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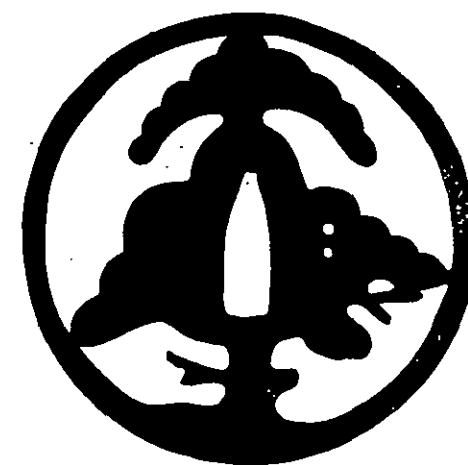
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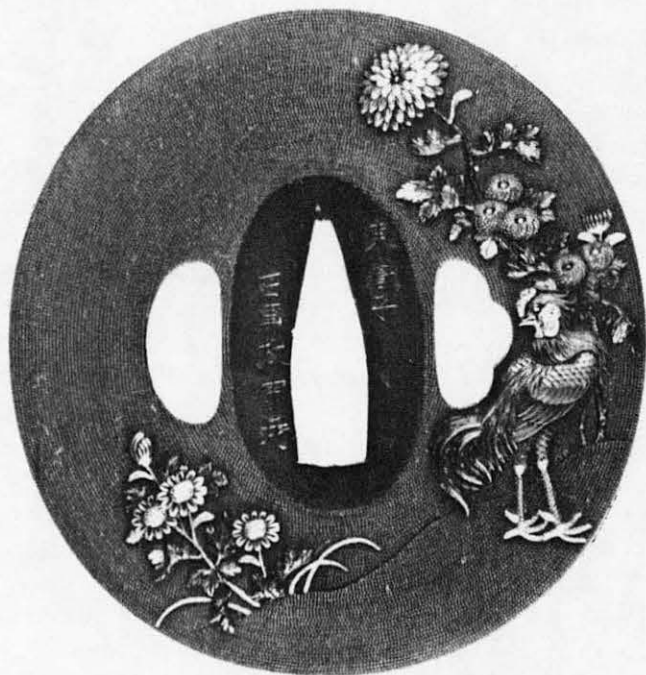
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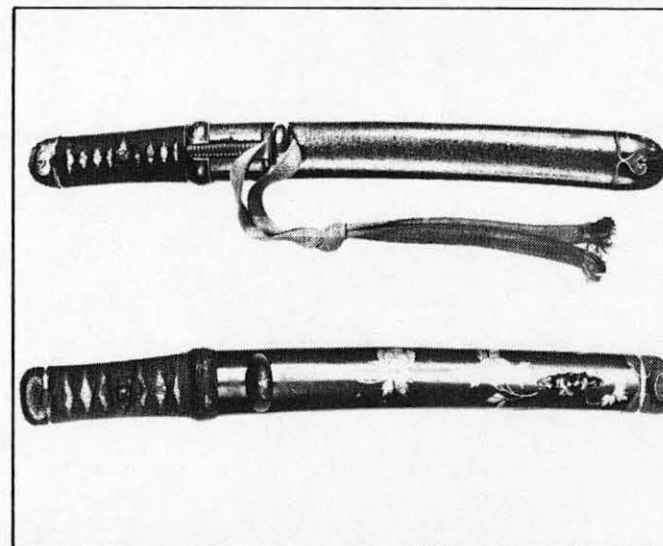
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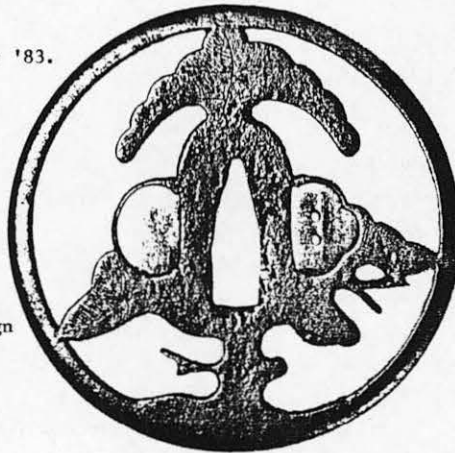
12. Tsuba Kantei

Identify the maker of this tsuba.

Send in your answer by 30th November '83.

Height : 8.5 cm
Thickness (centre) : 5.75 mm
Thickness (edge) : 4.8 mm

This iron tsuba is in the design of a pine tree and the branches are rendered in very fine kebori.



Entries to:

Dr. G. Curtis,
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12. Tsuba Kantei.

11. Shinto Sword Kantei

Identify the maker of this katana.

Send in your answer by 30th November '83.

Nagasa	:	70.6 cm
Sori	:	1.8 cm
Motohaba	:	2.6 cm
Sakihaba	:	1.7 cm
Kissaki nagasa	:	2.7 cm
Nakago nagaso	:	17.2 cm
Nakago sori	:	0.1 cm

Execution:

This katana is in ihorimune and slight koshizori. The kitae in the ji is even ko-itame and sprinkled with ji-nie, whereas that in the shinogi-ji is masame. The crisp nioi lined hamon is chogi-midare mixed with ashi and a small amount of gonome as well as juka and kawazuko choji. The boshi is a continuation of the hamon leading to a long kaeri. Midare utsuri can be clearly seen in the ji. The machi have been moved up. There are two mekugi ana. The tip is wide kurijiri. The yasurime is katte-sagari.

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FIG. 1

signed; Ikkashiki Juso Hogen

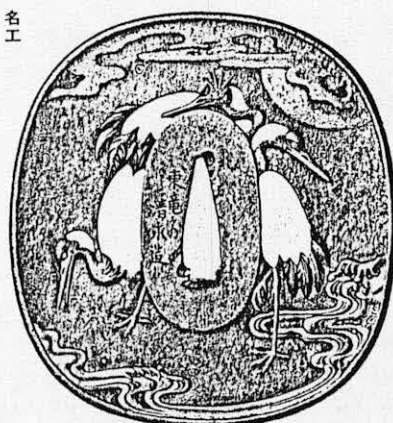


FIG. 2

signed; Toriusai Kiyonaga

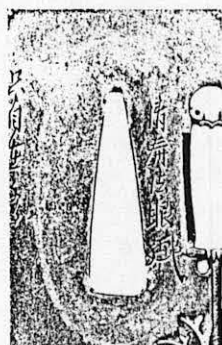


FIG. 3a



FIG. 3b

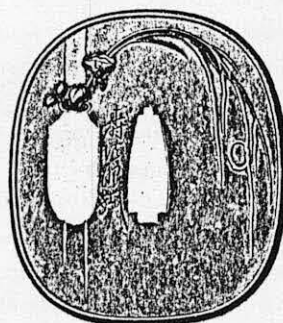


FIG. 3c

TANAKA KIYONAGA

1. Sword Words Living in Our Daily Life by Kajihara Sensei

It was during the Kamakura shogunate (12C) when Samurai started to take the reign of government and they reigned for about 700 years. During this time society was divided into classes; warriors, farmers, artisans, and tradesmen. Only Samurai were permitted to carry two swords and to take other people under their protection. For the Samurai, swords were the most important arms, the symbol of force, and their spiritual prop. Not surprisingly words initially specific to the description of swords have crept into the everyday language. I will show you some of them. It is interesting how their original meaning has been adapted.

MENUKI-DORI (目貫通り)

Menuki have an important functional purpose. They are also often conspicuous on the tsuka. The Goto family, the leader of sword ornament makers, had a great regard for the production of menuki. It has been said that people called the street in front of the Goto family 'Menuki-Dori'. Now, in Japan, 'Menuki-Dori' means a main street which is crowded as trade flourishes.

FUTOKORO-GATANA (懐刀・懐剣)

Futokoro-Gatana is a tanto in one's bosom. Its style is aikuchi-koshirae without tsuba. It was usually concealed in one's bosom and used in a crisis. Well, if you want to accomplish a great enterprise or a secret plan, you cannot go forward by yourself. You must use a hidden adviser or cooperator. In that case, they are called your Futokoro-Gatana.

Currently, in Japanese wedding ceremonies, it is a general tendency that a bride puts Futokoro-Gatana in her bosom. It is said that Futokoro-Gatana is a symbol of her will to kill herself rather than go back to the home of her parents should a great trouble happen at her new home.

YAKI-WO-IRERU (焼きを入れる)

An excellent blade is never made without skillful tempering and forging. The blade must be heated to a specific temperature and put into water to form the ha. This process is called 'Yaki-wo-Ireru'. In everyday language, 'Yaki-wo-Ireru' is used when we stimulate and cheer up the person who loses his vigor and ambitious spirit.

YAKI-GA-MODORU (焼きが戻る)

If a blade is burned in a fire, it loses the original pattern or tempering. The yakiba will disappear or the hamon will be dimmed. 'Yaki-ga-modoru' explains such a condition. In our daily life, this expression describes he who is dulled or falls into low spirits because of his old age or discouragement, though he was an active man and admired for his intelligence.

YAKI-NAOSHI (焼直し)

'Yaki-naoshi' means that a swordsmith retempers a blade which has lost its ha when it had been accidentally heated in a fire. ('Yaki-naoshi' is equal to 'shaiha'). In most cases, 'Yaki-naoshi' is done by a swordsmith other than he who made the blade, which takes the character of the blade away. Its power and artistic worth is diminished. If someone changes another man's work, not only swords, and publishes it as his own work, what he publishes is called 'Yaki-naoshi'.

TSUKE-YAKIBA (つけ焼刃)

'Tsuke-yakiba' is to finish polishing a blade, which does not have ha, as if it has complete ha. However, such a false hamon wears away. In the everyday context this expression means that a person affects to be intelligent and to have got good knowledge by hard studying and training. Everyone has a possibility of doing the same, though he should know that 'tsuke-yakiba' is easy to be revealed and that pretend or temporary knowledge is useless.

10. A Note on the Tanaka School 田中
by G. Curtis

According to Joly¹ several Tanaka schools existed in Edo. The one most commonly referred to is that to which Fujiwara Bunjiro Toriusai Kiyonaga (or Kiyo toshi) 清時 of shiba belongs. He was, apparently, something of a scholar who developed his style from study of pieces by the masters of other schools. Joly suggests that his unique contribution was the rich use of gold nunomé pushed into a ground roughened by a Y punch (teoki). It does seem to me that his work is also characterised by the style of rim he applied to his tsuba. In many cases the rim forms an irregular frame for his intended theme, as Fig. 1 shows². He was clearly pleased with the affects he obtained with his nunome and in sheer exuberance decorated the seppa gane with it. The latter is another distinguishing mark of many Tanaka tsuba. Carefully plugging of the nakago ana was practiced by many schools, e.g. Suruga, but none quite so obviously embellished it.

Another interesting feature of the School is the careful attention paid to the involvement of the hitsu ana in the overall design. The kantel tsuba is one example and that shown in Fig. 2 is another³. These two tsuba are also examples of the innovative design skills of the School. The kantel tsuba is made of shakudo and has a beautifully precise nanako ground. It is more usual to find tsuba made from iron with a lustrous brown patination glowing in its association with the rich nunomé and the tsuba of Fig. 2 fits into this category.

The Tanaka School(s) seems to have been initiated around 1780. Kiyonaga was active in the Tempo period (1830-1843). (Who his teachers were seems to have confused Shinkichi Hara?). His signature is often cut in straightforward kanji, but as shown in Figs. 3a, b and c, various degrees of gosho stylisation occur⁴. (Are some of these geisho script?). Fig. 3a is worthy of closer examination, because it shows a further example of how cleverly the kogai hitsuana could be designed!

Kiyonaga was followed by Toshikage () who was capable of producing good designs along the lines of his teacher. Joly suggests that Kiyonaga's genius may well have attracted up to 30 students to him.

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1. Joly, H.L. ; The Naunton Collection Catalogue
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4. Wakada ; Kinko Meikan

9.. Winners of the January '83 tsuba kantel

The maker of this tsuba is TANAKA KIYOTOSHI

The following members correctly ascribed it:

Sweden:

Lennart Ericson

U.K. :

David Leggett

John Lissenden



NAMAKURA-GATANA (なまくら刀)

When a blade is tempered by a swordsmith of little skill an obscure hamon results. It is dull and not beautiful at all. It is 'Namakura-gatana'. Now, 'namakura-gatana' means an idle fellow, a poor spirited fellow, a useless man, and so on.

(To be continued - Ed.)



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In the late Kamakura period, Kaneuji, one of the Masamune no jutetsu, originally of Yamato province, moved to Shizu in Mino province and founded the Mino tradition of swordsmithing which is generally reckoned to be influenced mainly by Yamato and Soshu styles.

