swords, the passing of time since then has been in his favour. It is extremely difficult to tell the difference between the genuine article and one of his fakes. He was particularly good at counterfeiting the signatures of Nagasone Okisato Kotetsu, Kiyotaka and Yukihido. These especially require a great deal of research before one may decide whether the inscriptions on the swords are genuine or not. Obviously Sano used blades of some merit from which presumably he first removed any existing inscriptions. Whether or not he did this purely for financial gain, or whether in his case there was an element of the joy of deception, it is impossible to say.

There were several reasons for his having been able to attain such a high level of deception. The most important of these were that research on inscriptions became easier due to the wide use of photography and the publication and availability of good quality oshigata of swordsmiths' signatures. Good quality tracing paper and better inks, made it possible to attach a tracing of the genuine inscription directly onto the sword. Added to this was the fact that Ken Sano was not only extremely fond of swords himself, and had spent a lot of time in research on his favourite subject, but was also an expert file maker, and thus very clever with a cold chisel or burin.

NAGA
SO
NE
OKI
SATO
NIUDŌ
KO
TETSU

長曾休進軍道布敵

曾子與果大直而敬

曾子與里直布

曲日环

20
1/2

Of the three illustrations of oshigata of Kotetsu signatures, the centre one shows a typical Sano fake. He has endeavoured to produce the effect often seen in luxurious 17th century inscriptions and has probably used the illustrated rubbing shown on the right-hand side of the three shown here. If that genuine inscription is placed on top of the counterfeit, the position of the characters is almost identical.

The differences between the genuine article and the Sano fake are very difficult to spot. But in general the calligraphy lacks depth and the angle of the cold chisel is slightly at fault, making the character look different, especially the ending of the strokes. For example the horizontal lines of the NAGA - and the perpendicular lines on the character NE, the right hand side element lack sufficient power. The characters OKI-SATO are particularly off balance, and the right side of the character TOTSU is weak.

Counterfeit sword blades by Ken Sano often have two holes in the nakago, both Katana and Wakizashi.

It is possible to write at much greater length on actual 'handwriting' of swordsmiths' signatures, in which individual characteristics are easily recognisable as they are in English handwriting. This I shall hope to do in a later edition of the programme. Here space only permits to write something of the activities of a modern forger and to show that the art of the forger is by no means confined to the remote past.

Biographical Note:

KOTETSU: Born 1599 and died in 1678. Said to have been a pupil of KANESHIGE. His blades are signed Nagasone Kotetsu Niudo Okisato, or as here, Nagasone Okisato Niodo Kotetsu. His early signature was Nagasone Okisata.

Continuing on the same theme let us move along to an eminent gentleman of 19th century Japan -

NAOTANE FAKES: Among the many Japanese sword blades which bear counterfeit inscriptions there exists a distinct group all of which seem to emanate from one source. It has become a custom to describe these blades as "Naotane fakes". Some explanation of the origin of this term may not be out of place before going on to discuss matters which may shed some light on the mystery.

The expression "Naotane fake" originated some time ago, when a blade with some very puzzling qualities came onto the market. A subsequent long period of investigation established that this was indeed a fake by Naotane, or to be more precise, a Naotane blade with a false inscription. A Japanese authority confirmed the blade as the work of Naotane, and I received confirmation that other similar blades by Naotane exist, also with counterfeit signatures of earlier swordsmiths. Although I was ignorant of these facts on first seeing the blade, my feeling had been that the blade was the work of Naotane despite the signature. Confirmation of this hypothesis and the new knowledge of the existence

of similar blades, led me to watch for, and to think back over other enigmatic blades which seemed to fall into the same category. Discussion with fellow collectors eventually led to the use of the generic term "Naotane fakes".

A brief summary of a few of the blades which I have examined, which may be so classified, may help to give some idea of the characteristics.

Firstly, a Katana signed "Soshu no ju Akihiro" and dated 1363. A fine blade with pronounced grain, abundant tobiyaki, and a fine, florid hamon. A tanto signed "Sadamune", with an active Soshu hamon and grain decorated with an excellent and very ornate horimono. A tanto signed "Masamune", for which the same blade details apply including an even more ornate horimono. Another tanto signed "Sagami no kuni no-ju Sadamune", a well forged and tempered blade displaying great activity, again with an extremely elaborate horimono of Bishamon. A long katana signed "Murasama" with a very distinct grain and tobiyaki. A long katana with a similar blade and a Dragon and Ken horimono signed "Sadamune". A Katana and fine horimono signed Hizen Tadayoshi. There are others both long and short, which I could quote, but in my personal experience there has been only one wakizashi, which fitted the pattern. This was an excellent blade with a fine horimono and, once more, was signed "Soshu no ju Sadamune".

