Wessex Press, Wantage.

刀劍會

THE JOURNAL

TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

JANUARY 1983

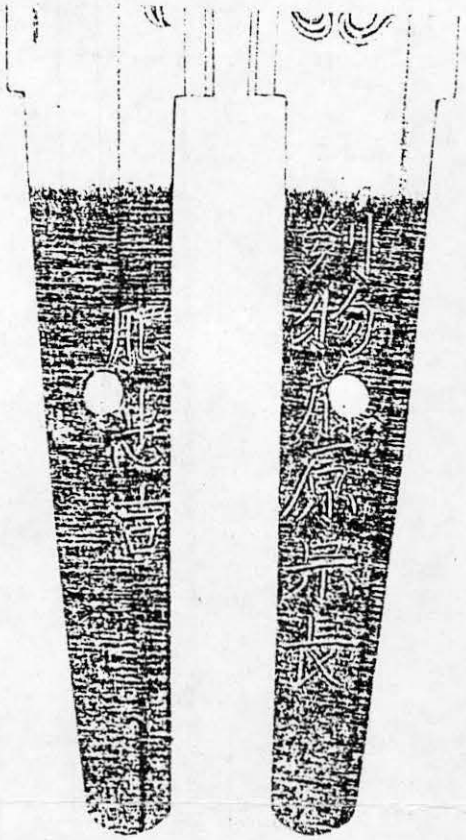
Shinto Kantei Programme 114

This wakizashi is by;

SHODAI TADAYOSHI

The carving (kirimono) is by;

MUNENAGA



Winners

U.K.: J. Burrows
B. Howells

Holland : Han Bing Siong

U.S.A.: C. Bird
G. Welch

TADAYOSHI and MUNENAGA both studied with Umetada Myoju. Of all the students TADAYOSHI's suguha is the best executed.

London Lectures, Spring/Summer'83

April.."AWA ARIYOSHI & IZUMI KUNISADA".....M.Hutchinson

May...."THE EDO EXHIBITION".....V. Harris

June..."GASSAN SADAKATSU".....G. Curtis

July..."YAMATO MASANORI".....D. Leggett

Help needed

To make the London meetings worthwhile we need volunteers to share their sword study with the attending members. The giving of a 20 minute, informal lecture is a very good way of cementing your knowledge and stimulating others. PLEASE VOLUNTEER NOW.

Shinto Kantei Programme 113

This wakizashi together with its horimono was made by;

IKKANSHI TADATSUNA

It is dated Genroku 13 (1700)

Winners

U,K.: B. S. Howells
D. Leggett
M. Lynn
T. Read
C. Sinclaire
F. Stride

Holland : Han Bing Siong

Austria : J. West

U.S.A.: J. Steffey
G. Welch

The yakidashi on this blade is that generic to Osaka. The O-notare with gonome and long ashi are a characteristic of Ikkanshi Tadatsuna. Combined with the fine horimono the attribution should be clear.

Congratulations to those members named above! Keep trying please. To those members who secretly got it right,----congratulations too, but next time write in please, otherwise how do I know I am being helpful?

TOKEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

for the study and preservation of Japanese swords and fittings.

Hon. President : B.W. Robinson, M.A., B. LITT.

Chairman : G.J. Curtis, B.Sc., Ph.D.

Secretary : H.M. Hutchinson,

The Society holds an evening meeting on the first monday of every month, (except when this is a Bank Holiday and not in August), at the Hotel Russell, Russell Square, London. The meeting usually includes a lecture and blade and fittings study.

The Society publishes a periodic Newsletter under the Editorship of:

C. Sinclaire
c/o 340 Hurst Road, Bexley, Kent. DA5 3LA

and a biannual Journal under the joint Editorship of:

G. Curtis and C. Sinclaire,
c/o The Mill, Locks Lane, Wantage, Oxon.

Contributions to the Newsletter and the Journal are always welcome and should be sent to the appropriate editor.

"IF YOU OWN A JAPANESE SWORD YOU SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF THE TOKEN SOCIETY OF G.B."

c/o The Secretary; 141 Nork Way, Banstead, Surrey.

CONTENTS

11. Obituary : Albert Sumitaka Yamanaka

The best encyclopaedia, in English, on the Japanese sword was and still is Yamanaka's Newsletter. Strictly this was called Nihonto Newsletter, but this monumental text was conceived, written editted and produced by Yamanaka-sensei alone, so for me it's Yamanaka's Newsletter. As such it will be his memorial. (A recent reprint is available through the Japanese Sword Society of the United States).

The post war renaissance in sword study in the West began in the late 50's. It became rapidly clear that most students who did not read Japanese were not going to achieve much knowledge. In Europe contact with Japanese experts was nil, so there was no chance of obtaining a sensei. Then the Lord provided a 'sensei-by-post" - Albert Yamanaka. Born in California, Yamanaka-sensei served with the U.S. Army in Japan and took the opportunity to study with Honnami Koson. After three years he graduated with the rank 'Okuden', being the highest which Honnami-sensei used. He started to publish his Newsletter in the late 60's. (I paid for my issues with boxes of 'Montezuma' cigars, which he seemed to prefer to Sterling!).

Yamanaka-sensei will be remembered as a communicator. He must have been stretched by the task of producing his monthly Newsletter, but he always seemed to have time to promptly answer letters. This readiness to communicate his experience never changed even when sky rocketting sword prices made many greedy men keep their knowledge to themselves.

Yamanaka-sensei died in January at the home he had made with his father in the country in Kagashima. He was in his early sixties. He came to teach us when we most needed it, - it is a pity he had to set down his burden so soon.

10. Shinto Sword Kantei

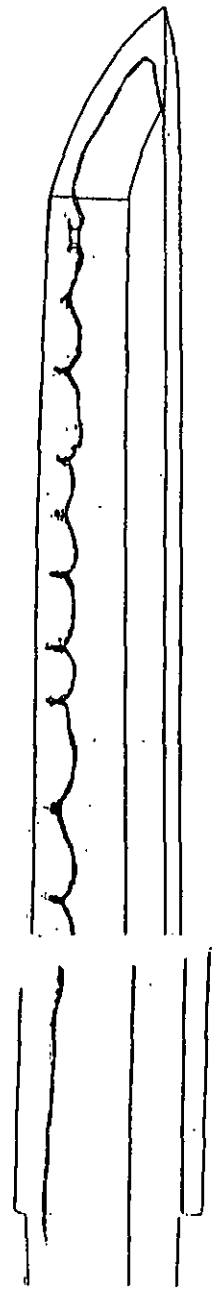
Identify the maker of this katana.
Send in your answer by 30th April '83

Nagasa (ha):	73.9 cm
Sori:	1.8
Moto haba:	3.1
Saki haba:	2.1
Kissaki nagasa	3.5
Nakago negasa	20.7
Nakago sori	little

Execution:

This katana is in shinogizukuri ihori-mune and fairly strong koshi-zori. The kitae is generally compact itame, but near to the machi is a patch of sumihada-gokoro. (blackish O-hada). Fine; ji-nie is sprinkled across the hada. The hamon and boshi illustrated is in deep nioi sprinkled with mostly ko-nie, but in places coarse nie can be seen. The nie cluster together to produce ashi. In the boshi the basic undulating suguha suddenly widens in a bump immediately below the yokote. The nakago is ubu with a ha agari-kurijiri tip. The yasurimei is faint katte-sagari. The mei is composed of 9 characters and is centred on the shinogi line. There are 3 mekugi-ana, one plugged. The reverse bares a gold inlaid cutting attestation.

Entries to:
Dr G. Curtis,
The Mill,
Locks Lane,
Wantage,
Oxfordshire, U.K.



1. Mempo

by J. Anderson

The things that strike people most when confronted by a Japanese armour are first the helmet and then the mask which add so much to the distinctive appearance. Facemasks have not always been worn with armour but their use is so ancient that it has now become an inseperable part of the whole. Its function was twofold, first, and most obvious was to protect the face and secondly to allow the cord of the helmet to be tied tightly which only becomes obvious if you have tried to secure a helmet cord over the bare face. A third reason is sometimes suggested, this being that the mask was to terrify the enemy but as the enemy was similarly equipped it cannot be seriously considered.

The earliest records of face protection come from scrolls depicting the GOSANNEN wars of 1086-1089 and that of the HEIJI MONOGATARI 1159 which show warriors wearing HAPPURI and HO-ATE. The HAPPURI protected the forehead and extended down either side of the face covering part of the cheeks but leaving the point of the chin exposed. It would seem they were of lacquered iron but the use of leather cannot be ruled out. Most existing examples were made to be worn with later copies of early armour and are lacquered black on the outside and red inside although at least one example exists which is covered with printed leather.

HO-ATE of the early period seem to have been a very simple cover for the chin and cheeks worn without a throat defence. The throat defence was added later and by the second half of the 15th century the HO-ATE was fitted with a nose and became the MEMPO or half mask most often seen with armours. It was at this time worn for the most part by the upper class of warriors whilst the foot soldiers, who at this period were becoming more numerous, were most often issued with HAMBO, a very brief form of mask covering only the chin and lower cheeks, affording little protection but offering a firm base for the helmet cord. As with all Japanese armour there were no hard and fast rules and the use of older styles continued long after the introduction of new ideas and men of rank often wore types of armour more befitting a lower class although the quality of manufacture was far superior.