A large number of swordsmiths appeared in Mino during the Muramachi period; the majority working in and around Seki, the provincial capital, and Seki along with Osafune in Bizen province became the two main centres of sword production in Japan. A number of these, during the earlier period, such as the Kanemotos and Kanesadas, (as well as smiths working elsewhere in the Mino tradition such as Muramasa of Ise) forged blades of distinction. The whole Muromachi period and especially the latter part ("Sengoku") was a time of great military unrest and there was a great demand for swords. The swordsmiths of Seki catered for this demand by almost "mass-producing" swords that were serviceable rather than aesthetic.

The Mino Tradition and the Shinto Revival

During the late Koto and early Shinto periods we find that a number of Schools of smiths working in the Seki style, but returning to the forging of quality blades. Migration from Mino took place. Many following the fortunes of various Daimyo. In the early Edo period we find 'Seki' Schools not only in Mino (e.g. Ujifusa, Omichi, Jumio) but in the neighbouring provinces of Kaga (e.g. Tsujimura), Owari (e.g. Nobutaka), Echizen (e.g. Shimosaka, Kunikiyo and --- MASANORI) and elsewhere. In fact the Mino tradition was probably the most influential in the Shinto period; influencing such essential figures as Horikawa Kunihiro.

The Echizen Seki School

Yuki Hideyasu, a well known military strategist and son of Tokugawa Ieyasu was banished to Echizen province, a province previously without a strong swordsmithing tradition and was followed there by many hopeful swordsmiths keen to do business. Most of these came from Mino or worked in the Seki Style and are known as Echizen Seki.

KOTETSU blades cut very well and many of his early blades were put through tests by the Yamada clan. The results were inlaid on the nakago. But as his skill became generally recognised he ceased the practice. Initially the verification of quality helped sell his blades as did the very skillful horimono which he added. His horimono rank with the best shinto makers, but he clearly regarded horimono as superfluous and phased them out.

As might be expected eleven out of ten KOTETSU blades are fakes. His skills were more overtly copied by his principle students Okimasa, Okinao and Okihisa.

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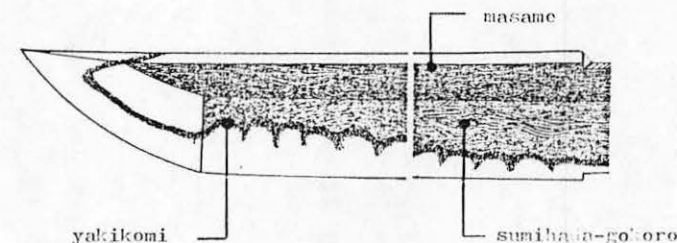


FIG. 1 Some characteristics of KOTETSU blades

At this time he signed:

庚 徇 文 (KOTETSU)

Hane-tora form, which later in this period

was inscribed as 虎

Second period Kanbun 4 + (寛文 1664) or Hako-toro period.

The shape of the blade is still the shinto shape of relatively shallow sori and wide mihaba¹, but he now introduces more funbari, (which is a general kanbun tendency for smiths all over Japan). At times he reproduces the characteristics of Kamakura Rai Kunitsuga, i.e. a deep, white nioi filled hamon.

Around Kanbun 4 (1664) he introduced his Juzu-ba, which is one of his characteristics, where the hamon is composed of widely spaced gunome with ashi². The early tendency to vary the width of the hamon is replaced by greater uniformity. The nie and niguchi are particularly bright and deep compared with that produced by the Osaka Kaji. KOTETSU's boshi has the idiosyncratic characteristic of often resembling the side-view of a thumb (Fig. 1) and there is usually a bump (yakikomi) just below the yokote.

At this time KOTETSU's skill grew and it is generally recognised⁴ that his greatest achievements begin in Kanbun 12 and continue into the Enpo period (1673-1678). Around Kanbun 4, however, he changed the form of the Ko character in his name:

厩

Hako-tora form

(There is at least one Enpo period blade, i.e. that described in reference 4, where he still uses the cursive Hane-tora form. So the change over may have been initially intermittent). Around Kanbun 11 (1671) he started to inscribe²;

Ju Toeizan Shinobu-ga-okahen

Although Echizen Seki cannot boast any swordsmiths of truly outstanding reputation, Fujishiro Yoshio lists some 40 Echizen smiths of at least average ability working between the Keicho (1596) and Genroku (1688) periods: the two foremost centres being Fukui, the provincial capital, and Shimosaka.

Yasutsugu and Higo Daijo Sadakuni (follower of Yasutsugu and uncle? of Nagasone Okisato) are the foremost names. Fujishiro lists as jo-saku (superior) smiths the following: Higo Daijo Kanenori, Echizen Kanezaki, Yamashiro Kami Kunikiyos I and II (The 1st was a Horikawa Kunihiro pupil), Yamato Daijo Masanori I, Echizen Sadatsugu and Yasutsugus II and III.

Yamanaka lists the following general blade characteristics of Echizen Seki smiths:-

Shape and style of Shinto period though somewhat awkward. Horimono are common.

Hamon Wide. O-midare, notare-midare, gunome-midare, hako-midare. Togari-ba. Suguha and hitatsura occasionally. Nie.

Boshi Komaru togari with the kaeri made in yoru, made very deep in most cases.

Jitetsu and Hada Pronounced grain in mokume/masame. Shinogi-ji is usually masame.

Nakago Shortish with kurijiri or kengyo tip. Kiri yasurime. Long inscriptions.

MASANORI I

Originated from the Tango Miyazu district of Kyoto and claimed descent from Sanjo Yoshinori of the Koto period. (Heianjo School). He moved to Echizen during the Keicho period and worked mainly in the Genwa period (1615-24) at Fukui.

The shape and style of his blades is mainly "Shinto" though a few resemble Koto. He was well known for hira-zukuri wakizashi. There are Kenmaki-ryu or Fudo horimono.

Hamon are chu suguha, wansho? (= small bay?) midare and regular gunome worked in nie with sunagashi.

Hada is pronounced grain mokume/masame.

Nakago are well proportioned, straight sided and tapering with a Kengyo tip. File marks are Kiri or Katte-sagari.

大和 大 塚藤原 正則

Descended directly from MASANORI I were two further Masanoris and three Kunitsugus. There were a number of other associated smiths.

Fig. 1 illustrates the hamon on a wakizashi made by MASANORI.

Shinogi-zukuri, toru-zori, lorimune, chu kissaki

(Nagasa - 55.9 cm

Sori - 1.3 cm

Motohaba - 3.0 cm

Sakihaba - 2.1 cm)

Hamon: midare which becomes gunome-midare below the monouchi. Nie in monouchi and boshi with sunagashi and kinsuji becoming nioi below monouchi with less "activity".

Boshi: Komaru with hakikake.

Hada: itame; masame in shinogi-ji.

Nakago: ubu with katte-sagari yasuri-me and a Kengyo tip; two mekugi-ana.

Signed: Yamato Daijo Fujiwara MASANORI.

N.B.T.H.K. Tokubetsu Kicho certificate No 5504281 dated 16th July 1980.

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8. A note of the characteristics of KOTETSU (b.1594 - d.1678)

by G. Curtis

The Tokugawa established their capital in Musashi and Iyeyasu set-up Echizen Yasutsuga as his favourite smith in Edo in Keicho 18 (慶長 1613). Not long afterwards Nagasone KOTETSU and Node Hankel came to Edo.

KOTETSU originated in Nagasone in Omi Province. At first he moved to Fukui in Echizen Province where he gained a reputation making armour, fittings for horses and tsuba¹. It was not until he was 50 that he went to Edo. It is said¹ that he studied carving with Higo daijo Sadakuni and sword-making with Soshu Tsunahiro and Kazusa Kaneshige. His first patron in Edo was Matsu daira Yorimoto. He later settled down in Ueno, (the locality of the National Museum,) to work for Inaba Iwami no kami Masayasu. Interestingly KOTETSU never received (or accepted) a title. At some late stage he adopted the priests habit and added the characters 入道 i.e. nyudo to his mei.

In attempts to characterise the work of KOTETSU it becomes clear that his early work can be distinguished from his later work. Changes took place in both the details of forging and 'tempering' as well as his mei:

First period (Manji-Kambun . 1658-1661) or Hane-tora period.

Yamanaka¹ suggests that he worked in both the new shinto tradition and the old Yamashiro tradition. The blade shape is shallow sori with wide mihaba. The quenching is in nie and the hamon is wide notare-gunome with hako tendency in the Sue-Seki style² with considerable variation in width along the length of the blade. In some cases pairs of large and small gunome resembling a gourd cut in half (hyotanba) are regularly spaced along the blade^{3 4}. In others he produced o-notare hiro suguha. Many will have shinto yakidashi in long suguha. The hada is generally compact mokume/masame with masame in the shinogi. (The latter is a particular Edo characteristic⁴). The steel is well worked and will exhibit strong ji-nie, however he often mixed in some o-hada, particularly near to the machi, called sumihada-gokoro, and this is a key point in the kantei of KOTETSU - whatever the period of his work.

7. Winners and Comments upon the January '83 Sword Kantel

The maker of this katana was KOTETSU

The following members correctly named KOTETSU:

Australia : Vaughan H. Cottle
Austria : Johann M. West
Belgium : H. Schippers
Holland : Han Bing Siong
Sweden : Kjell Lindhberg
U.K.: : John L. Burrows
David Leggett
Trevor Read
Clive Sinclair
U.S.A. : George E. Welch

The Kantel blade has a medium kissaki and funbari. The koshizori is perhaps a little large for the kanbun period, but the shape generally fits the accepted kanbun characteristics. The even width gonome, tending to juzuba, but with some of the gourd shaped gonome of his first period tends to suggest that this might have been a transition blade. However the clear nioguchi, the thumb shaped boshi with its bump below the yokoto, the straight suguha yakidashi, the bright nie and lastly the presence of o-hada (sumi-hada-gokoro) near the machi are clear pointers to KOTETSU's finest period. Regretably the blade is undated in the mei, but these characteristics together with the hakotora form of the character "Ko" suggest post kanbun 4 manufacture, (see accompanying article). The cutting test details: Enpo 2 (1674) cutting 3 corpses by Yamato Kanjuro Hisahide suggest that the blade was made at sometime between 1664 and 1674, but probably close to the time of the test.