The distinctive quality of these blades is not in the engraving of the signatures, nor the signatures themselves, although they do tend to be eminent swordsmiths from Soshu-den. The distinction is in the workmanship of the blade. The often exceptionally long Katana have a 19th century 'feel', a thickness and point heavy balance which is typical of the mid 19th century style. More important, however, all swords, both long and short, have pronounced graining on the blade surface. All have strong and active hardening patterns, hamon. These often break into hardened spots on the blade's surface above the line of the hamon, this is called tobiyaki. Often there is intense niye activity along the hamon or scattered over the blade's surface. In short the work in these blades clearly intends to be seen and they have a strong look of "mixed metal". Masahide in his "Secrets of Forging" tells us that copper or even gold mixed with the molten iron will, in the final polishing, produce silver lines or inazuma (lightning), in the blade surface. These techniques were used in earlier times, but there is little doubt that they were carried further to produce more startling and easier results by Masahide, his pupil Naotane and others that followed him.

These general characteristics of hamon and forging can be typical of, for example, a good 14th century Soshu blade, but when they are coupled with a 19th century 'feel', a horimono which is not of that period, and a patination of the tang which is not quite right, then we may have a 'Naotane fake'.

It is of course nonsense to suggest that Naotane made all the blades of his period and school which have counterfeit signatures. He may indeed not have been aware that any of his blades were tampered with and given false inscriptions. But what is certain is that blades with false inscriptions were produced by pupils of his school or by swordsmiths associated with it.

The most widely known of these was Naomitsu who worked in Musashi around 1860. His full signature on his own acknowledged work is Hosoda Heijiro Naomitsu; he was more commonly called Kajihira, or Kajihei. The name, Kajihira is the shortened form of Katanakaji Heijiro, the character 'hei' also being read as 'hira'.

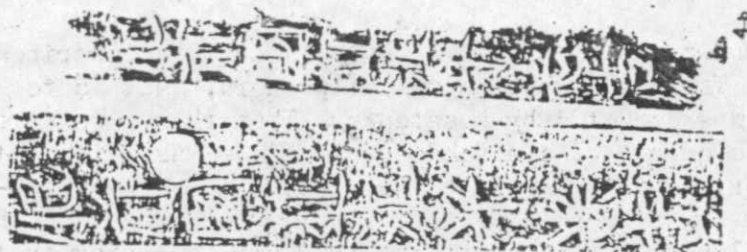
There seems to be some doubt as to whether he was the pupil of Naotane or Naokatsu. Whose pupil he was does not really matter, what is important is that Naomitsu was associated with Naotane himself or with one of his nearest pupils.

It is Naomitsu or Kajihira who seem to have been the greatest producers of 'Naotane fakes'. He may not have made all the blades upon which he engraved false inscriptions, but there is no doubt that he was an expert forger of other swordsmiths' signatures.

Books have been published in Japan which illustrate numerous oshigata of false inscriptions by Kajihira. Two of these were published during the periods of Bunkyo and Genji, that is during Kajihira's own lifetime; I have no explanation of this fact. Another collection 'Kajihira Shingi Oshigata' was published by Isao Kajima in 1936, this I have not seen but it apparently illustrated many Koto inscriptions. It may therefore be a clue to some of the blades mentioned earlier. There was also another book 'Kajihira Kotetsu Mei Shu' which illustrated many spurious Kotetsu inscriptions, but this is said to have been lost in fire. 'Kajihira Shingi Oshigata' states that he lived in later life at the Yushima shrine in Yedo and died there in about 1897. The same book attributes the reason for Kajihira turning to fake inscriptions to the Imperial Edict abolishing the wearing of swords in 1877, saying that after that date, he could no longer make a living as a swordsmith. This, however, cannot be true because the two books first mentioned were published in 1862 and in 1864. It would seem more likely that, living in the shadows of masters like Naotane and Naokatsu, a young swordsmith found that orders were not very frequent, and that greater profit could be made from engraving false inscriptions.