The HO-ATE, HAMBO and MEMPO were used throughout the latter half of the 15th century until the end of the EDO period but the story is somewhat

different for the rarest form of mask the SOMEN which covered the entire face. It first appears in the late MUROMACHI period where it does not appear to have found favour for although it provided a good defence it considerably restricted the warriors vision and so dropped out of use. SO-MEN were usually made in three pieces, basically a MEMPO with a detachable nose and a brow piece which was capable of being removed by extracting hinge pins, but examples made in one piece are encountered. After the establishment of the TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE and the comparative peace that followed ancient styles of armour were once again made and the SO-MEN reappears though it was still not common and many of these were originally MEMPO with a brow plate added later, often of an inferior quality to the original mask. In many of these later masks the eyeholes were reduced in size from the comparatively large early examples making them even more impractical for combat.

The comparative peace of this period was however to the advantage of the mask in general as the armourer had more time to increase his skills. Such craftsmen as MIOCHIN MUNESUKE and particularly MUNEAKIRA working in the late 17th to mid 18th century produced superb examples of repousse work whilst OHARA KATSUNARI 1674-1687 was said to have produced MEMPO of one piece even to the extent of having the HADOME and O-TAYORI-NO-KUGI in one with the rest.

Most masks are made of iron but leather examples are not uncommon being made by pressing leather softened by water into a mould and allowing it to dry. Iron masks for the most part are made with the cheek and chin portion from one piece of metal with the nose, ears and the section under the chin added later. The earliest examples had the nose riveted on as a permanent fixture but later examples were made with detachable noses which could be removed at will to facilitate ventilation or communication.

On the cheeks of most half and full face masks can be found a pair of hooks which were for the attachment of the helmet cord loops whilst under the chin were two pegs (O-TAYORI-NO-KUGI) behind which the cord passed and was prevented from sliding forward. Rings are sometimes found on the cheeks instead of hooks but were somewhat of a disadvantage when the helmet was to be removed as the cord had to be undone completely before being pulled through.

Some masks, particularly those of the YOSHI RYU were fitted with a standing flange at rightangles to the surface of the mask and running from

9. Tsuba Kantei

Identify the make of this tsuba.

Send in your answer by 30th April '83.

Height 7.1 cm
Width 6.7 cm

This tsuba is executed in fine shakudo - nanako. The body of the monkey is in sukashi-bori. Its face is in copper with gold eyes and shakudo pupils.

Entries to:

Dr G. Curtis
The Mill,
Locks Lane,
Wantage,
Oxfordshire, U.K.

8b. Comments on the August '82 Sword Kantei

The maker of this katana is Shodai Tamba-no-kami Yoshimichi

The point of this kantei was to observe how many members would assimilate the data contained in the article upon Mishina boshi. The boshi shown was a clear example of the Mishina type (b) postulated as generic to the School. This apart, what other factors make the blade a Mishina one?

The sori is shallow and there is some funbari, so the blade was probably forged when the Keicho style of little funbari was being replaced by the stronger Kambun funbari. The kitae is finely forged ko-itame. Had it obviously shown some masame mixed in with it and perhaps some O-hada, then the link with the Mishina School would have been clearer. The yakidashi is, however, a beautiful example of Kyo-yakidashi so the blade has to have been made in Kyoto. The hamon is the major clue. It is unique to the Mishina School and to the Tamba-Yoshimichi family. But which generation? The answer here lies in the relatively ill formed sudara-ba. It is the nidai who took the style his father invented to its full blown perfection. So this blade is by the Shodai.

Now that the nakago is revealed it is useful to note a further clue to the generation; the mei has been cut with the 子 character almost running into the 吉 character. This was done by the Shodai, but never by the nidai. Otherwise, had the blade been by the nidai a chrysanthemum mon on the nakago might have been expected.

below the eye to the chin behind which the helmet cord was passed. The flange was called YA-DOME and had the doubly useful purpose of stopping the cord slipping forward and protecting it from sword cuts. Its name would indicate it was also a protection against arrows but the function is not immediately obvious.

One distinct disadvantage of the mask apart from a certain tendance to bring on attacks of claustrophobia was that of excess moisture pooling in the chin and finding its way down the neck and on to ones clothes. This moisture, caused by condensation, perspiration or salivation was prevented from pooling by a hole under the chin called ASA-NAGASHI-NO-ANA or sweat running hole, sometimes fitted with a short tube called euphamistically the TSUYO-OTOSHI-NO-KUBO or dew dropping tube.

The mask was held in position on the head by either one or two tapes which passed through holes in the top of the mask in front of the ears whilst in the case of the SO-MEN a hood was usually stitched to the brow plate.

A lot of attention was paid to the finish given to such a prominent feature of armour. The interior was almost always lacquered, usually red, which was said to impart a fierce glow to the warriors features. Masks of the 16th century were often black lacquered inside and gold is found occasionally with the odd examples being lined with soft leather which must have been comfortable in the short term but rather nasty when wet and even more so when it stiffened after drying.

On the outside the iron mask was most often left with the surface simply russetted which exhibited the armourers skill to the best advantage and the russett surface was sometimes decorated with fine engraved lines in various forms or had additional decorations in the form of the stylised floral motifs popular with the HARUTA school and the more naturalistic branches of blossoms sometimes favoured by the smiths of KAGA and ECHIZEN.

The exterior was also often lacquered usually black but red and russett the latter very popular with the NARA smiths, were common whilst gold and silver examples are found. Fine examples of masks which are lacquered do exist but lacquer was often a way of hiding poor work or imperfect finish and the percentage of inferior quality masks which are lacquered is far greater.

The moustache is probably the one feature of the mask which causes most comment, especially amongst the uninitiated. Why the moustache was used has

often been the cause of speculation, some believe it added to the fierceness of the warriors appearance, others that it disguised the age of the wearer but whatever the reason it is one of the most distinctive features. Usually of horse hair or bear fur it is found short and bristley or long and droopy sometimes with the addition of a beard at the dictates of the wearer. One some masks it is only indicated by lines of gold or silver lacquer which is a practice that detracts least from the appearance.

The throat defence called YODARE-KAKE (Lit. dribble hang) was fitted to nearly all masks after the mid 15th century and was constructed to match the rest of the armour with KO-ZANE, KITSUKE KOZANE or ITAMOMO with from two to seven plates. Early examples tend to taper at the bottom whilst most broaden outwards sometimes being hinged vertically to allow them to lay more closely on the chest. Some were of all mail (KUSARI) and others with iron plates inserted in the mail, these latter most often to go with TATAMI GUSOKU (folding armour).

The types of mask are numerous, influenced by school, locality or of course the personal requirements of the client. In general the earlier masks were more severe in shape with cheeks devoid of wrinkles. MIOCHIN YOSHIMICHI working in the first quarter of the 16th century produced masks without wrinkles, straight narrow noses and a small mouth and having the HADOME on the cheeks. The armourers in the NARA area made a mask which has remained unchanged in style from the 16th century and is found in all qualities. It is not the prettiest in style with its broad rather flat nose and is most commonly russett lacquered but some good examples do exist. The NARA school also favoured teeth in their masks often gilded or silvered although this was not exclusive to this school while other armourers produced them wrinkled and without teeth called UBA-HO (old woman mask). Some masks had beak like noses inspired by the mythical TENGU, others were long and fingerlike. The KAGA masks were often of heavy iron, sometimes in two pieces joined horizontally at a point above the jawline with decorative riveted plates whilst the IWAI school favoured masks with smoother cheeks.

Although some of the finest masks were tailored to fit the wearer most masks were brought "off the peg" the wearer choosing the one that fitted most comfortably. In one book on the Samurai it was stated that "His (The Samurai's) metal face mask accurately copied his features so that he could be recognised in battle" a statement which can only lead one to speculate on the authors knowledge of armour or their opinion of the Japanese features.

8a. Winners and comments upon the August '82 Sword Kantei

a) Winners

Australia:

Paul Kenny

Austria:

Johann M. West

Holland:

Han Bing Siong

Sweden:

Kjell Lindhberg

U.K.:

John L. Burrows (specially noted for correctly attributing the Shodai)

David Leggett

7. Winners and comments upon the August '82 Tsuba Kantei

The following members correctly attributed the tsuba as 'design of Yagyu Renyasai':-

J. Lissenden	-	Jersey, UK
R. Peverett	-	Kent, UK
M. Copp-Taylor	-	Somerset, UK
W. Bunn Jonson	-	Sweden
L. Ericson	-	Sweden

As the piece is unsigned, it may be the work of Iawata Norisuke who copied many of Yagyu Renyasai's designs in the 19th century.

Yagyu Renyasai (also known as Toshikane) was the fourth hereditary master of the Yagyu martial arts school that served the Tokugawa. He lived from 1625-94 and made sukashi tsuba that symbolised the spirit of his martial ryu. Personnaly he was a dedicated warrior, who devoted his life to training in martial arts, managed to stay unmarried, designed sword guards and studied Buddhist literatures.

The Yagyu family still possess a book containing the schools designs, and this is an important object of research. It contains several doubtful contentions such as all guards were tested by pounding to test their strength. Another probably ficticious claim is that Kotetsu, (the famous sword smith), Kano the painter and a Goto artist all combined to produce Yagyu guards.

Yagyu tsuba show designs that epitomise the spirit of the warrior beraking waves and water showing flexibility and strength, boars eyes, crescent moons (a warrior should be able to observe an opponent and grasp his intentions as clearly as a moon reflected in water). Yagyu's personality is seen throughout all his designs, including the subject of the Kantei 'Single Bamboo' which symbolises strength and resilience - Jo.

Although Yagyu tsuba lack the refinement of, for instance KYO-SUKASHI, they certainly give the impression of strength and the spirit of Yagyu Renyasai.