G. Curtis

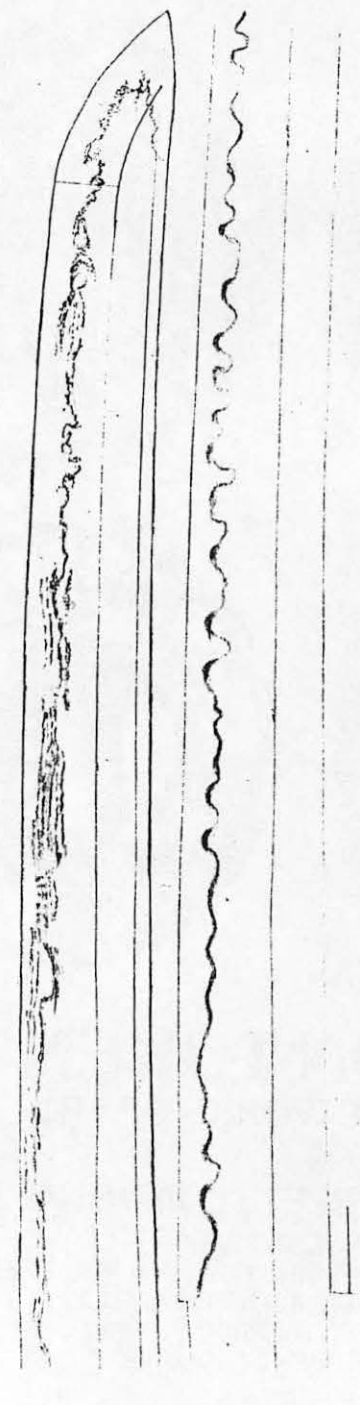
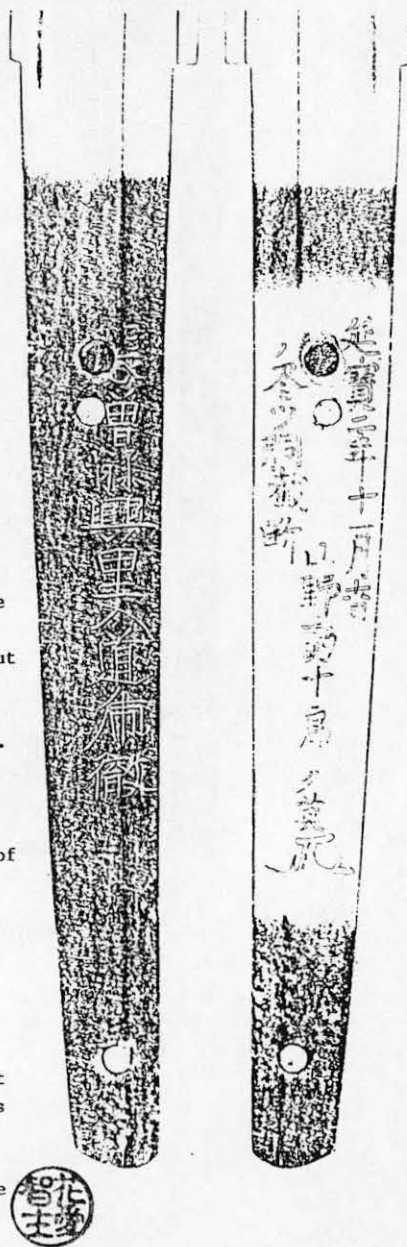
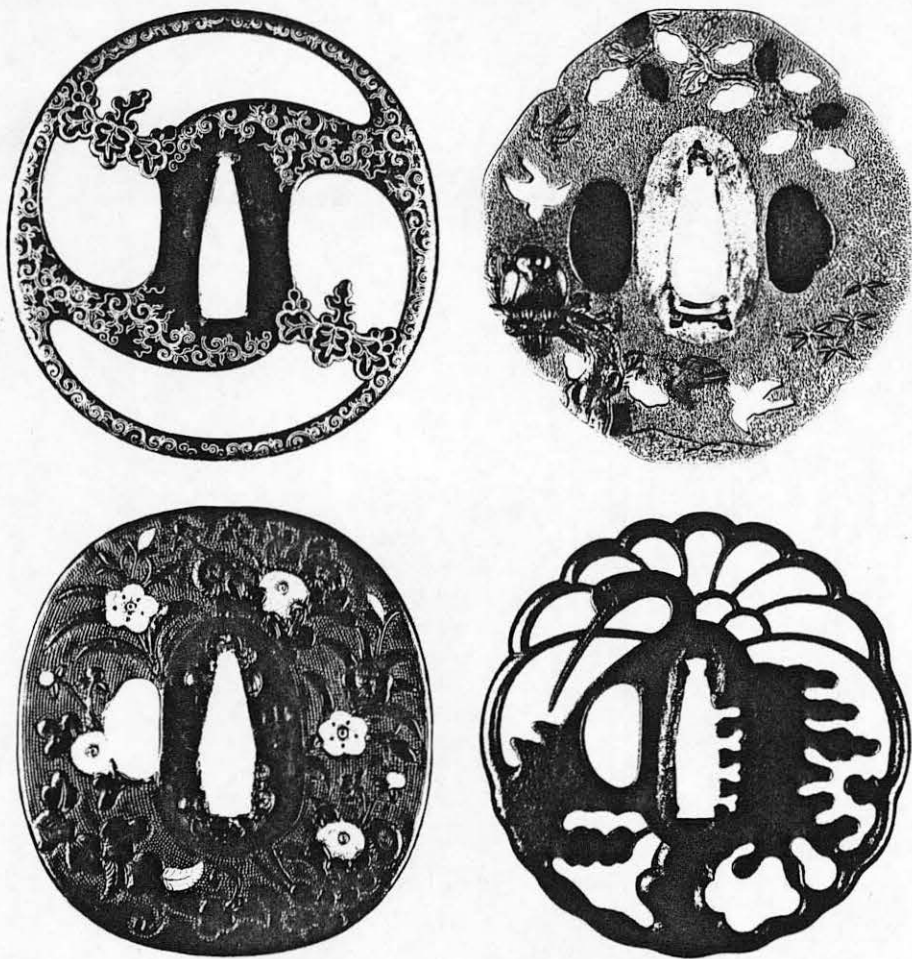


FIG. 1 A wakizashi by
Yamato Daijo Fujiwara
MASANORI



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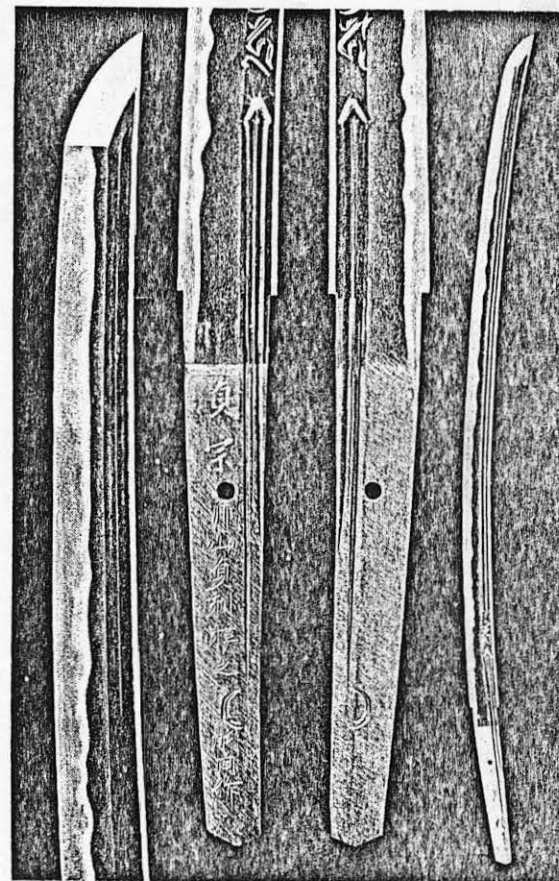


FIG. 12 SADAMUNE copy by GASSAN SADATOSHI

3. SOME SHOAMI TSUBA

by J.P. Lissenden



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FIG. 11 Katana by SADAOKAZU II dated 1969

When one considers the importance of the Shoami schools in the artistic development of sword furniture it is surprising how little attention has been paid to this large group of craftsmen, second only to the Choshu schools in its size and range of influence.

The Shoami records go back to the sixteenth century and the family was well established in Kyoto by the beginning of the seventeenth century. The last master, Katsuyoshi, died in Kyoto as recently as 1908 and held the appointment of chaser to the Imperial Court. Thus the family spanned an incredible four hundred years of continuous metal working.

Having its origins in Kyoto, members of the school soon established centres scattered throughout the whole of Japan (see Fig. 1). The Victoria and Albert museum's classification in Section C. XII lists eleven sub-groups, each of these representing a centre where branches of the school settled more or less permanently, viz.

- XII (a) Kyoto Shoami
- XII (b) Iyo "
- XII (c) Awa "
- XII (d) Tsuyama "
- XII (e) Shonai "
- XII (f) Saotome "
- XII (g) Aizu "
- XII (h) Akita "
- XII (i) Bushu "
- XII (j) Harima "
- XII (k) Bishu "

With one single exception, all of the Shoami sub-groups are named after districts or towns where their members settled. As early as the sixteenth century KYOTO contained, in addition to its many ateliers, both independent and Shoami craftsman. IYO is the name of one of the six provinces of Nankaido.

TSUYAMA was a town in the province of Minasaka on the island of San-yo-do. The SHONAI take their name from a town in the province of Uzen: the modern name for this town is Tsunugaoka.

The SAOTOME are the single group which do not derive their name from their place of residence. This was a family of sixteenth century armourers some of the members of which were tsuba makers.

AIZU, another sub-section of the Shōami, takes its name from a district in the province of Mutsu on the north-east coast of Handō. AKITA was a town in the province of Dewa.

BUSHŪ is the Sino-Japanese reading of Musashi, the province of which Yedo is the principal city. Some collectors include in this group all those iron fittings made in this centre, thus including Ito-Odawara and Akasaka work. It is probably better to reserve this heading for those iron fittings made either by independent craftsmen or by those belonging to small groups. Those fittings made by members of the Shōami family in this centre would thus be labelled Bushū Shōami work.

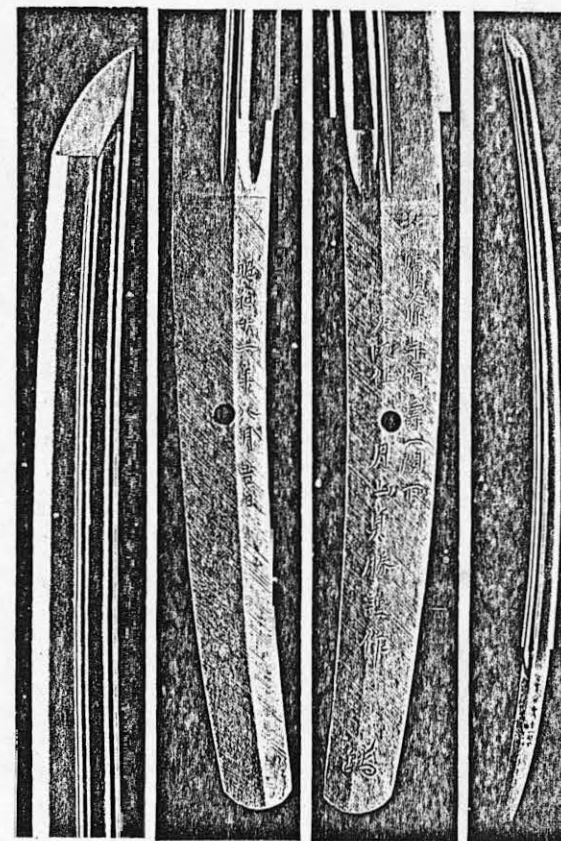
HARIMA is one of the eight provinces of San-yō-dō and BISHŪ, the last of the sub-groups, is the Chinese name for the province of Owari.

The AWA workers are sometimes grouped with those other workers who specialised in nunomé decoration. The Victoria and Albert museum's classification in section G. XXXI lists them thus:-

The Nunomé style of Awa, Kyōto, Nagasaki and Kenjō,

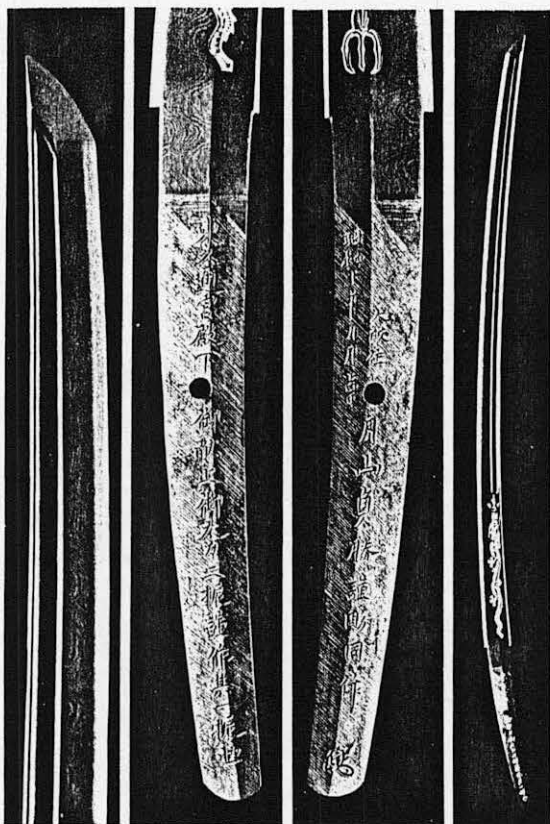
This is a strange grouping. The Awa arose as a Shōami offshoot, having been founded by Tansai in the late eighteenth century. Awa work utilised gold very freely in the interpretation of its design and favoured nunomé, afixed by cross-hatching the iron base. Since the Awa group worked in Kyōto and Nagasaki, the Nagasaki group was its single offshoot, and since Kenjō tsuba were lavishly decorated Awa (or sometimes Kinai) tsuba made for presentation to the shogun, the distinction between these four groups is a very difficult one indeed. Awa work is probably best listed as being a sub-group of the Shōami school and the Victoria and Albert group confined to other, miscellaneous nunomé workers.

Some of the Kyōto workers remained, but this centre finally lost its importance when the Emperor Meiji moved to the new capital of Yedō in 1869. The migrant sub-groups soon developed their own individual characteristics both of style and of technique and, with the passage of time, became progressively removed from their early influence. A study of the later work of the sub-groups shows their pieces to have little in common with one



三山貞勝刀 (受命陸軍大臣寺内寿一閣下・昭和十一年)

FIG. 10 Tachi by SADAOKATSU dated 1936



月山貞勝謹彫同作刀 (東久瀨宮殿下へ献上・昭和十年)

FIG. 9. Tachi by SADAOKATSU dated 1935

another and to have been influenced by, and to have influenced, the areas in which they settled. Some general observations on the work of the schools are nonetheless possible.

It has been noted that they were not afraid of weight and that a considerable proportion of their guards are circular in form. They were essentially tsuba-makers; relatively few of the small ornaments were made. An unusually large number of them are unsigned and individual characteristics include cloud-like designs cut out of the shitagi and decorated rims. Earlier work consisted of inlays of gold, silver and shakudo on the softer metals after the style of the Goto craftsmen working in Kyoto. These earlier pieces are sometimes called Ko-Shoami. Later, iron was used as a base and work resembling Fushimi and Yoshiro inlays was produced.