Naomitsu's own sword blades are very limited in number and all are tanto. Illustration No.1 shows his two character signature and distinctive Kakihan, this blade is dated Keio 2nd year (1866). His full signature is illustrated in No.2, Hosoda Heijiro Fujiwara Naomitsu, the reverse is dated Bunkya 2nd year (1862).

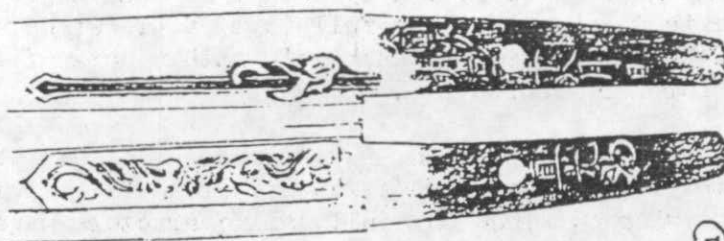
It was said that he was a very studious man and kept records of his work; apart from being a swordsmith and an expert engraver, he studied orikami and sword judging. In this sense he was different from other counterfeiters and it is difficult to see the difference between his fakes and genuine inscriptions. In the published books of oshigata some are extremely well done whilst others are poor and lacking skill. There is some doubt whether all the recorded forgeries are Kajihira's or not, other engravers are known to have worked with him and helped him with them. Two of these co-workers appear on oshigata of the reverse of the two illustrated nagago of Naomitsu's own work. The first has the name



亦江指
有江指



遂江指
遂江指



①



③ 興里布 补



③ 興里布 补



③

Ooka Masahito working in collaboration with Naomitsu. The second is inscribed on the reverse, Matsui Ikkansai Tachibana Masatsugu Kore wo horu, that is to say, the horimono on the blade was executed by Masatsugu. That these men were also swordsmiths there is little doubt. I can find no record of Masahito, but there were several Masatsugu working in Musashi at this time. Another collaborator, Naotaka, is probably the one recorded in Hawley's 'Japanese Swordsmiths' NA 393, province unknown, date 1865. He appears to be the only one using that combination of characters for his name.

Of the fakes which have been recorded in 'Kajihira Oshigata', those of Kotetsu are the most important. One of them, a Nagasone Kotetsu, has been recorded and still exists.

Illustration No. 3 is an oshigata of the genuine tang, 3a and 3b is an analysis of strokes of some characters of the inscription; 3a the genuine, 3b the fake. Judging from the style of Kotetsu this was copied from a sword of 1673. Kotetsu engraved his name with a thick engraving tool until 1672 but after 1673 he used a thin one. Both ends of the cross strokes of the characters, the fifth stroke of 'naga' and the fourteenth stroke of 'oki' show that the engraving tool was held correctly. But the ends of the bars of the characters are all running. The sixth stroke of 'jaga' is also weak. The whole inscription is extremely skilful, but the softness and thinness in the strokes is more pronounced than the real thing. In style the blade is not Kotetsu's but seems to belong to the 'Ishado' school which was still working in Yedo in 1860.

Illustration 4a shows a genuine Tadayoshi inscription; it reads 'Hizen no kuni omi no kami Tadayoshi'. 4b is a fake of the same form of Tadayoshi's signature, 4c and 4d show the stroke analysis of some of the characters of the genuine and fake respectively.

Illustration 5a is of a genuine inscription by Totomi no kami Fujiwara no Kanehiro. The oshigata is a fake using the full form of his signature, 'Hizen no Kuni no ju Totomi no Kami Fujiwara no Kanehiro', with a date of the Kyoho period (1716-35) and a further inscription.

Analysis of the strokes (5c and 5d, genuine and false) again show the same characteristics. All the inscriptions are executed extremely well in strong and beautiful engraving, but when examined carefully all characters have the same 'handwriting', namely the ends of the cross strokes tend to go downwards and are running. These are the same characteristics of Naomitsu's own signature. Therefore it is concluded that these inscriptions, Kotetsu, Tadayoshi, Kanehiro also a Motoyuki (and even a Naotane signature not illustrated here) must have been engraved by Kajihira himself.