FURTHER INFORMATION: SASANO MASAYUKI; Early Japanese Sword Guards - Sukashi tsuba.
NAUNTON COLLECTION - Joly
CLASSICAL BUDO - Draegar (for matrial ryu information)

2. Characteristics of the hada and hamon of Mishina - Tamba-no-kami Yoshimichi, (Shodai, Nidai and Sandai)

by G. Curtis

In the August 1982 Journal an examination was made of the so-called Mishina boshi. The kantei in the same issue concerned a blade by Tamba-no-kami Yoshimichi. It is useful to conclude the discussion with a brief look at the general hada of the school and the hamon which springs to most collectors minds when they are called upon to give an example of Mishina hamon.

During the 'Age of Contending Provinces' (Sengoku Jidai 1467-1596) the demand for swords was so great that techniques of steel making and blade forging had to be streamlined. At the onset of the Keicho era (1596) the new mobility of sword smiths meant that they were less concerned with making their own steel, but obtained it from specialist tatara furnaces. As a consequence steels in Honchu lost their regional characteristics, e.g. their colours, (but not completely, see article on Yasutsugu). The renaissance of the Shinto period is thus in forging, quenching and shaping. At the outset the shape was copied from the suriage Kamakura and Nambokucho blades which could be found. The kissaki is long and the blade is wide with little taper. By the time the Kambun era (1661-1672) is reached fencing styles dictated less sori, more taper and a centre-of-gravity nearer to the point. Freedom to experiment and growing commerical pressures to produce "something different" prompted some smiths to produce designs never seen before. Tsuda-Sukehiro developed his toranba, Kotetsu produced his juzuba-gonome and in the Mishina School Shodai Yoshimichi hesitantly produced his sudare-ba[1].

Shodai Tamba-no-kami Yoshimichi took his title in 1595 and he worked all his life in Kyoto[2]. He saw the Mishina School[3] take over from the Horikawa Kunihiro School as the foremost in Kyoto. He also saw the School wane as the attractiveness of nearby Osaka grew. His first son took over his title in 1639 and worked with him in Kyoto. His second son, however, moved to Osaka and became the shodai of the Osaka line[2].

The Mishina Go Kaji;

Kinmichi
Rai Kinmichi
Yoshimichi
Masatoshi

all had their own styles of hamon and made variations in their forging. There is, however, a basic hada which is often to be seen on their works of ko-itame with some masame mixed in and with the grain standing out. Their common inheritence in hamon is the Mino tradition and elements of this permiates the experimentation of Iga-no-kami Kinmichi and Etchu Masatoshi. (As Yamanaka says there is always an area of "hard-hamon" to be found somewhere along the hamon[4]). Yoshimichi managed to break the bond and proved that he could produce good O-midare with sunagashi and ara-nie. This is the Soshu style, with its emphasis on creating sparkling displays of nie. Yoshimichi never achieved the quality of nie produced by the great Soshu masters, or for that matter some of his Shinto contemporaries, he did however take the concept of nie-sunagashi and develop it into a new feature i.e. sudareba. Sunagashi is usually found at the edge of a hamon, on the shinogi side. Yoshimichi's hamon has this sometimes near to the monouchi, but Yoshimichi's innovation was to place it inside the hamon. This broke the hamon into striations parallel to the ha. The result in his last years is an unrefined sudaraba. The hamon in the August 1982 Journal kantei is a good example of this degree of development, that in Fig. 1 is another. He and his Kyoto successors used Kyoto yakidashi as the kantei blade demonstrates[5].

Nidai Tamba-no-kami Yoshimichi took the title in 1639 and also the honour of carving a 16 petal kiku on his nakago. His most noteworthy act was to take the legacy of sudaraba and refine it. To quote Ogasawara sensei[2], he made it more 'pictorial' see Fig. 2. He stayed in Kyoto. His brother, on the other hand succumbed to the attractions of Osaka and moved there to become Osaka shodai Tamba-no-kami Yoshimichi, unlike his brother he did not cut 16 petal chryanthemums on his nakago, that became a characteristic of Kyoto successors of the nidai. He did, however, take with him sudaraba and like his Kyoto brother he made pictorially neat sudaraba. Fig. 3 illustrates the developed form. Intreguingly he may have decided to further distinguish his work from his fathers by the way he cut his mei. That shown in Fig. 4 is more agressively cut than that of his father illustrated in the Kantei comments included in this Journal, but compare the kami characters, it will be seen that[2]:

Kyoto

Osaka

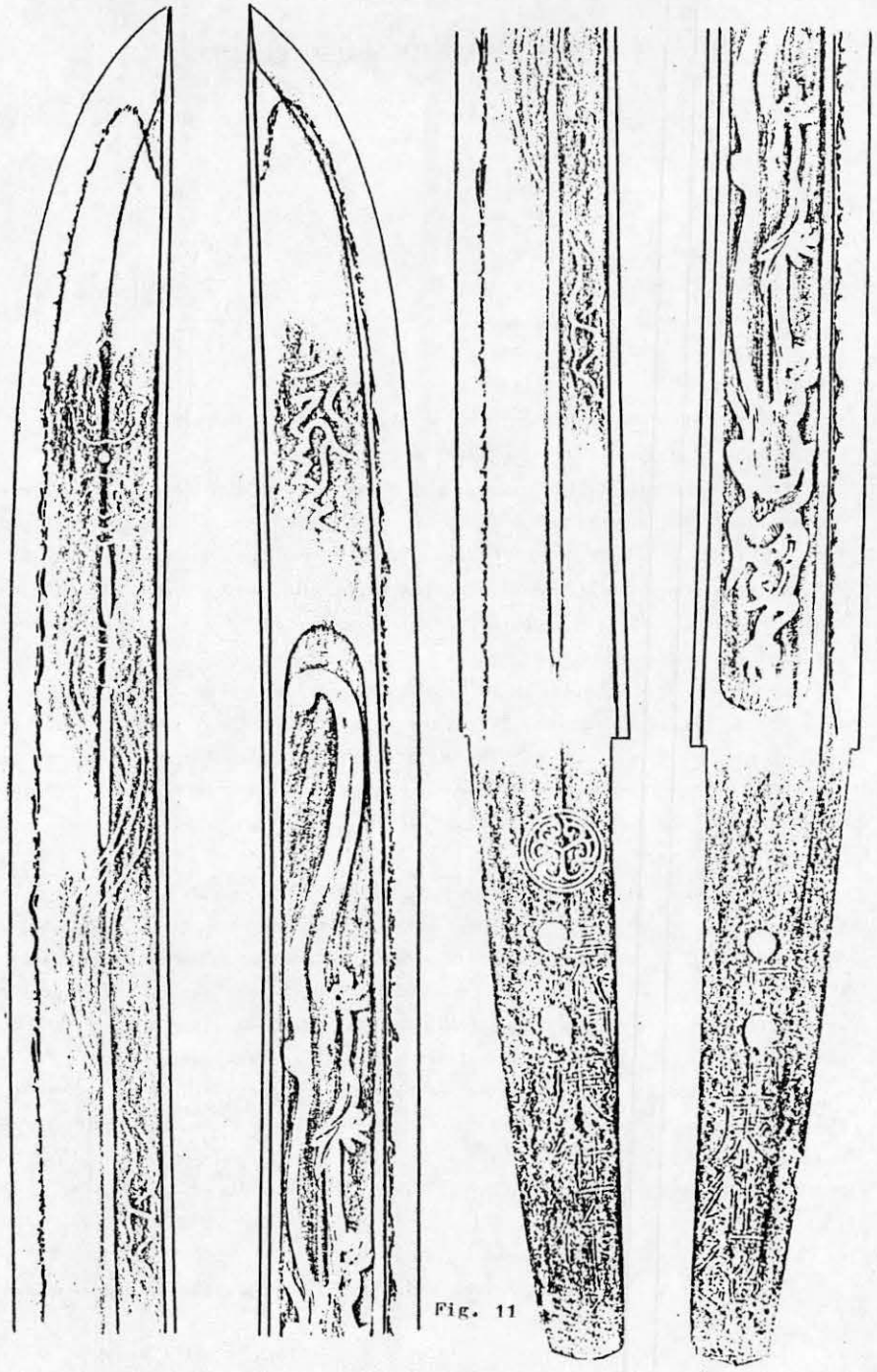
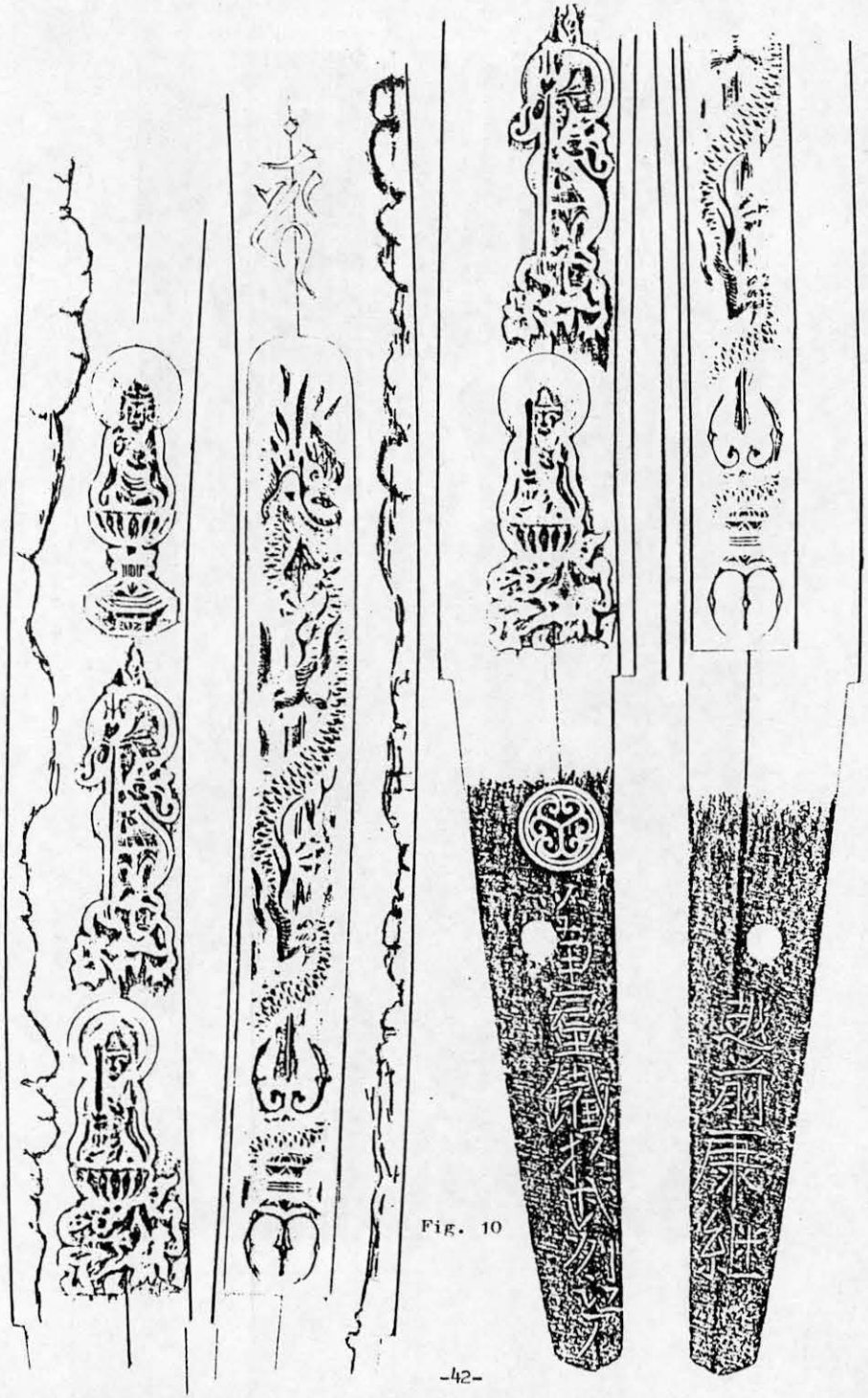