In the eighteenth century an additional factor adds to the difficulties of identification. This period was notable for the development of individualisation; artists began to specialise in particular aspects of design and many became renowned for these specialities. Brinkley (1) quotes many examples of such trends and includes amongst these Shoami Tempo, confining his work in Kyoto almost exclusively to the carving of wind-tossed peonies and chrysanthemums.

How then may this later Shoami work be identified? Certainly, in the absence of a signature, this may be quite impossible. For example, many Bushu Shoami pieces would, in the absence of a maker's name, be simply labelled as Bushu work. One of the most striking features common to much Shoami work is its appeal; it seems somehow to come close to the western concept of eastern style and to have a tasteful vulgarity that demands to be noticed. It conveys an impression of antiquity which is denied by its brightness and newness. Visitors to a collection, untutored in things Japanese, will often pick out a Shoami piece for favourable comment. The contrast of broad, rich decoration upon a skillfully worked and hammered iron base is one which very easily attracts.

A list of the Shoami craftsmen distributed in eleven main centres in Japan throughout four centuries must total several thousands. Among these each sub-group had its outstanding artists, all of which merit further study. Dennai, working in Akita around 1600, Morikuni and Shigesada, working in the first half of the eighteenth century and Moritomi, working in Iyo in the early nineteenth century, must be numbered among the greatest.

Numerically also the Shoami schools merit more attention than they have to date received. Joly, in his introduction to this group of artists in the Naunton catalogue (2), points out that no fewer than thirty three, or eleven per cent, of the two hundred and seventy tsuba selected by Mr Furukawa from the Professor Wada collection for exhibition at the Japan-British exhibition held in London in 1910 (3) were Shoami pieces. Most collections contain a similarly disproportionately high number of such pieces. This may be partly explained by available quantity of such work, but it does also have an especial appeal and seems to be favoured by collectors in the earlier stages of their interest.

Why then has Shoami work been relatively neglected, especially by the earlier collectors? Many of these described the products of this school as being, with the exception of some earlier pieces, "rather vulgar and exhibiting poverty of design". Hancock (4) suggests that the broad, strong treatment of this school did not find favour in the shogunal capital and that the intricate and more detailed treatment of the eighteenth century Yedo schools was more generally favoured. Be this as it may, this neglect remains surprising.

The examination of representative work from various of the Shoami sub-groups serves little purpose apart from demonstrating the influences which existed between these sub-groups and the traditions of their adoptive homes. Instead, I have selected four interesting Shoami pieces for comment.

The first of these (Fig. 2) is an old, circular iron tsuba with many hammer marks on its surface and a rich dark, almost black, patina. There is one ryo-hitsu, plugged with shakudo, and a cloud-like formation has been cut out of the shitagi in negative shilhouette. This latter feature has already been mentioned as a recurring decoration in Shoami work. On each surface of the guard are inlaid five assorted sea shells in copper and shakudo. Each of these is decorated with a few strands of inlaid gold and silver vegetation. The guard measures 3.1 inches in diameter and is 0.1 inches thick. It is unsigned and the tang-hole shows signs of alteration in order to fit it to a smaller blade. This is probably an early Shoami piece, and comparison with a similar guard in Helen Gunsaulus' book (5) and signed 'Shoami Aizu no ju' indicates this first to be Aizu Shoami work.

The second (Fig. 3) is an early Saotome Shoami guard from the Jepson collection. It is of irregular circular outline, measuring 3.4 inches in diameter and 0.15 inches in thickness. The rough hammered surface, with a

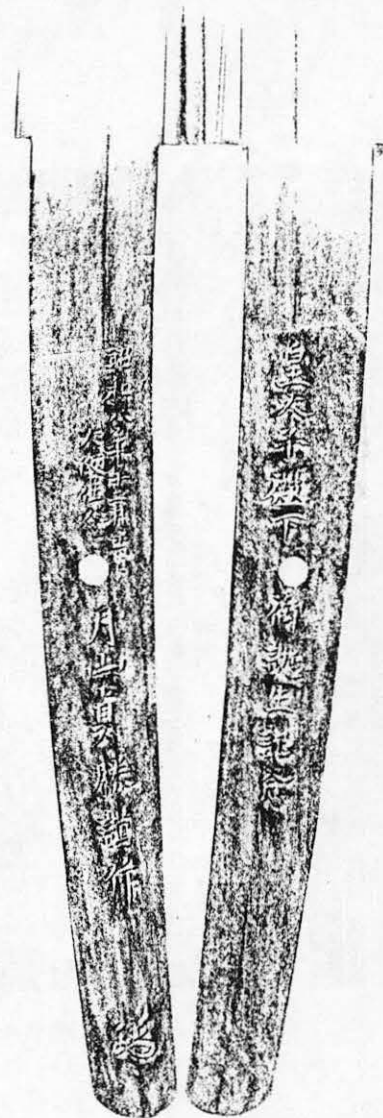


FIG. 8b The nakago of a katana by SADAKATSU made to commemorate the birth of H.R.H. the Crown Prince Akihito dated December 1933

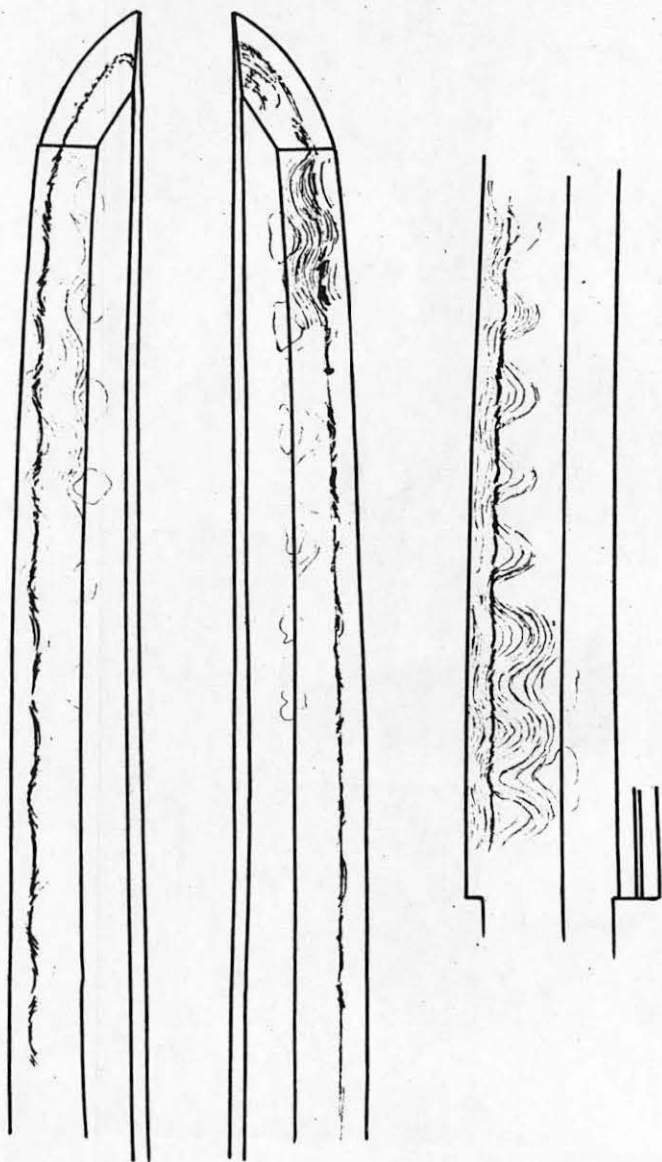


FIG. 8a Details of hada and hamon
in a katana by SADAKATSU

rich dark patina, bears three aubergines rendered in negative silhouette. It has a single ryo-hitsu and is unsigned.

Edgar Jepson was a novelist and a black-and-white artist who was also an expert in 'things Japanese'. After his death his considerable collection was auctioned by Glendinning on 20th and 21st June, 1938. This piece was bought by Tommey who subsequently sold it from his shop in Sicilian Avenue in 1939 for the sum of eight shillings.

The third guard (Fig. 4) illustrates very well the influence played upon the Shōami craftsmen by local techniques. It is lenticular in cross section and is slightly ovoid in outline, measuring 3.1 inches in height and 2.9 inches in width. The smooth chocolate-brown patina, the sharp negative silhouette of the butterfly and the use of itō-sukashi perforation to depict the antennae all suggest Ito- Odwara work, but its Shōami origins are quite apparent. The brightness is there, and the cloud-like apertures in the top right-hand section. Careful inspection of the narrow edge reveals traces of gold nunome, and the attribution to the Bushu Shōami sub-group is confirmed.

Butterflies (Cho) appear frequently in Japanese mythology and are considered to be the souls of living or of dead friends. Edmunds (6) states the presence of a butterfly could be taken to indicate a death, either recent or impending, according to the fancy of the beholder.

The fourth tsuba (Fig. 5) has been chosen simply as an outstanding example of early Shōami work; it is also one of the best iron pieces in the author's own collection. An openwork guard of beautifully forged, granular, and darkly patinated metal, it depicts chrysanthemum blossoms and foliage forcefully carved in marubori. Measuring 3.2 inches in diameter and 0.15 inches in thickness, the design is sparingly touched with gilt nunome. The centres of the two large blossoms are silver nunome and the tang-hole has caulking of silver. Both ryo-hitsu are plugged with an isime of silver on shakudo. The guard is unsigned.

The adaptation of this complex design to a closed, circular outline indicates a Shōami origin to this piece. So skillfully has this adaptation been achieved that nowhere does it appear artificial or contrived. The two small, brilliant areas of silver nunome, giving a brightness to the design and imposing an impression of stability, support this attribution. The overall restraint of the work, together with the granular texture of the metal and the extensive wear at the tang-hole lead me to suppose that this is an early piece. Certainly the final result is a triumph both as a work of art and as a functional sword guard.

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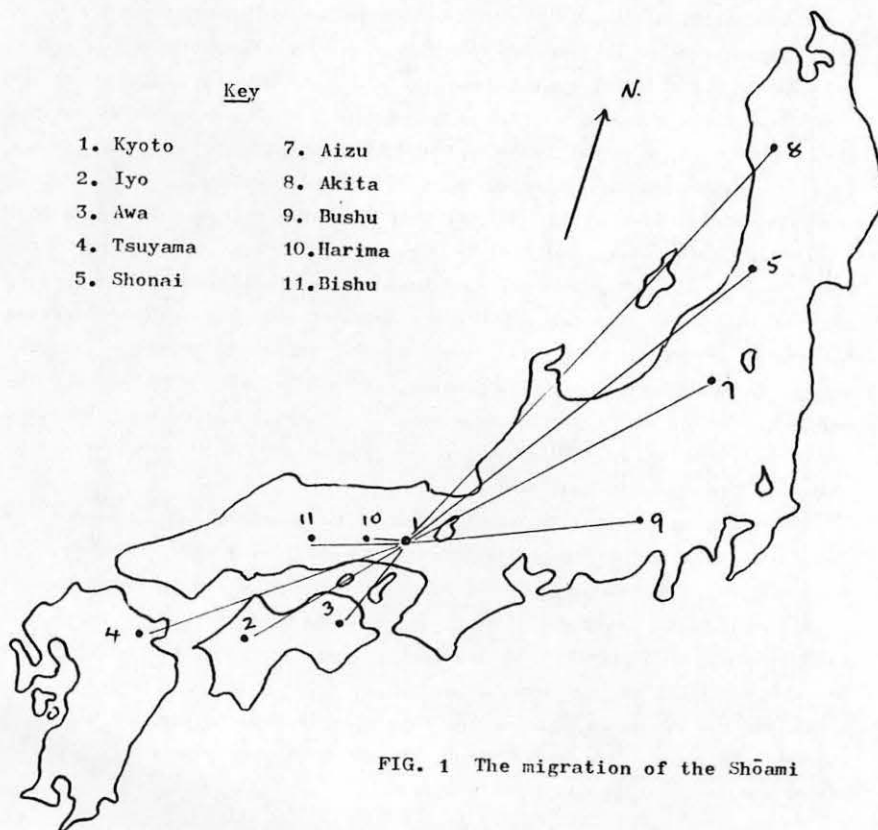