I cannot claim that this article, which is based partly on my own research and partly on Japanese translations, entirely solves the mystery of the 'Naotane fakes'. I have seen no evidence that Naotane or Naokatsu were aware of or involved in these productions. It seems difficult to believe that Naotane was completely innocent. The excellence of some of the horimono on

blades mentioned at the beginning of this article would seem to point towards Yoshitane, who is known to have been an expert in this field and to have carved horimono for Naotane. Indeed there is a blade which is attributed to Naotane, and which has a horimono attributed to Yoshitane, which, nevertheless, is signed with the name of a much earlier and more illustrious smith. Whether or not Naotane was involved in this complicated fake is mere supposition. Circumstantial evidence would seem to indicate a whole school of fakers which poor Naomitsu or Kajihira have become the eventual scapegoat.

Bon Dale

What follows is a transcript of a talk by Mike Mortimer on an unusual aspect of our subject. The talk took place at our March meeting and the following are Mike's words:-

Some Comparisons in the History of Feudal Scotland and Feudal Japan

The subject of this talk, which, in my usual fashion is to provide food for thought, rather than dogmatic statements, occurred to me whilst taking holidays in Scotland recently looking up friends and relatives long overdue for visits.

I am aware that I am by no means the first to make comparison between the collection of islands off the coast of Europe known as the British Isles and the collection of islands off the coast of Asia known as Japan for indeed there are many similarities.

As always, in an investigation of this nature the problem becomes not one of inclusion but of exclusion such is the wealth of material available for reading and study. A bias towards the history of Scotland will be detected because the object is for you yourselves to see the similarities rather than for me to do most of the pointing.

The question of dates is not regarded as significant, nor is chronological order of events although the point in history where the survey begins is roughly the same both for Japan and Scotland.

In both nations the population is not composed of the original inhabitants to any great extent. In Scotland the people were mainly Celtic and Pictish immigrants with a strong leavening of Norwegian. For many centuries the Western Isles were Norse possessions until the Battle of Largs in 1263 drove them out. In Japan the people came from China, driving out the original Ainu inhabitants almost to the point of extermination.

The Japanese inherited a strong cultural heritage from the tenets of Confucius and from the Buddhist religion which they imported with them. This link

with the mainland continued for many centuries and gave inspiration for artistry of all kinds.

Gradually these links were broken and there followed a period when Japan was isolated from the rest of the world and contacts were actively discouraged. This enabled Japan to resist imperialist attacks from the outside and the nation itself was not seriously disposed towards imperialism.

In contrast, the history of Scotland is punctuated with attempts at conquest by their more powerful southern neighbours out of which arose a special relationship with France - mutual assistance against a common enemy. Scottish culture, at least as far as the court was concerned, drew much from the French.

One cannot proceed far in a dissertation about Scottish feudalism without reference to the clans and the territory which they occupied. This was the area northwards from the Clyde in the southwest to the Tay in the northeast. Even today the terrain is difficult and it must be remembered that in 1745, the Highlands were two weeks distant by relays of fast horses.

Scotland was brought to a state of unity from a number of petty kingdoms by Malcolm Canmore, although at many points in history there was doubt whether the king or the clans were the stronger. The dilemma of the kings was whether to use the clans or to suppress them illustrated by the Norse custom of 'weapon showings' on the one hand, when warriors paraded before the monarch fully armed so that he could assess his power, or 'suppressions of disorder' when he felt things had gone too far and a lesson was needed for the unruly. The effort to extirpate the clan Macgregor (or Rob Roy fame) is one of the best examples. To be sure they were a troublesome, thieving bunch but they certainly did not warrant the retribution handed out to them, hunted and harried, their women branded, the very name of Macgregor proscribed.

The celebrated affair of the Glencoe massacre with the politics and the emotion stripped away was simply another attempt to discipline a branch of a clan which had got too big for its brogans.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish clans from tribes. Alluding to the MacDonalds as Glencoe must, brings the thought that all the MacDonalds are descended from the great Somerled, Scourge of the Norsemen. Looking at the clan map the western Highlands are peppered with MacDonalds, and indeed, Clan Ranald is the most numerous of them all. By no means did the tribe act in unison, however. Many stayed home when the standard was raised in 1745, but many more lie beneath the stone, solitary among the larches growing out of Culloden Moor.