Fig. 11



脇指　康継（二代）

Fig. 10

References

1. "Shinto (1)" Ogasawara Nobuo, Token Bijutsu 8, Spring '81 NBTHK
2. "Shinto (4)" Ogasawara Nobuo, Token Bijutsu 10, Autumn '81 NBTHK
3. Yamanaka's Newsletter - The Mishina School
4. Yamanaka's Newsletter - Mino-tradition
5. Yamanaka's Newsletter - Kyo yakidashi

初代

Fig. 1

貳代

Fig. 2

參代

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

3. The Soten School

by A. Bale

The Soten school is one of the most popular among European collectors, although in Japan it is not considered of any great importance being a "Machibori" or street carving school making tsuba for sale on the open market as opposed to the "Iyebori" or family carvers who were supported by princely families and made items to order.

1st Soten

The First Soten spent his early years in Kyoto, he later moved to Hikone in Omi Province. His early signature was KITAGAWA SHUTEN, this is rare and is found mostly on shakudo tsuba, he later signed GOSHU HIKONE (no JU SOHEISHI NIUDO SOTEN SEI or "Soheishi Niudo Soten an inhabitant of Hikone in Goshu (Omi) made this" usually on iron tsuba, round in shape and either solid (Ita) plate or pierced and carved in the round (Ubuzukashi), this latter style was more popular and tsuba of this type are the ones most commonly encountered today, almost always as copies. The solid plate tsuba are much more likely to be genuine Soten work; he was working in the early 18th century and has left one tsuba signed "made at the age of 72 in 1723".

2nd Soten

The second generation was either a son or pupil of the first and worked in both iron and shakudo, but in a somewhat richer style than his teacher covering more of the plate with inlay which is finer and more detailed; also his signature is carved in slightly smaller characters. He has left works dated 1748 and 1750.

There were many students of both Soten but these seem to have seldom signed with their own names preferring to falsify the Soten signature, their work in any event is of only average quality with one exception, that of NOMURA KANENORI who was the equal of either Soten.

The characteristics of genuine Soten workmanship are: inlay of shakudo, copper, silver and gold of two colours, well carved small figures with silver or copper faces, the mouths being deeply carved making the cheekbones prominent. Separate gold rims are frequently found, particularly on iron tsuba, these will either have a "cat-scratched" or roped edge. Subjects include figures from Chinese and Japanese legend, animals, landscapes and dragons, the battle scenes so often encountered are almost all copies; rarely tsuba in Mino Goto style are seen carved and inlaid with flowers

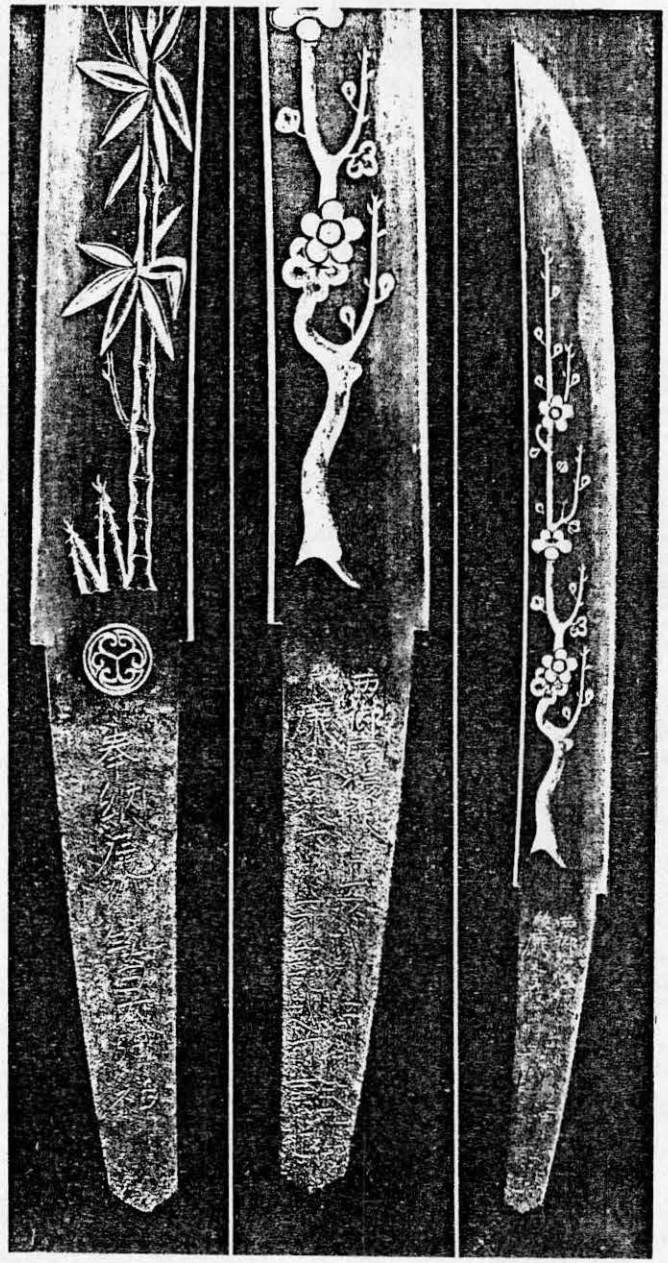
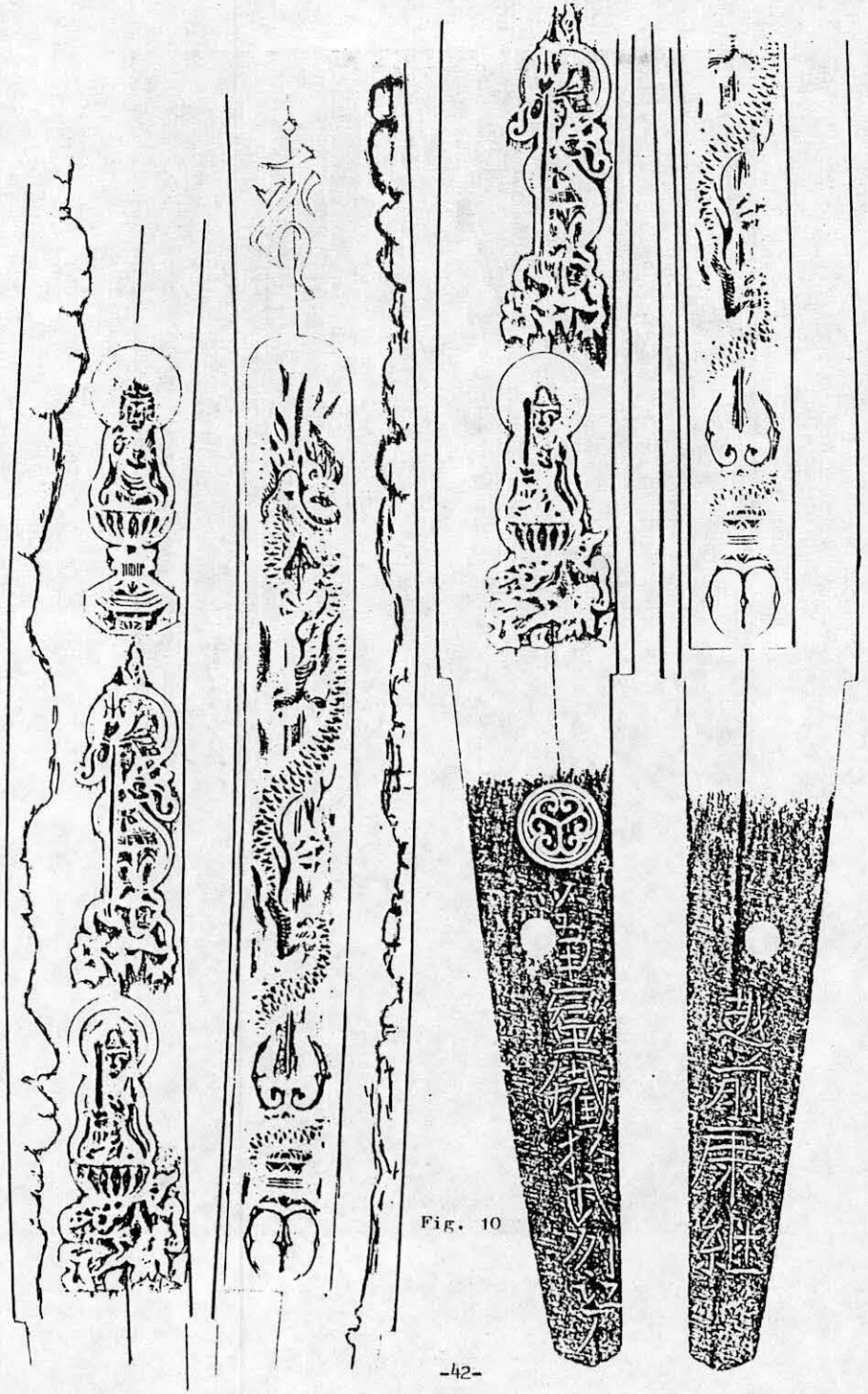