FIG. 1 The migration of the Shōami

SADAKAZU I



SADAKATSU



SADAKAZU II



FIG. 7

The Modern GASSAN s

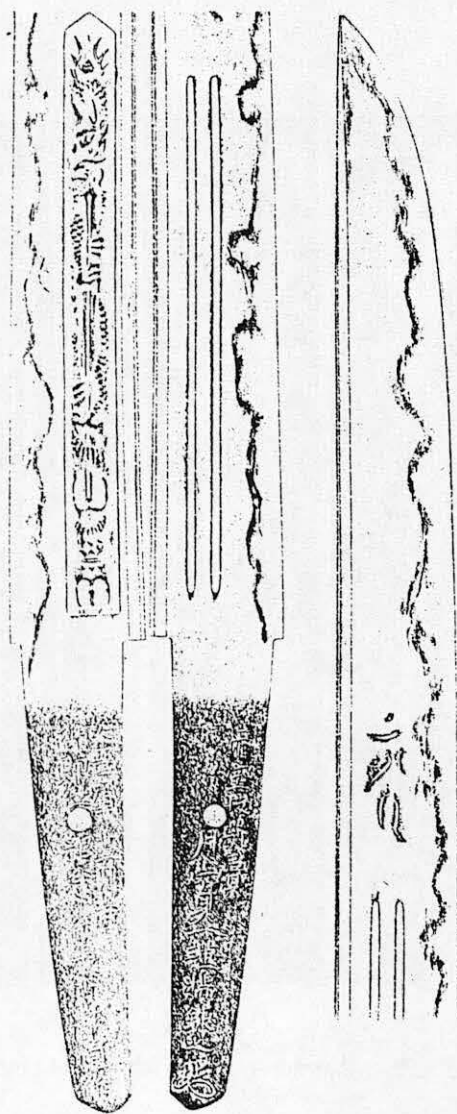


FIG. 6 Tanto by SADAKAZU I dated 1915

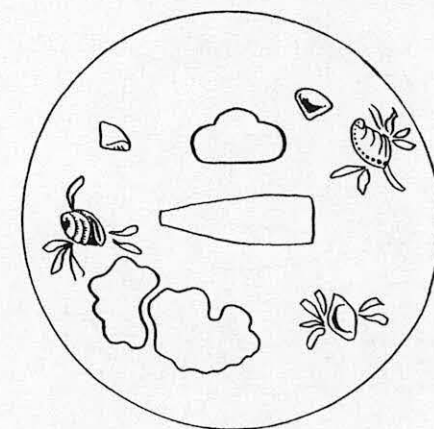


Fig.2.

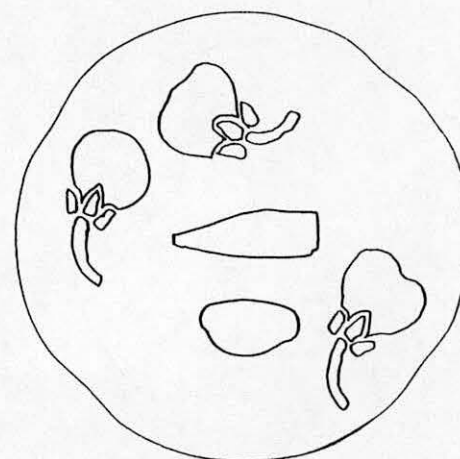


Fig.3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



FIG. 5 Katana by SAKAKAZU I dated 1894

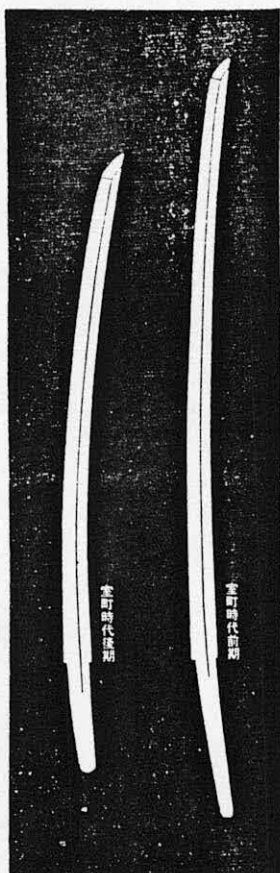


FIG. 4 Muromachi period shape

4 . A Discussion of the Basic Characteristics of Shinto Blades with particular reference to Sendai KUNIKANE by C. Sinclair

This paper (presented at the Token Society meeting in London in February 1983) discusses the Sendai school of KUNIKANE, but I feel it may be useful to first outline the basic characteristics of Shinto thereby putting the Sendai smiths, and indeed all Shinto schools into some sort of historical and cultural context.

The first year of Keicho period (1596-1614) sees the beginning of the Shinto Era. This is not simply a convenient date from which all previous swords may be called Koto, but marks an important historical changing point in Japan. The previous 130 years, known as the Sengoku-jidai (period of the country at war) had been a time of unending conflict, embroiling virtually the entire country. The demand for swords had been intense, and quality plummeted to an all-time low, as swordsmiths rushed to arm the various armies. Mass-production was the order of the day, and the techniques of the Gokaden were virtually forgotten.

With Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, peace was eventually thrust onto Japan, via the decisive battles of Nagashino and Sekigahara. At last the art of swordsmith could come back into its own and be given time to develop and be perfected. There were 4 main differences now prevailing, not applicable to Koto period, and I think they may be summarised as follows:-

1) Jocka-Machi Castle towns sprang up and became major centres for both commerce and culture. Run by powerful daimyo appointed by, or at least approved by, the Tokugawa, the castle towns attracted many of the best swordsmiths seeking to earn a living. Previously scattered amongst warlike clans, or retained by large religious organisations (now disbanded) they tended to stay as close as possible to their source of raw materials - sand iron, water, etc.

Now all their customers were concentrated in the Jocka-Machi and they eagerly sought the patronage of the daimyo. Examples of swordsmiths who were beneficiaries of such patronage are:-

Shigekuni at Wakayama - The Kii Tokugawa
Kanakawa at Kaga - The Maeda
Tadayoshi at Hizen - The Nabeshima

Yasatsugu and Hankei at Edo - The Tokugawa
and of course, KUNIKANE at Sendai - The Date.

2) Raw Materials In the Koto period the swordsmith would have both mined and refined his own iron ore. With the rise of the Joka-Machi this became not only impractical, but unnecessary. Improved communications allowed the raw materials to be transported to the town or to a central source, from which it could easily be acquired.

This led to the disappearance of the local characteristics of the Koto period and the so called 'distinctive colourations' associated with the regions.

Another result of improved communications was the growth of European trade, mainly with Holland and Portugal, whilst maintaining existing contact with the Asian mainland. At this time, imported iron or steel became quite widely used, although whether it actually came all the way from Holland and Portugal, or whether it may have been carried by their mercantile fleets from, say India, is unclear. However, the use of Nambam-tetsu seems to have become quite popular at this time. One 'user' was Yasatsugu, the favourite swordsmith of Ieyasu, and as such, he may have set the fashion in the use of Nambam-tetsu.

3) Forging Methods As previously stated the methods of the old schools (pre Onin period) had been all but forgotten during the Sengoku-jidai. There is one very basic difference in the forging of Koto and Shinto, which is as follows:-

- a) Koto - O-Hada is most common and will not be in Shinto.
- b) Shinto - Ko-Hada will be found and not O-Hada.

Additionally new types of hamon are found, never previously seen. These illustrated in Fig. 1 tend to be slightly later in Shinto, (rather than Keicho period) and are rather extreme examples. They are:-

- a) Fuji - by Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke (Naka).
- b) O-Doran - by Sukehiro and his school.
- c) Kikusui - Various.

These are seen as a reflection of the different taste encouraged by peace and the rising influence of the merchant class.

4) Kendo-Styles After Nagashino and Sekigahara, the futility of mass-cavalry charges was a hard learned lesson. The bushi no longer required a sword with which to slash and cut from horseback and now what little fighting there was, tended to be on a 'one-to-one' basis. The sword would be used with two hands and the deep curve, and koshi-zori of Koto, became less practical. The curvature became tori-zori and even saki-zori, with a much more shallow curve. The basic chudan-kamae demands this, as it allows the trajectory of the kissaki to be much more direct when employed in a stabbing motion.

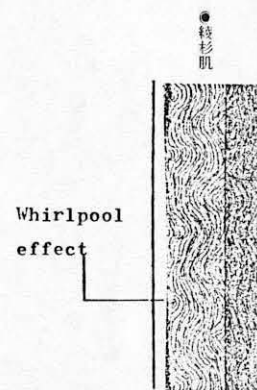
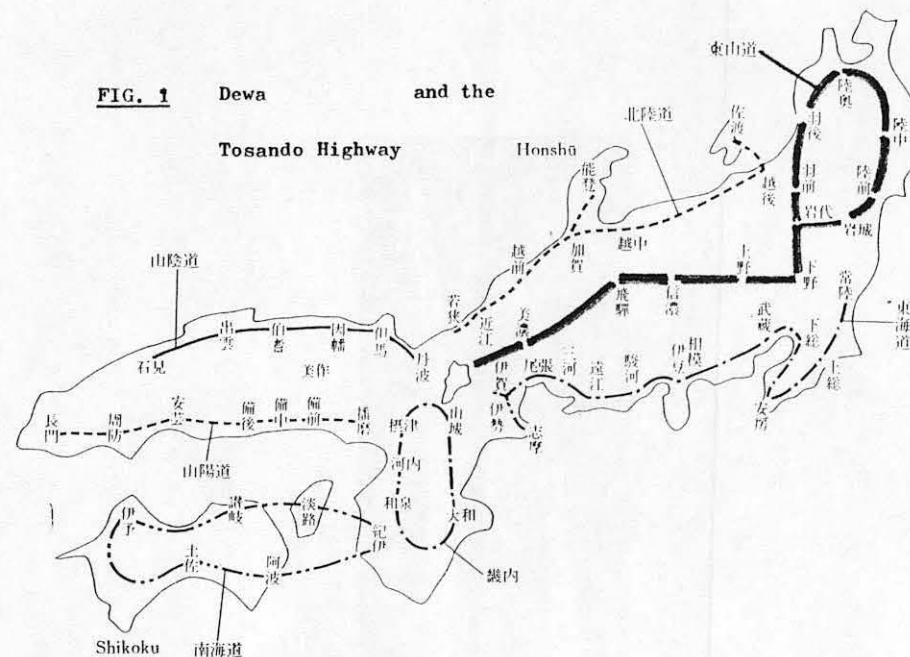


FIG. 2 Ayasugi hada



FIG. 3 SADAYOSHI's Ayasugi

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Also under the heading of 'Kendo-styles', comes the wearing of the daisho. Once again a deep curve, especially in koshi-zori, is uncomfortable with a sword worn cutting edge uppermost, and it is only in Shinto period, we see the production of wakizashi. (There are of course suriage koto blades used as wakizashi, but custom made swords of this length, were not made until Shinto.)

Artists such as Umetada Myoju (previously a habaki maker) and his pupil Kunihiro are credited with spreading the Shinto 'gospel'. Early blades of the period (Keicho) tend to resemble those of the previous Momoyama period, but the further into Shinto we go, the more the above reasons influenced the production of blades.

The best periods within Shinto were:-

Kanei (1624-1644)

Kammon (1661-1673)

After this date a general deterioration set in until Masahide's revival heralded the Shin-Shinto period. From Shin-Shinto, all the shapes and hamon of the Koto period were revived, and one must study the steel to ascertain age (Look for ko-hada, bright and fresh nie etc. etc., do not rely on shape).

KUNIKANE

Against his revolutionary background in the manufacture of swords, the powerful daimyo Date Masamune invited the shodai Kunikane to work in Sendai of Mutsu province, where he became a retained swordsmith. KUNIKANE set up his forge at Kokubu Wakabayashi in Sendai, and was awarded the title of Yamashiro Daijo in Kanei 3rd year and retired in Shoho 2nd year. After his retirement he was known as Yokei KUNIKANE.

In his book "Kaiho Kenjaku", the famous sword tester Yamada classifies shodai KUNIKANE as SAIJO-O-WAZAMONO (supremely sharp).

The second generation, son of the first, was named Hongo Kichisaemon KUNIKANE. He was born in 1612 and succeeded his father in 1645, receiving the title of Yamashiro no Kami in 1667. He died five years later in 1672. The mekugi-ana nearest the mei on nidaï's blade is supposed to always have a small irregularity. A further 11 generations followed, see Fig. 2, all under the patronage of the Date clan, a family known for their interest in sword-making (see Appendix).

Shodai KUNIKANE is reputed to have been a student of the Mishina artist Etchu-no-Kami Masatoshi of Kyoto. Masatoshi was the most talented brother of the Mishina group and faithful to the traditions of Mino-den. I find it most unusual that KUNIKANE's work shows absolutely no trace of influence from his teacher Masatoshi, and it is interesting to speculate why this should be the case.

I submit three possible reasons why this may be so, for consideration.

a) Etchu no Kami Masatoshi is known to have faked swords, and worse still got caught at it. The story goes that a fine blade by Kanemitsu was owned by a farmer, but a local samurai named Takemata relieved him of it, and presented it to his lord, the redoubtable Uesegi Kenshin. This warrior is reputed to have cut through both an armour sode and a musket aimed at him, during one of his battles with the Takeda. On his death, the sword was bequeathed to his adopted son Kagekatsu, who on a trip to Kyoto decided to have the blade polished.