In all feudal societies the cement which holds the system together is the tie between lord and vassal. It is similar to a family relationship between parent and child in many respects, for although the vassal owes unquestioned the unquestioning allegiance to his lord, the lord in turn is responsible for the protection and well-being of his vassals.

Clan followers did not necessarily bear the clan name although they might well adopt the patronym. Each was aware of his reciprocal duties and responsibilities.

As in most eastern societies the Japanese hierarchy was polygamous and clan lineage tended to come down from the Emperor's concubines and court ladies. The Fujiwara tribe looms large throughout history, and the Minamoto and Taira clans were prominent in their turn. At many points in time the clans were unquestionably stronger than the Emperor.

In both countries the clan chieftains and leaders were intensely proud of their lineage and military prowess and before a fight of any significance this fame was proclaimed for all the world to hear. The cause of such fights had certain differences, however, for in Scotland a man's wealth was determined not only by the number of fighting men he could muster at his back but also by the quantity of animals he possessed. Struggles for land were unimportant mainly due to the nature of the terrain. It was the cattle raid which was the principal pastime. By contrast, the Japanese contests involved the annexation of land where possible since the annexation of people and livestock would be the logical outcome of success.

Both countries had a remarkably similar clan military system with their professional soldiers and knights at the head and their untrained ashigaru and peasants at the other. Both naturally tended to build castles and towers and to fortify their bases against surprise attack.

Due to the isolation of Japan military strategy and tactics were very slow to change. Such things as artillery and siege trains were unknown and those Japanese castles which survive appear flimsy when compared with the compact clan castles such as Eilean Donan.

With the cross-fertilisation of ideas from France the Scots kept abreast of military developments although the main manoeuvre remained the charge whereby the clan dashed at the enemy in a body, broadswords swinging, bellowing their Gaelic battle cries in a fine fury. Whilst the Scots readily embraced firearms, making some of the finest examples of their kind, cold steel retained the principal place in the warrior's array of weapons; the broadsword (which is not the same thing as a claymore) which one could compare with the katana, the dirk which one could equate with a tanto, the skean dhub which one could say was a kwaiken.

In addition there were the bows, and the Lochaber axes which one would never compare to a naginata being a very blunt instrument.

Despite their ready use of the sword no school of swordsmanship arose although the professional warrior class must have practiced fencing in some form nothing of which has come down to us.

As has been mentioned previously the clan leaders and their families were professional warriors by right of birth, each clan having its distinguishing tartan (not by any means the same as they purport to be today), its badges,

emblems, mottos and slogans. The clan assembled in order of rank with the family at the fore and the meanest peasants at the rear. These latter were probably armed with agricultural implements rather than with weapons and there are recorded cases of men standing with nothing in their hands at all. They were there because their laird had summoned them, and it was their duty to attend.

The clan system virtually came to an end with the rising of 1745/6 and nothing illustrates more readily its disadvantages. The attempt to forge a contemporary fighting force from a motley collection of medium to small units, some of whom had been rivals if not active enemies for centuries was well beyond the limited capabilities of their undistinguished Prince. It was also beyond the very great capabilities of such a renowned soldier as Lord George Murray to salvage anything at all from the wreck of the long march to Derby and back. Nevertheless, as the Duke of Wellington observed at the Battle of Waterloo in the next century, It was a damned near-run thing.

Even before the battle of Culloden there were grave disagreements. The MacDonalds of Keppoch had fought on the right flank of the Scots army since Bannockburn; now they found themselves on the left. Such insensitivities do not bring out the best in an army which in reality was defeated before it marched on to the field.

Following the defeat of the Highland army the clans were suppressed with the vehemence and vigour which any ruling house applies when it has suffered a bad fright. Within a generation the clan system and almost everything with it had disappeared. What we see now is only the romance woven about the remnants, and that was only saved by the realisation of the quantity of brave fighting men available to the recruiting officer. Highland regiments were formed and much of the trapping of Highland dress and custom re-discovered.

Although some would argue that the old clan loyalties still exist and there is vestigial evidence that this is so the paternalism which continues to exist in Japan today is nowhere to be seen. In Japan the feudal system also came to an end far more peacefully but none the less drastically, and that too was dismembered in a generation. Nevertheless, the Japanese tradition of loyalty continued and in my view is the secret behind the economic success which is so apparent today. The Japanese people have transferred their ancient allegiance from the old Samurai families to the zaibatsu, which, strangely enough are headed by those same families.