Fig. 9



脇指　康継（二代）

Fig. 10

References

1. "Shinto (1)" Ogasawara Nobuo, Token Bijutsu 8, Spring '81 NBTHK
2. "Shinto (4)" Ogasawara Nobuo, Token Bijutsu 10, Autumn '81 NBTHK
3. Yamanaka's Newsletter - The Mishina School
4. Yamanaka's Newsletter - Mino-tradition
5. Yamanaka's Newsletter - Kyo yakidashi

初代

Fig. 1

貳代

Fig. 2

參代

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

3. The Soten School

by A. Bale

The Soten school is one of the most popular among European collectors, although in Japan it is not considered of any great importance being a "Machibori" or street carving school making tsuba for sale on the open market as opposed to the "Iyebori" or family carvers who were supported by princely families and made items to order.

1st Soten

The First Soten spent his early years in Kyoto, he later moved to Hikone in Omi Province. His early signature was KITAGAWA SHUTEN, this is rare and is found mostly on shakudo tsuba, he later signed GOSHU HIKONE (no JU SOHEISHI NIUDO SOTEN SEI or "Soheishi Niudo Soten an inhabitant of Hikone in Goshu (Omi) made this" usually on iron tsuba, round in shape and either solid (Ita) plate or pierced and carved in the round (Ubuzukashi), this latter style was more popular and tsuba of this type are the ones most commonly encountered today, almost always as copies. The solid plate tsuba are much more likely to be genuine Soten work; he was working in the early 18th century and has left one tsuba signed "made at the age of 72 in 1723".

2nd Soten

The second generation was either a son or pupil of the first and worked in both iron and shakudo, but in a somewhat richer style than his teacher covering more of the plate with inlay which is finer and more detailed; also his signature is carved in slightly smaller characters. He has left works dated 1748 and 1750.

There were many students of both Soten but these seem to have seldom signed with their own names preferring to falsify the Soten signature, their work in any event is of only average quality with one exception, that of NOMURA KANENORI who was the equal of either Soten.

The characteristics of genuine Soten workmanship are: inlay of shakudo, copper, silver and gold of two colours, well carved small figures with silver or copper faces, the mouths being deeply carved making the cheekbones prominent. Separate gold rims are frequently found, particularly on iron tsuba, these will either have a "cat-scratched" or roped edge. Subjects include figures from Chinese and Japanese legend, animals, landscapes and dragons, the battle scenes so often encountered are almost all copies; rarely tsuba in Mino Goto style are seen carved and inlaid with flowers

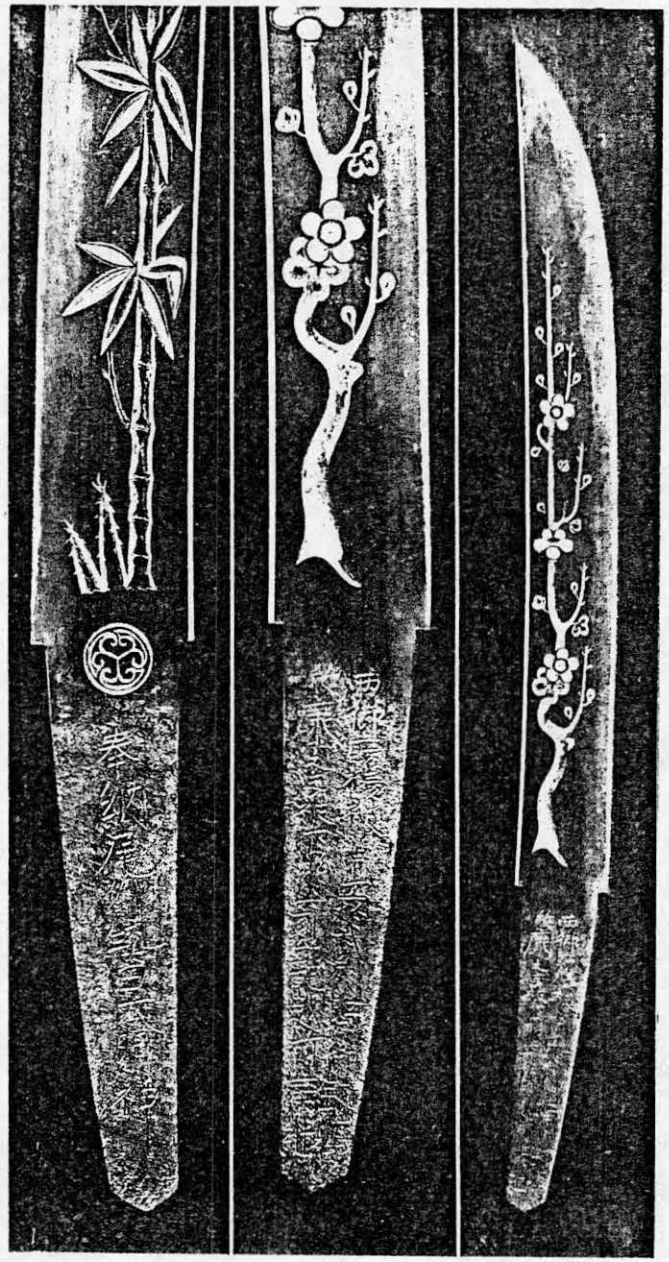


Fig. 9

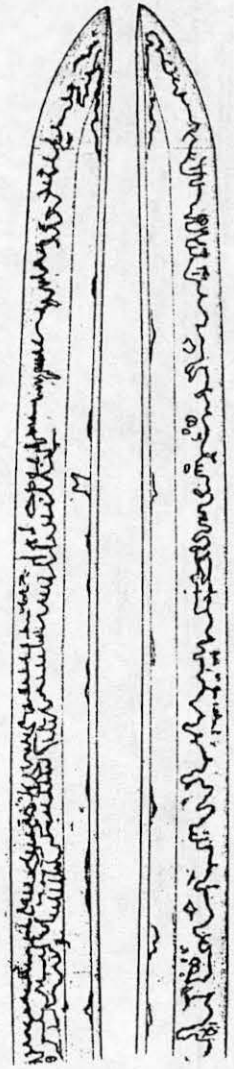


Fig. 7

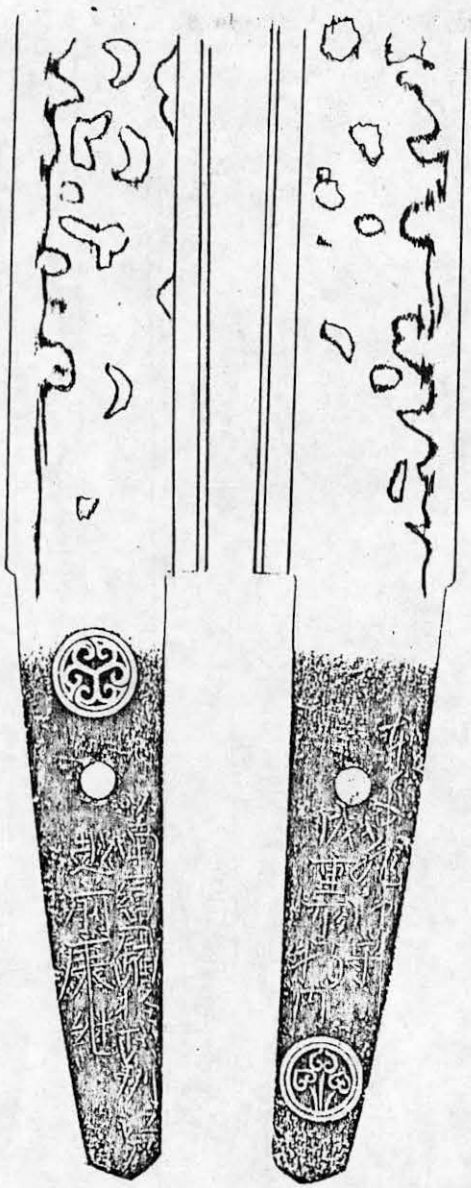


Fig. 8

usually chrysanthemums and insets. Fuchi-kashira are scarce, some being in Mino Goto style.