When it was returned from polishing, a retainer noticed a small hole near the habaki (through which a hair could pass) was no longer, there, and further investigation revealed the returned blade to be a copy! One may imagine the feelings, and eleven culprits were soon tracked down and hung. Masatoshi, the skillful faker of the blade, felt discretion to be the better part of valour, and fled Kyoto, rather than argue the merits of his latest creation. (The original blade, known as Takemata Kanemitsu, was sold as part of the Shimizu collection, in 1933. Its present whereabouts is unknown, as it disappeared during the U.S. occupation after World War II).

KUNIKANE is known to have had a high regard for the ancient blades and may well have been somewhat disenchanted with a teacher capable of such behaviour and reacted by rejecting his teachings. The following anecdote demonstrates KUNIKANE's respect of at least one particular ancient blade.

When Date Masamune was in Edo castle one day, Kato Yoshiaki said to him "You must be wearing a suriage Masamune" which was a pretty wild kantei, as the blade was still in it's saya! Date, not wishing to admit to the contrary, said that he was, and hastily departed. On his return home he had KUNIKANE search through his sword store, find a Masamune and shorten it! KUNIKANE, whilst obliged to obey, expressed his regret at having to do this sort of work on such a very fine blade.

GASSAN SADAKATSU at some stage opened a workshop in Yoshino, Nara¹, but many of his works bear the characters, Osaka jūnin. Like his father he gained a reputation for good work both in forging and cutting horimono, e.g. Ryu and Ken-maki Ryū. He seems to have liked producing ayasugi hada. Fujishiro¹ shows the nakago of a blade made in August 1933 which is in ayasugi with suguha embellished with sunagashi twining into the grain texture. Fig. 8 shows a katana made to "commemorate the birth of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince (Akihito b. 8,12,1933) and incompletely dated December 1933. (This blade is in a private UK collection and was the subject of a lecture given to the Society in May 1983. An almost identical blade is illustrated in Nihon-to Zenshu⁹). The ayasugi, unlike the koto predecessor, is remarkably tight and controlled with almost machine-like precision. It stretches from the mune to the ha and interestingly the pattern is almost precisely out-of-phase from one side of the blade to the other. Fig. 8 tries to indicate the nature of the hada and it will be seen that the details of the hamon stem from it. The basic suguha is in nioi with very fine ko nie. Short bursts of sunagashi follow the hada. In the boshi bright strands of kinsuji can be seen.

Fig. 9 clearly shows the ayasugi in another specially commissioned katana made in August 1935³. Fig. 10 illustrates another made in August 1936³. It is clear that in the pre-World War II era SADAKATSU gained the reputation of being the best gendaito kaji^{10 11}.

After SADAKATSU died in 1942, SADAKAZU, his son (pictured in Fig. 7) took on the mantle of the 5th generation of the modern School. This was at the age of 35, so he clearly was no novice at this time. He seems to have survived the difficulties of post World War II Japan and prospered becoming a (Ningen Kokuho living National Treasure) in 1971. He has won many NBTHK prizes, e.g. the MASAMUNE prize, and after the changes in the NBTHK administration in 1982, became a director of the organisation. With his son SADATOSHI (b. 1946), SADAKAZU carries on the GASSAN tradition¹⁴. Figs 11 and 12 illustrate their achievements in the modern search for the greatness displayed in the 13th century SOSHU tradition.

Acknowledgements

Useful communications with Barry Thomas (Australia) and Han Bing Siong (Holland) are duly acknowledged.

swords deprived him of a straight forward livelihood. As Fujishiro¹ quaintly puts it, 'he was obliged to obey the public request to produce swords with the names of famous artists for a living'. Unquestionably he did this well becoming skilled in all the basic traditions, (except Mino) and also at carving horimono, e.g. Ryu (dragon), Hata-hoko and Fudo. Many blades are in the shape of the Muromachi period (cf. Fig. 4) although as can be seen from the sword shown in Fig. 5 he sometimes produced blades with little fumbari and long kissaki rather more reminiscent of the Nambokucho period. This example, made in 1894, witnesses his skill at cutting beautiful horimono¹².

Clearly SADAKAZU was in the mould of NAOTANE and NOBUHIDE and he was soon 'recognised' by the Imperial family. In 1906 he was appointed as an official craftsman at the Royal Museum (currently Tokyo National Museum). With the recognition came many commissions from the armed forces and thence commercial success. Sato sensei suggests that he became particularly well known for his copies of early Bizen blades⁴, but his expertise in producing Soshu Tradition hada and nie was so good that some of his tanto are easily confused with examples by MASAMUNE and SADAMUNE. Fig. 6 shows a tanto, dated November 1915, which he made (as stated on the nakago) at the age of 80, as a member of the Imperial Household Art and Craft Academy, to commemorate the Imperial Coronation (10th November 1915) with zest! The kitae is itame mixed with mokume containing o-hada in places. The texture is zanguri (coarse) and contains numerous chikel. The nie grains sprinkled over the steel surface stand out brightly and some in irregular sizes. There are also some areas of yubashiri (spots or bands of tempering near to the ji). The hamon is basically o-notare or gyō-no-midare thickly lined with nioi forming ashi. There is plenty of nie, (some ara,) forming kinsuji. The boshi is pointed with hakikake and a long turn back⁵.

CASSAN SADAKAZU did not take many students, but with his legitimate son SADAKATSU formed a lucrative 'cooperative' (they are pictured together in Fig. 7). As early as 1906 SADAKATSU was cooperating in manufacturing blades signed in SADAKAZU's name⁶ (e.g. the gunto for Meiji Tenno). The extent of the cooperation is debateable⁷. As far as western tourists were concerned, in the immediate post World War I years, it was possible to order with the assistance of a catalogue printed in English the following⁸;

A sword 70 cm long in either ayasugi den or masame den with dragon horimono on one side and ken on the other mounted either in peers style (efu-no-tachi) or warriors' style (buke-tachi) for only 2,000 Yen (£200).

b) The second possibility for KUNIKANE's rejection of Masatoshi's methods may have been due to his ancestors. KUNIKANE claimed direct descent from the Hosho Yamato school of the Kamakura period, and indeed all his work has much in common with Hosho Yamato.

Did Shodai KUNIKANE feel that in a time of change, he could only find inspiration in the past, or that he was a re-incarnation of a Yamato smith with a mission to revive the school?

c) The third reason may have been that KUNIKANE had no connection with Etchu no Kami Masatoshi, at all!

Characteristics of KUNIKANE

As previously mentioned the Hosho Yamato school greatly influenced the work of all the KUNIKANE smiths. This is seen in the beautiful, slightly undulating, masame-hada, known aptly enough as Hosho-Masame-Hada. This runs from the machi area, clear into the kissaki, but it does lend itself to one problem. Because of the structure small hada-ware are often seen, especially if the blade has been over polished, but sometimes they may be found anyway. Known as Hosho-Hada-Ware I guess if any flaw is acceptable, this is one of them. Both the beautiful masame-hada, and the not so beautiful hada-ware, are seen in Sendai blades.

Other characteristics are of a high shinogi (another Yamato trait), and sugu kuichigai nijuba. A yakizume boshi is also characteristic. Fig. 3 shows an oshigata of one of Shodai KUNIKANE's blades.

I feel of all these characteristics, however, the masame-hada should lead you to kantei a Sendai blade successfully. The 28th Convention of the Nippon Bijitsu Token Hozon Kyokai was held in Sendai, and a monument has been erected on the site of KUNIKANE's forge. The 13 graves of the KUNIKANE have been designated an "Important Historical Relic" by the local municipality. Fig. 4 shows oshigata of nakago of the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th and 10th generations.

One Particular KUNIKANE

At the Society meeting, I brought one example of a KUNIKANE blade, to illustrate some of the points discussed above. This blade was of hira-zukuri form, with wide mihaba, chu-suguha hamon in nie, with much sunag ashi

and some chikei. It also has masame-hada becoming almost like Naminohira ayasugi and complete with small hada-ware! The nakago was ubu, with keisho yasurime and hakikake in the boshi, signed:

Omote : KUNIKANE

Ura : Sendai (no) Ju Minamoto Kunetsugu Kore wo saku.

It will, therefore, be evident that the blade is gassaku (worked on by two smiths).

When this blade first came into my possession I considered it, by virtue of shape, nakago patina, calligraphy and the fact that no metal had been removed from the blade, to be from the late shin-shinto period.

However, there are only 4 recorded Kanetsugu listed in my records who worked in Sendai, and only the second of these is recorded as a pupil of KUNIKANE. This smith is recorded as working from 1688 - and, if I assume he was a student slightly earlier than this, his dates marry up quite nicely with sandai KUNIKANE. A tempting thought!

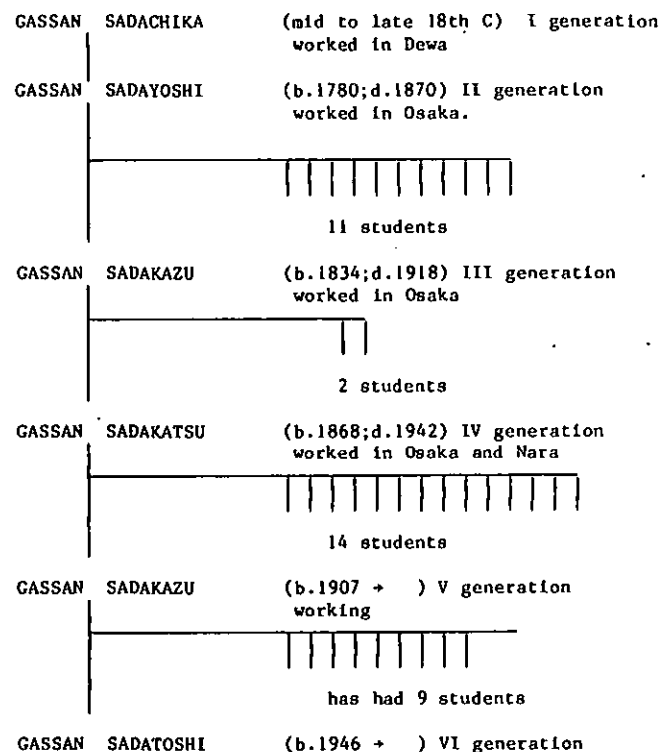
On receiving the blade back from polishing, the polisher's opinion seemed to confirm this but my first impression of shin-shinto remained. On studying the blade, after polishing, especially the somewhat course and not very interesting nie, I am now totally convinced that this blade is definitely shin-shinto.

This would seem to indicate that the Kunetsugu working in Sendai around 1864 was, although not recorded as such, either a pupil of a KUNIKANE, or at least collaborated on certain blades with one of the later KUNIKANE. The Shin-Shinto Meikan seems to favour the 12th generation KUNIKANE, but the 13th generation is a distinct possibility.

Appendix

One of the Date daimyo Tsunemune was actually a buke-tosho (warrior swordsmith). He had his own smithy a Shinegawa in Sendai and became a skilled artist under the tutelage of Yasutomo (see Fig. 2), probably the 2nd generation as the first died very young, and the 2nd Yasutomo is generally considered the founder of the line. The Yasutomo's worked also in Sendai, but separately from the KUNIKANE.

Date Tsunemune signed his work - 'Shin Saku'. Although other works are seen, signed 'Bushu Shinegawa ni olte Sendai Kokoshi Mutsu Tsunemune', these are considered fakes.



GASSAN SADAYOSHI enjoyed a good reputation and certainly continued to promote ayasugi hada. Those students familiar with Robinson's "Arts of the Japanese Sword" will recall that Robinson uses an example of SADAYOSHI'S work to illustrate ayasugi hada (see also Fig. 3). He stayed on in Osaka and attracted 12 students. One of them called YAGORO showed considerable promise and he adopted him as his son.

YAGORO changed his name when he was adopted to GASSAN SADAKAZU, (he also used the nom de plume UNRYUSHI.) He was obviously a precocious apprentice and started making swords at the age of 14. His early works exhibit a sturdy shape with shallow curvature and either suguha or ō-midare. When his father became infirm he made swords in his father's name. After 24 years of sword making, when he was 38, the decree abolishing the wearing of

Yamanaka² observes that "the school laid emphasis on the steel construction and not on the hamon". The old Cassan hamon is usually nioi suguha hotsure, chu suguha or ko gonome. The nioi will be loose and lifeless with nioi shimi in places. The ayasugi forging, with its whirlpool effect between the waves, see Fig. 2, will induce some nioi effects at the hamon edge, but no detail within the hamon. The tradition of the School, as far as hamon is concerned, is thus Yamashiro Den and this must have been transmitted to Mount Cassan along the Tosando Highway (東山道 see Fig. 1) I have no reliable information as to when ayasugi first appeared, but the inference from Yamanaka is that it was being forged by the CASSAN in Hein times. It is possible to conjecture that the CASSAN in fact took the Yamato Den masame hada and 'bent' it into their own unique ayasugi. Conservatism in the Schools' techniques must, however, have soon set in, because although Mino province stands at the beginning of the Tosando Highway, none of its methods were obviously transmitted to Dewa. Nor is there any attention paid to Masamune's innovations. The connection could have been made, if not directly, via Kaneuji on his settling in Mino around 1300. (What ayasugi hada embellished with chikei, ji nie and complemented with a hamon showing nijuba, kinsuji, inazuma, sunagashi, ashi yo etc etc would look like we may never know).