The high degree of Japanese culture had no counterpart in Scotland for whilst the spirit of Bushi taught the philosophy of 'pen and sword in accord', apart from literature, songs, and the pibroch not much else has come from Scotland. But, before we go let us contemplate the tenderness of some Scottish love poems. It is strange that such beauty should emerge from such wild people in their wild barren land. Surely there is spirit here?

The conclusion drawn at the end of my research was that there were striking similarities between the two peoples, despite being half a world apart. There

were episodes of great loyalty, and great treachery; brave courage and shrinking cowardice; enduring love and bitter hate, and marvellous feats of endurance and tenacity.

Mike Mortimer

An Exhibition of Japanese Armour
from French Private Collections

On the 4th of May I had the pleasure and privilege to be present at a preview of an exhibition of Japanese arms and armour held by member Robert Burawoy at his superb gallery at 12, Rue le Regrattier, Ile Saint-Louis, 75004 Paris.

The exhibition comprises items from private French collectors and is notable for its high quality. The 137 items cover swords, sword fittings and armour and have come from most of the finest French collections, many of the names are well known to us, such as Bob Burawoy, Bernard le Dauphin, Jean Sapporta, Bernard Fournier-Boudier, Christian Magnier, Claude Thuault and Brune de Perthuis, plus some other private collections. There are some very fine items to be seen and it is always difficult when reviewing an exhibition of such fine overall quality to pick out items of particular note. The only way one can proceed is to pick out items which appeal to you personally and with this in mind I must make mention of the very fine ayoda nari helmets (Nos. 1, 2 & 3) which are all very fine and rare, a beautiful 62 plate Hoshi Kabuto by Saotome Iyetada which is further enhanced by a very fine wood Kashiradate of Marishitem standing on a running boar (No. 6). Particular favourites (Nos 11 & 12) of mine among the helmets are two exceptionally fine helmets of the Unkai school. Both are by Kunkai Mitsunao and although of very different form, one in the shape of a jewel with flames standing proud on four sides, the other a most elegant eboshi, they both exhibit the crispness and attention to detail so common in this school.

It is always nice to make the acquaintance again of old friends and the armour (No. 17) and the fine somen (No. 20) were both at one time mine, and it is good to see them in such distinguished company.

Masks are well represented - a favourite of mine by a beautiful tengu type (No. 9) which is of a bold form. I could go on about the armour but let me now pass on to swords which though admittedly not my first love cannot be ignored. Probably my first choice (were it offered) would be the beautiful early tachi blade (No. 29) attributed to Enju Kunimura, (14th century) which although 0. Suriage still retains a lovely shape. Another would be the katana blade (No. 35) by Bizem no Suke Munetsugu dated 1851, a most elegant shinto blade. In mounted

swords my first vote goes to (No.39) the beautiful Wakizashi mounted in shakudo and gold with a delightful design of bamboo - the mounts signed by Soriushi Issai Hogen Takechika a pupil of Yasuchika VI.

As to tsuba, well there are nearly too many fine ones for me to make an easy choice. However the Kaneyama Sukashi Tsuba (No.57) is very appealing, with a design of a fist in water and a very crisp design of iris signed Bushu no ju Masakata (No.62) also. A lovely bold Jingo - signed Yashiro Jingo (No.68), a subject which has always been a favourite of mine. If I was given a choice of some of my two favourites would perhaps be the landscape signed Someya Kazunobu (No.100) and the fine Natsuo Tsuba of the crow standing before the moon (No.110).

A lovely exhibition well worth a visit.

L.J. Anderson

The exhibition closed, I am afraid on June 25th. The catalogue is, however, available from:

Galerie Robert Burawoy
12 Rue le Regrattier,
75004. Paris
France

Price: Soft bound

U.S. Dollars 20

De-luxe hard-bound edition (300 copies only) U.S. Dollars 28

80 pages, 140 objects illustrated (70 in colour), Japanese index.

Editor

Treasure Swords of Japan

We have received notice of an exhibition at the Ontario Science Centre to be presented by the Centre, the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre and the Japanese Canadian Centennial Society. It will run from 1st July to 5th September. This is the first major Canadian exhibition of Japanese swords, fittings, blade stands, helmets, armour, other weapons and clothing. There will also be demonstrations of martial arts, cultural performances and films.