There is a perculiarity of the signatures of both Soten that should be noted, this is that the "shi" character of "Soheishi" (子) is almost always chiselled thus (), I have only seen one exception to this rule, a tsuba I owned some years ago that Dr. Torigoe identified as 1st Soten, although the "shi" was cut in the conventional manner.

The generic name for these tsuba is "Hikonebori" from the name of the town where they originated, about 95% are copies although signed with full Soten signature they can be of good or even fine quality but are frequently poorly made and carved with the inlay of silver or gold plated copper rather than the pure metal used in the genuine pieces. I use the word 'copy' rather than 'fake' as I feel there was no real intent to deceive because neither Soten nor their many students could make enough tsuba to meet the public demand for this style as it became very popular throughout Japan.

Fine quality copies were made by the Tetsugendo school of Kyoto, notably Shoraku, with very good inlay and carving, these are technically more proficient than real Soten work but seem over-refined and lack the latter's somewhat rustic strength. The Tetsugendo copies were not as far as I know signed with the Soten signature, some very fine tsuba are signed simply "Tetsugendo" sometimes with a kakihan.

The Hiragiya school of Kyoto made copies of reasonable quality, these are almost always unsigned. The lowest quality were made by the Aizu Shoami school (A branch of the Shoami school in Aizu Province) who would copy any style of tsuba that was popular at any time; some workers of this school moved in the Meiji period (post 1868) to Yokohama and made tsuba for sale on the docks to Europeans, they were working as late as the 1920's.

Illustrations

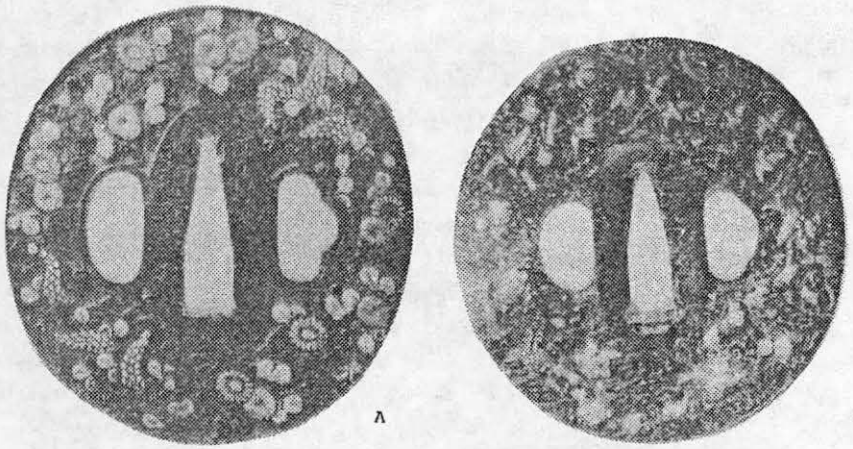
A) SHAKUDO: GOSHU HIKONE no JU SOHEISHI
SOTEN SEI

B) SHAKUDO: SOHEISHI NIUDO SOTEN GYONEN
(aged 72)
Reverse = GOSHU HIKONE no JU KYOHO 8
(1723)

C) SHAKUDO: GOSHU HIKONE no JU-NIN NIUDO SOTEN SEI

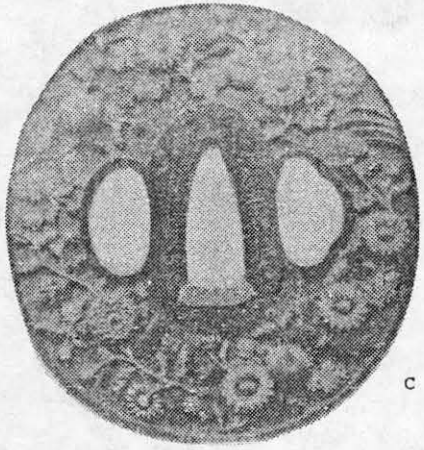
D) IRON SOHEISHI KITAGAWA NIUDO SOTEN SEI
Reverse = GOSHU HIKONE no JU KANEN 3
(1750)

E) SHAKUDO: SOHEISHI KITAGAWA NIUDO SOTEN SEI
Reverse = GOSHU HIKONE NAKAYABU no JU ENKYO
(1748)

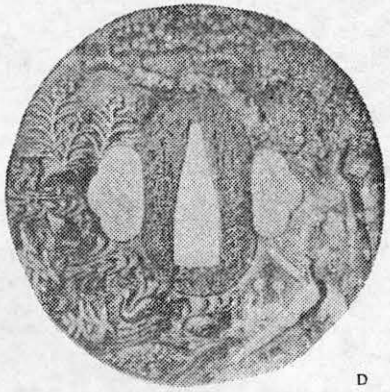


A

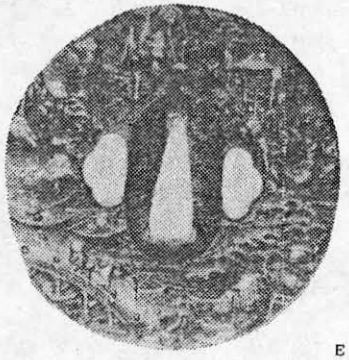
B



C



D



E

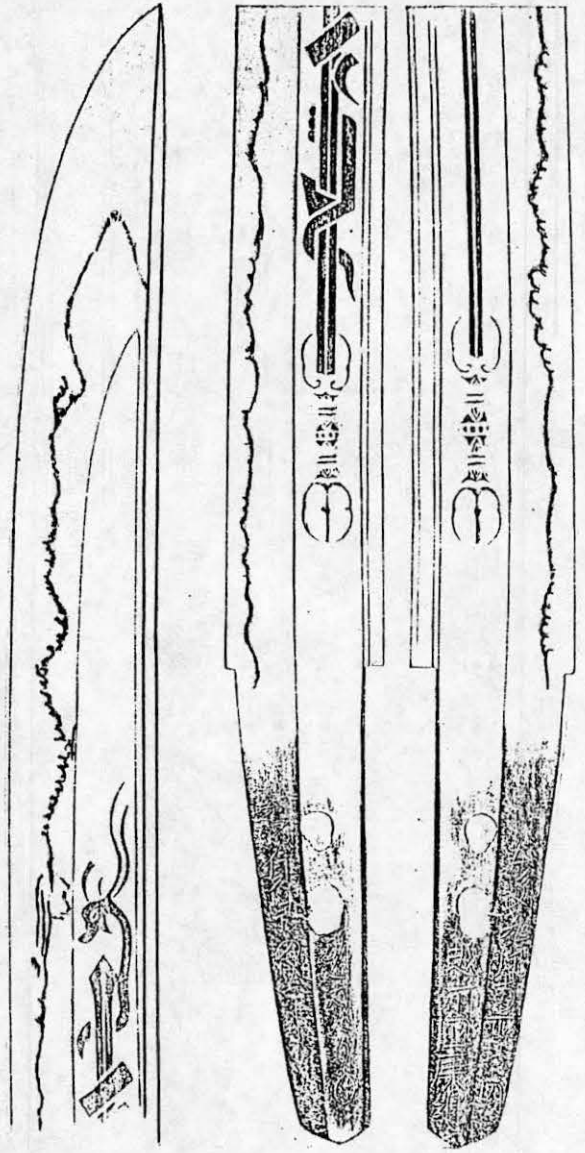


Fig. 6

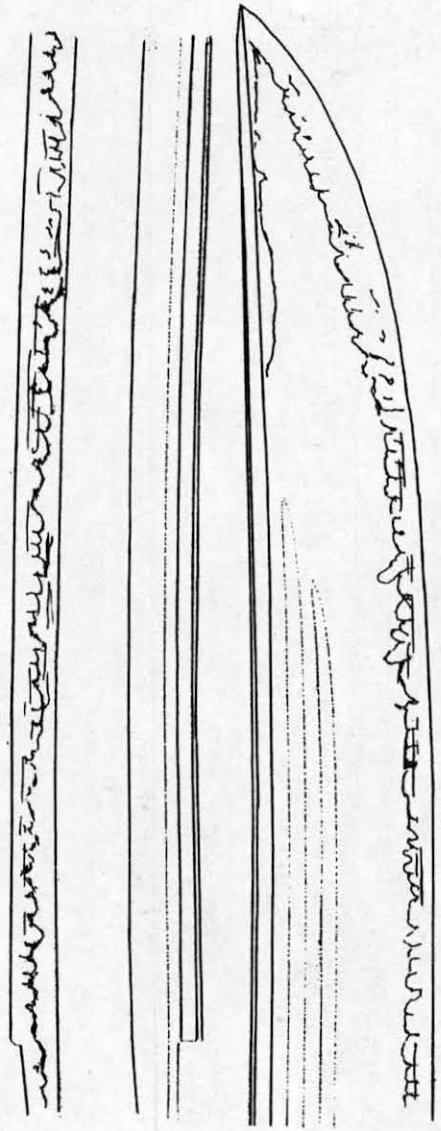


Fig. 5

Fig. 4

4. Japanese Castles

by P. Cottis

The history of fortification in Japan, as in almost every other country, probably goes back almost as far as that of the fence. Once man had hit on the idea of a permanent structure to keep wild beasts out or tame beasts in, it is a fairly obvious step to produce a more solid version to exclude men. According to Schmorleitz, the earliest reference is that in the Kojiki, to "rice castles", dating back to about 25 B.C. Typically, they were easily burnt.