Not surprisingly, the entrenched conservatism having escaped modification by Masamune also escaped any of the revitalisation by the Shinto renaissance. At the turn of the 18th Century, however, CASSAN SADAYOSHI made the break and left Dewa to study with SUISHINSHI MASAHIDE in Osaka (Settsu Province). It is this smith who might, on the grounds of skill, be thought of as the founder of the modern Cassan School. Nevertheless, it is his father that the School itself regards as their modern founder³. The lineage of the School, up to the present, may be set out as follows:

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- | | |
|----------------|--|
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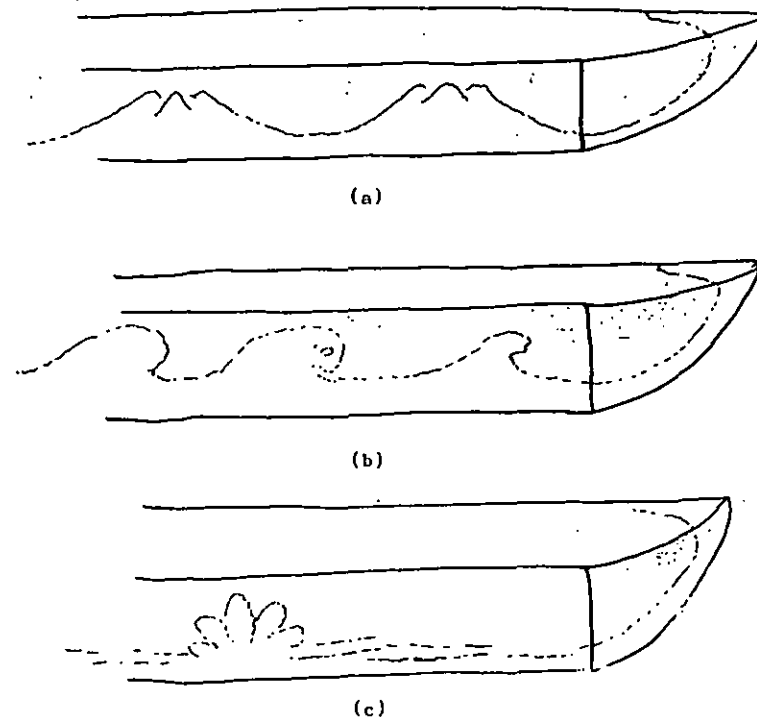
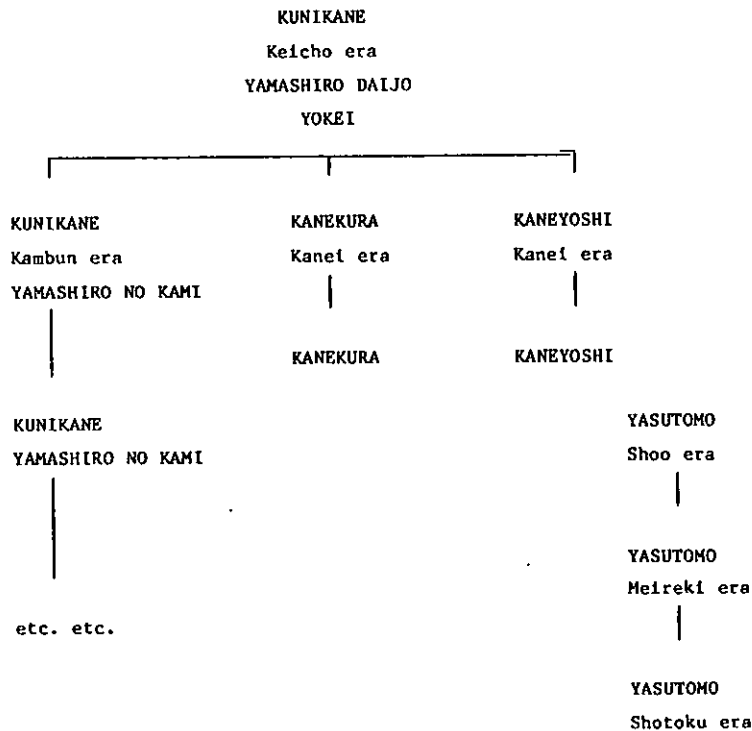


FIG. 1 Some Shinto hamon

Figure 2

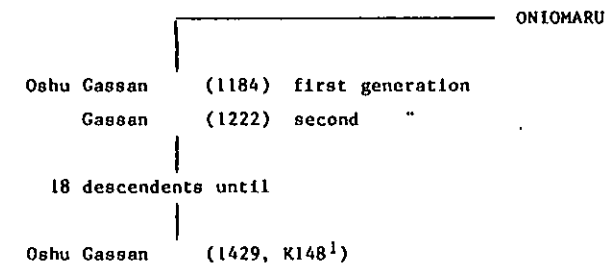


HONGO KUNIKANE GENEALOGY

6 . The Modern Gassan School by G.J. Curtis

Ayasugi hada is for many students of koto Nihon-to synonymous with the old Gassan School. The obvious beauty and implied skill of the forging makes the novice wonder at the generally low rating of the Schools' work. They neither cut extremely well nor do they seem to satisfy the multifaceted, qualitative standards of art sword criticism. The reasons why they do not cut well has yet to be determined. But the reason why the old agasugi Gassan swords are mediocre works of art is that beyond the obvious there are no detailed forging affects in nio or nie nor is there the accompaniment of a skillfully made hamon. Despite this the School did not die out and the modern Gassan School is one of the foremost in pre and post World War II Japan. The current head of the School is Gassan Sada kazu II who is one of the two living National Treasures.

The old Gassan School worked almost exclusively in the mountains of Dewa (see Fig. 1) and seem to have named the School after Mount Gassan (in present day Yamagata prefecture) which has always been a symbol of hermit faith. The first recorded swordsmith is Oshu Gassan who worked in the Hein period (1184) and the lineage can be set out as follows:



It is to this Nambokucho period GASSAN that we seem to owe the first signed example of the Schools' work. Although the School appears to have continued for the next 300 years none are recorded as having any notable skill².

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FIG. 3 刀
国包 (初代)

Shodai
KUNIKANE

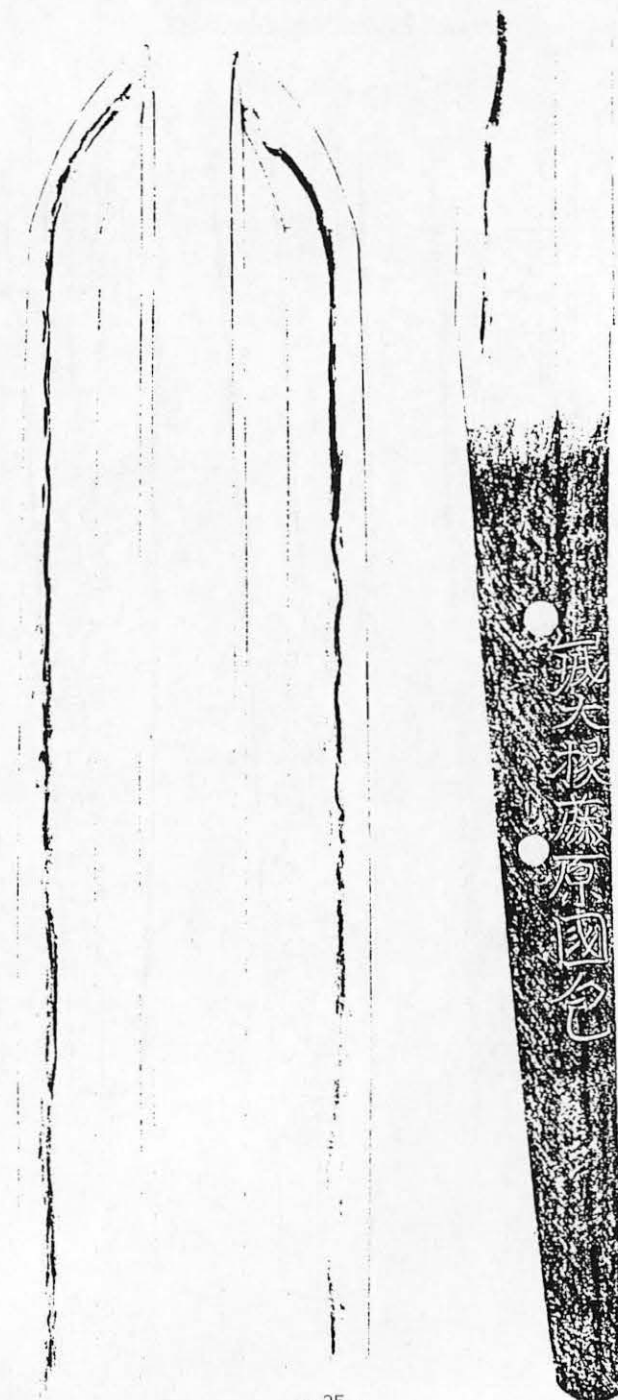
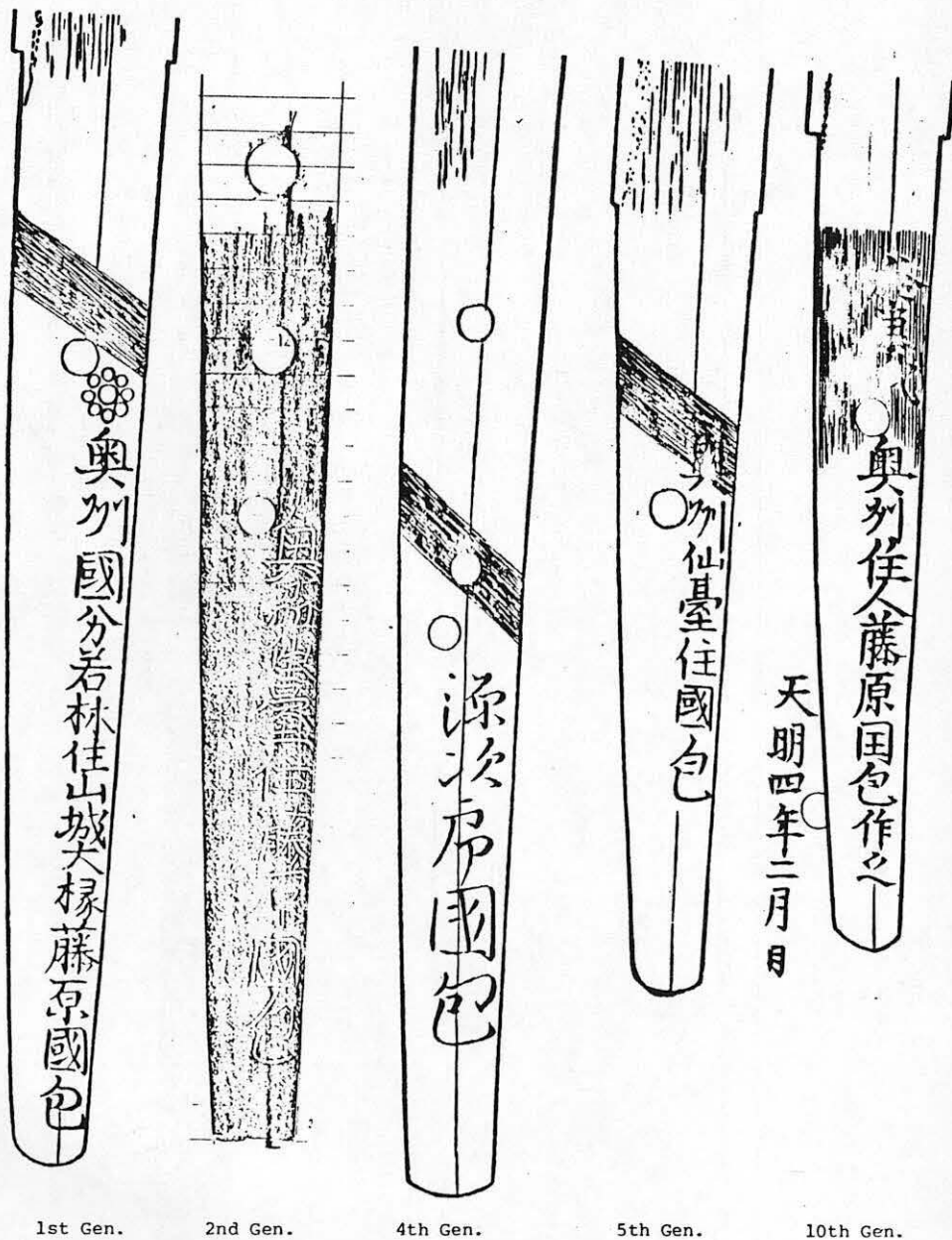


Fig. 4

Examples of Kunikane signatures



EQUIVALENT SPHERICAL DIAMETER, μm

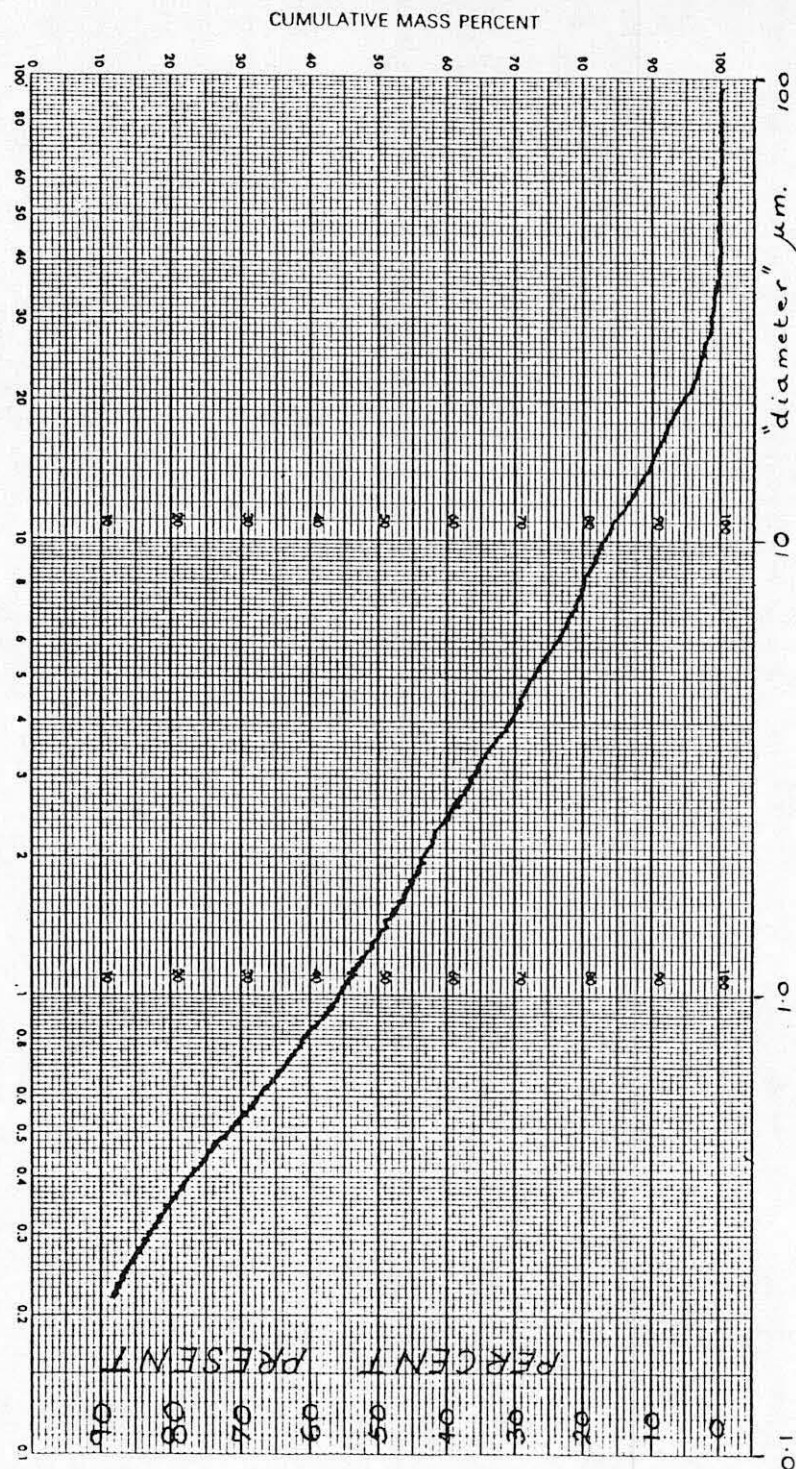


FIG. 3 Amount of uchiko sample with particles bigger than $x \mu\text{m}$.

5. Uchiko - a potential source of scratching

by D. Moyaerts

A sword fresh from the polisher immediately poses a problem; 'how to preserve the state of perfection'. How, in fact, not to introduce the wrong sort of scratches. This is the point, because even a low magnification lens reveals the surface of the blade to be covered in scratches induced by the polishing process. (Old members will remember the surface studies carried out by D.P.H. Tudor-Williams¹ - Ed.). What is required is care not to produce long scratches (hike) which can be readily seen by the naked eye.

In the cleaning process, prior to sword viewing, some medium is needed to remove the oil used to preserve the blade when stored in shirasaya. The common practice in Japan^{2 3}, is to use Honcho paper to remove the bulk of the oil and then uchiko to remove the residue. Both the paper and the uchiko together with the technique of their application must be sources of scratch introduction. Traditionally uchiko is a residue of the materials used in the final stages of polishing (uchigomori)⁴. According to Hawley⁵ it was originally tsushima powder. Currently artificially prepared material is being introduced. In the 1970s uchiko was a source of some discussion within the Society⁵. It was felt that scientific analysis would help western collectors develop their own substitute. These ventures seem to have lost impetus. Perhaps just as well, because good uchiko not only acts as a medium to soak up the oil, it helps to consolidate and enhance the effects produced in the final stages of polishing. Defining the characteristics required for a substitute might be quite involved.

Scientific techniques do, however, help us to understand the material. If for example we wish to know what are the constituent parts of uchiko, then the technique of X-ray diffraction spectroscopy can be applied. Fig. 1 shows a typical spectrum obtained for a sample taken from a cleaning pom-pom. As will be seen the dominant constituent (defined by the height of the spectral line,) is CaCO_3 which is commonly called calcite. There is, somewhat alarmingly, a considerable amount of quartz present. Whilst calcite is comparatively soft with a hardness of 3.0 (mineral hardness is classified⁶ on a scale from 1 to 10, with talk ($\text{Mg}_3 \text{Si}_4 \text{O}_{10}(\text{OH})_2$) at 1, table salt at 2.5 and diamond at 10) quartz has a hardness of 7. The other major constituents are dolomite ($\text{Ca Mg}(\text{CO}_3)_2$) with a hardness of 3.5 to 4.0 and mica ($\text{K Al}_2(\text{Al Si}_2\text{O}_{10})(\text{OH})_2$) with a hardness varying between 2.5

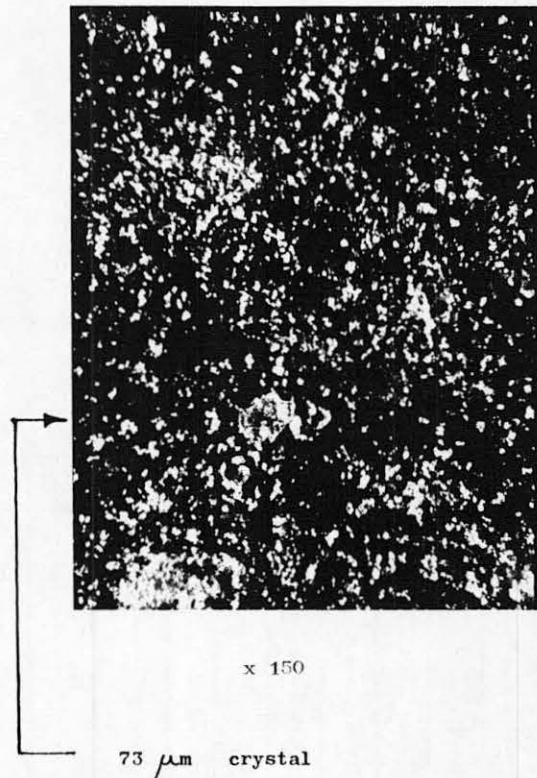


FIG. 2 Optical microscope picture of uchiko

(cleavage) and 4.0 (across cleavage). Uchiko is thus most likely a powdered dolomite rock which contains calcite quartz and mica. 50% of it is in the form of very hard, abrasive crystals. How dangerous these crystals are depends upon their size.

Fig. 2 shows an optical microscope picture of uchiko. It will be seen that a variety of particle sizes are present. The biggest in this picture is 73 μm (1 μm = 10^{-6} metre), however, in other samples studied a 150 μm particle was observed. It only takes one such particle to produce a disastrous scratch on a blade. (My experience as an amateur polisher has shown me that even a 5 μm silicon carbide particle will produce a very visible scratch). Such particles are, thankfully, few in number and the particle size distribution can be determined by a technique called speed of sedimentation in a liquid. Fig. 3 shows the distribution for a sample taken from a cleaning pom-pom. From this it will be appreciated that;

5% of uchiko is composed of particles bigger than 20 μm ,
 20% " " " " " 8 μm ,
 50: " " " " " 1.4 μm .

X-ray diffraction spectroscopy on the bigger, heavier particles shows them to be similarly composed to the bulk of the material.

Uchiko powder is usually contained in a bag - the pom-pom. This is typically composed of a synthetic paper bag with inter-fibre dimensions of 60 μm to 300 μm , encased in cloth (rayon?) with apertures in the weave ranging from 20 μm to 80 μm . This composite bag thus acts as a filter. But is it a sufficiently fine filter? If a 5 μm silicon carbide particle can induce a visible scratch perhaps a closer weave is necessary.

This examination indicates that commonly available uchiko should be used with some care. (Wafting during the application helps blow away the bigger particles - Ed.). Perhaps further filtering through another more closely woven bag should be considered. Only the best, (finely filtered) should be bought, e.g. from a polisher with a reputation to uphold. Clearly cleanliness is paramount and the pom-pom should not be allowed to become soiled and to pick up dust.

This examination, however, poses the question; how deleterious to a polish would the use of talc be? Aren't the risks with uchiko too high?

Uchiko is the principle, potential source, (other than household dust or rust from the nakago,) of scratch introduction. Wiping with cloth or paper tissue is clearly another. In the next issue of the Journal I shall consider this point.

Acknowledgements

My research on the abrasiveness of uchiko and cleaning paper stems from conversations with Graham Curtis.

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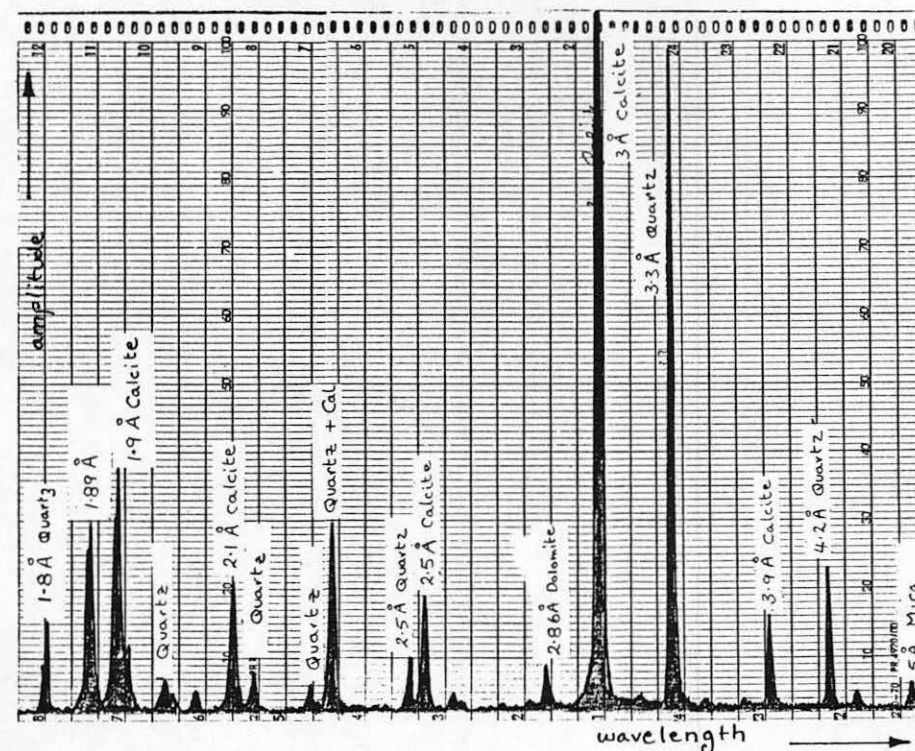


FIG. 1 X - ray diffraction spectrum for uchiko