The oldest surviving fortification known to me is the Tago-jo in Mutsu, which was one of the forts built in the eight or ninth century as part of the campaigns against the Emishi. It has earthen banks with (I would guess) some sort of stockade on top of them.

There are occasionally references to forts in the history of the Heike wars, and of course more in the history of Kusonoki Masashige, whose greatest exploits were his defences of his complex of little forts at Kawachi in 1331 and of Chihaya in 1332. At about the same period the temples of the Hokkei sect in Kyoto were defended by moats and earthen embankments (presumably stockaded).

The Masashige forts and the defended Hokkei temples are examples of the two earliest types of Japanese castle - the yama-jiro (mountain castle) and the hira-jiro (plain castle). In the first case, the position was selected for its strength and was generally of no great size. Masashige's fort at Kawachi "looked as though it had been built in a hurry. (It had) no proper moat; and the fortifications, which were less than two hundred yards in circumference and contained only about two dozen hastily constructed towers, were surrounded by a single wooden wall". (Morris, quoting an unstated original[5]). The Hokkei temples, on the other hand, were in downtown Kyoto, and were as big as their religious and political functions required. Thus neither their site nor their plan was determined by military considerations, and the builders of the fortifications had to do the best they could with a predetermined site.

Forts of these kinds were very common in the Time of War, but so far as I know none of them survive in their original state (though the Nijo-jo is an example where the plan of the fortifications is determined by the site), and it is unlikely that many of them were very spectacular.

The Japanese castle as we like to think of it was invented by Oda Nobunaga, perhaps with advice from his Jesuit friends, when he built Aizuchi castle in 1576. Aizuchi seems to have been the first Japanese castle which functioned as a power centre and status symbol as well as a piece of military mechanics, and it had all the characteristics of the classic castles which followed it - its site on a small hill in the middle of a plain; its complex plan; its very magnificent central keep; its function as a base; its rapid construction; and its equally rapid end. (It was built in 3½ years, and it was burnt down after some three years of full glory).

After Aizuchi, everybody who was anybody built that sort of castle. Of the fifty or so castles whose dates I know, thirty-six were built between 1580 and 1610. Every daimyo seems to have had one, and some had several.

As might be expected, the two finest castles were built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, at Osaka and Fushimi, alias Momayama. As might also be expected, Tokugawa Ieyasu did not allow either of them to survive in its original form. At Osaka he left the walls but destroyed all the buildings and replaced them by others on an entirely new plan. Fushimi he pulled down and distributed among the temples of Kyoto (all of which seem to have a bit of Fushimi and a garden wrongly attributed to Kobori Enshu). As a result, many of the residential and ceremonial buildings of Fushimi survive and constitute one of the greatest glories of Japanese secular art - most of the surviving Kano school paintings, for instance, seem to have come from Fushimi. Most of the Japanese castles now extant seem to have originally been built after Sekigahara and before about 1650. Tokugawa Ieyasu not only encouraged his daimyo to build themselves magnificent castles (though only one each) but also expected them to contribute to the construction of equally magnificent castles for himself and for junior members of the Tokugawa family. In both cases he probably wanted the daimyo to spend too much money and so reduce their power to make trouble, and it seems he often succeeded.

By the eighteenth century, castle building had virtually ceased, and those which were accidentally destroyed were rarely rebuilt. However, the worst periods for castles were around the time of the Meiji restoration, when some were destroyed in the various troubles and more were subsequently pulled down as irrelevant to the modern Japan, and between 1940 and 1945.

The period since 1950 has been the second great era of castle building in Japan. Mostly this has taken the form of rebuilding old keeps which had

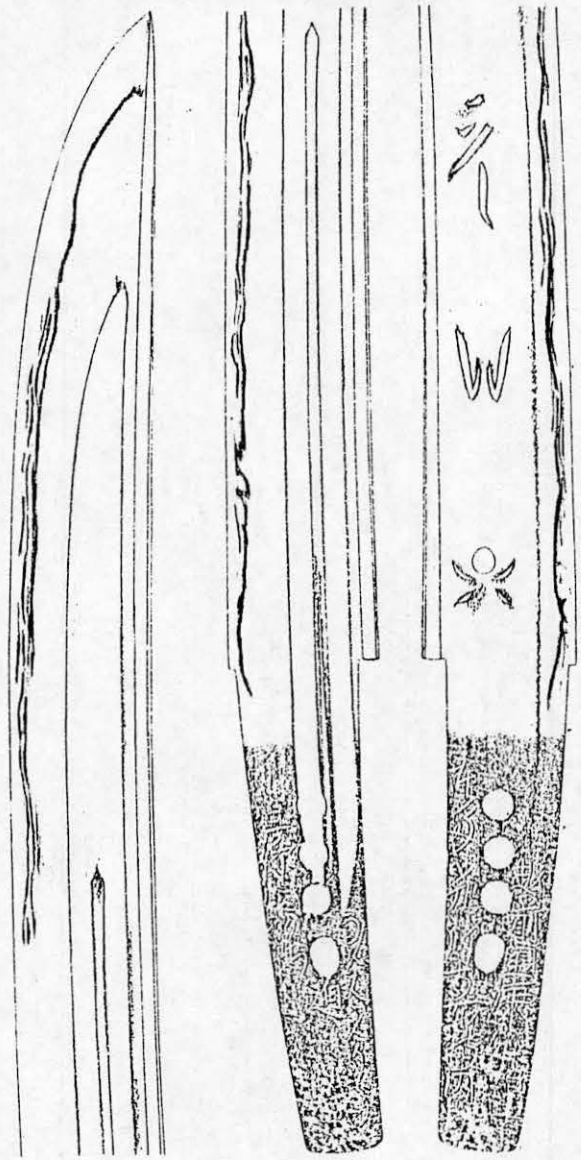


Fig. 3

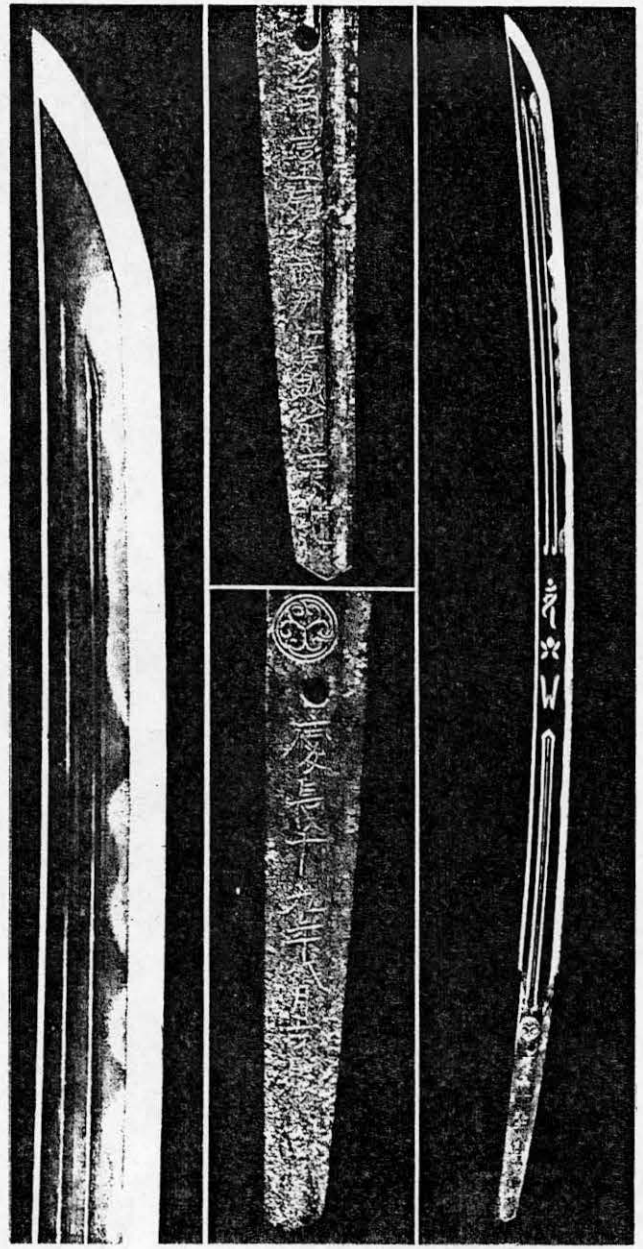


Fig. 2

been destroyed between 1650 and 1945, but some castles which never had keeps when built have recently been equipped with them.

II Construction

There are six main elements in the construction of a Japanese castle - the walls; the gates; the towers; the halls; the keep; and the plan. One element which is absent is the load-bearing stone wall and vault which are the essential features of the European castle. Japanese architecture is essentially timber architecture, sometimes covered with unbaked clay, and so is very vulnerable to fire. It would have been even more vulnerable to heavy missile weapons if the Japanese had ever developed any, but for reasons which it is very difficult to explain rationally, they never did. The absence of mediaeval-type stone-throwing machines like catapults or trebuchets can be attributed (not very convincingly) to lack of inspiration, but the failure to bring cannon into serious operation is hard to understand except that on the assumption that deep down they didn't really want to. Cannon were used in the sieges of Osaka castle and Shimabara, but those cannon were mostly Western ones, taken from foreign ships (and so not really of siege calibre), and were not very successful. Japanese techniques of bronze-casting were not suitable for cannon, but there are some Japanese cannon in existence and I cannot believe that the Japanese could not have learnt how to cast cannon if they had wanted to.

1. The Walls

These are the strongest part of a Japanese castle. They consist of massive stone-faced embankments up to 80 feet high topped with walls of clay or wood or both, fitted with loopholes for guns or bows, and five or six feet high. The technique probably originated in the mediaeval yama-jiro, where all that was required was to scarp the sides of the hill and put a stockade on top. When castles began to be built on plains, artificial mountain sides were created. Great care was taken with these embankments. Their slope was carefully adjusted to conform to the weight they would have to carry - the parts under a wall are much steeper than those under a tower (see Fig. 1) and in the finest examples, such as Edo castle, the stones are very carefully cut. Kumamoto, however, is a good deal rougher. The stones were never cut square, but fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle, and sometimes of enormous size. One at Osaka is 18 ft. by 34 ft. There is no structural point in this, and it was probably done to emphasize the power and importance of the lord of the castle and the loyalty of whoever provided the stone.

The walls proper above the embankments were relatively feeble, being not much more than bullet-proof. Clay walls had the advantage that they wouldn't burn, but were rather easier to knock over. To prevent this they were sometimes fitted with wooden "flying buttresses".

Walls were normally moated where geography permitted, both for the obvious reason that it is not easy to swim in armour and to prevent mining. For example, the sea is used at Takamatsu, the river at Himeiji and both at Osaka.

2. The Gates

The gates are an important part of any castle; they are an especially imposing part of a Japanese castle, for three reasons:

a) Gates are an important part of any Japanese ceremonial architecture, e.g. the great temples of Nara.

b) Since there is no point in opening a gate fifty feet above the ground or opening directly onto a moat, any gate in the outer circuit had to involve a break in the great stone embankments and a bridge across the moat.

c) Since it was not really sporting for a samurai to hide behind stone walls if there was any sense in coming out and fighting, the gates had to be wide enough for this to be practicable. This was made easier by the timber construction; a twenty-foot stone arch has to be at least twenty feet high, whereas a twenty-foot timber beam is no problem, (see Fig. 1).

There were small inconspicuous gates in castles, especially in the internal circuits, but the classic Japanese gates were much more splendid. The simplest was the "kara-mon", or Korean gate, which was essentially a gap in the wall with a roof over it, (see Fig. 1) but the more typical were the "watariyagura" and the "masugata-mon". The watariyagura was a two-storied tower, the bottom floor of which was a gate, while the top floor was a fighting gallery with loopholes, stone-throwing windows, and removable floorboards for dropping things on assailants. At least in one case at Kumamoto, the watariyagura was set at right angles to the line of the wall in a re-entrant, thus making it more difficult to take in a rush and making it less obvious that it was being opened for a sally. The next stage from this type was the "masugata-mon" (a masu being a rectangular rice-measure), in which the opening was filled by a second gate. The merits of this were that an enemy breaking through the first gate would find himself in a square

References

1. "Yamanaka's Newsletter - The Echizen Yasutsugu School"
2. "Token Bijutsu" (English Edition) Autumn 1982, p.10 N.B.TH.K.
3. "Yamanaka's Newsletter - The Tokugawa Jiki".
4. "Nihon-to Zenshu" Vol. 4 p.65.
5. "Tanto" by Suzuki.
6. "Nippon-to no Horimono" by Sato.
7. "Nippon toko Jiten Shinto-hen" p.288-296 by Fujishiro.
8. "The Arts of the Japanese Sword" by R. Robinson.
9. "Japanese swords" Nobuo Ogasawasa.

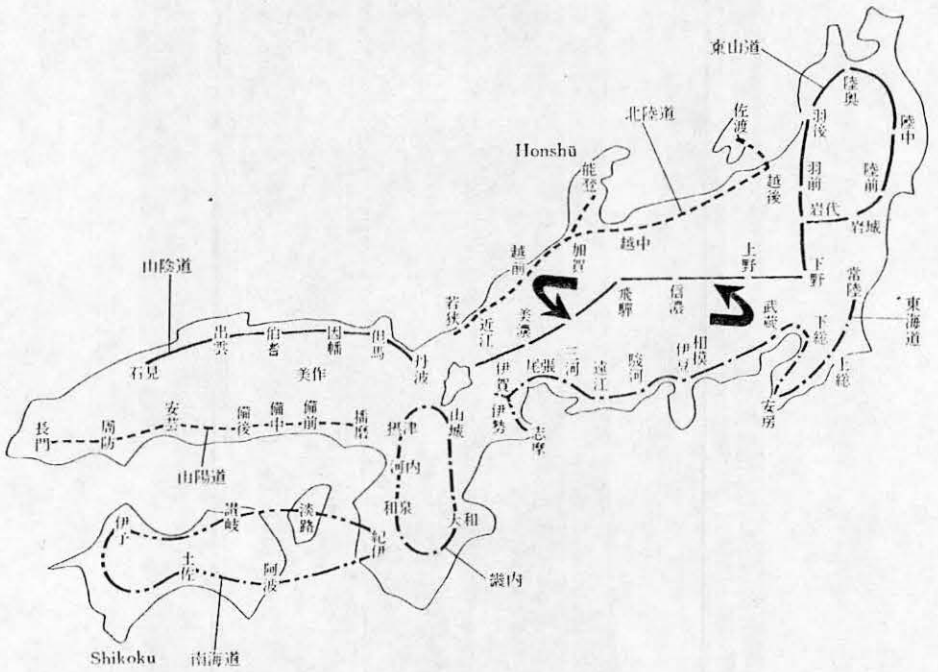


Fig. 1

The second generation certainly did reproduce the quality of the Shodai and to a lesser extent so did the third and fourth. The second generation was unambiguously a fine carver of horimono[6], as the tanto of Fig. 10 clearly illustrates. But the third and fourth called in the Kinai artists once again.

Fig. 11 illustrates a tanto in an English collection which bears horimono attributed to the Kinai by Terumine Sensei. The rain dragon on the ura side is deeply set in the shinogi-ji of a blade which is in kata-kiriha-zukuri to accommodate both it and the bonji character above it. The omote side is in normal shinogi-ji and bears a hata banner centred on the ji. This blade is in fine condition and is a rare example of a dual work by the third and fourth generations. It is currently rated Kicho Tokubetsu by the NBTHK and was the subject of the September 1982 lecture to the Society. It illustrates a number of the characteristics of the School: The hada is mokume. The hada in the shinogi ji is difficult to specify as the polisher has interestingly given it a 'matt' finish to enhance the horimono. It is thus not possible to look for masame hada which is a characteristic of Edo blades. As to the colour of the steel the author's lack of experience does not permit comment. (Assessing colour reliably seems to be a skill only achieved by long exposure to many definitive blades in good polish). The hamon is a subtle suguha with the school's characteristic tiny ashi, (cf. the Sadamune copy of Fig. 6). The nakago is ubu and well cut. The aoi mon is in the form used by the third generation, (there are subtle variations between the way the various generations cut the mon, but as yet the author has not been able to use these alone as means to define any given generation). The inscription on the omote reads; third generation Yasutsugu made this. That on the ura reads; fourth generation Yasutsugu signed this. This latter statement is very intreguing. A similar statement appears on a tanto made with the second generation and depicted in Fujishiro Shinto-Hen p.294. Conveniently Fujishiro shows on the facing page (295) the variations[4] in the signatures of the various generations, so it is possible in the case of the p.294 blade to see that 'signed by' might mean that the fourth signed both his and the seconds' names (cf. the 糸 elements). In the case of the third and fourth generations blade the signature for the third actually looks like it was cut by the third (cf. the 糸 and 糸 ; the 康 and 康). So what does 金吾之 imply? Was playing with the mei all that the fourth generation contributed to the production of these tanto? Yet another question to put with the principle one; what was it that the shodai did to ingratiate himself with Ieyasu?

"killing-ground" with defended walls on three sides and a formidable gate to break through, and that troops could be assembled for a sally in the area between the two gates with no risk that the besiegers could come in through the gate at which the defenders had gone out, (see Fig. 1 and the plan of Fig. 2). The gates themselves were often covered with iron or copper, and drawbridges exist (I believe) but are certainly rare. So far as I know, portcullises or drop-down gates are never found. Some of the internal gates in some castles, to judge from the Nijo-jo and the relics of Fushimi, were primarily decorative, with splendid carving but not much attempt at defence.

3. Towers

Beside gate towers, a Japanese castle would normally have watch-towers at strategic corners and "tamon" towers along the walls, (see the plan of Fig. 2). These, like the gates and the keep, would be heavily built of wood, usually with a clay covering, and large and impressive tiled roofs, (see Fig. 1). The final refinement was to cover the tower with layer upon layer of clay to make the place fireproof - nigurome-zukuri (lacquer-walling); and at Himieji this was even applied to the projecting eaves. Watch-towers were generally three or five stories high (four was unlucky, because the words for "four" and "death" sound alike); tamon towers, which were really buildings whose outer wall was part of the curtain wall, rarely more than two high. Watch-towers were used not only as lookouts but also to give more than one fighting level at corners. I cannot recall ever seeing a tower pushed forward from the line of the wall to give flanking fire along the face of the wall but I might be wrong. Some castles used an expanded watch-tower in place of a separate keep, as in the West. Tamon towers were first used as storehouses, but were later also used as kitchens and even to live in. The outer wall of the West Bailey at Himeiji, which is one long tamon tower, formed the apartments of the famous Sen-no-hime, (who was a great beauty) Ieyasu's granddaughter, and the daughter-in-law of Ikeda Terumasa, the man who was responsible for Heimeiji as we know it.

Towers were often fitted not only with gun- and arrow-slits, but also with "stone-throwing windows", which are the Japanese equivalent of machicolation. I have never seen any part of a Japanese castle equipped to carry what I would call a cannon. There are references to loopholes being equipped with "cannon", but I think these must be what I call wall-guns - heavy matchlock muskets.

In the eighteenth century a few towers were built for less warlike purposes, like the moon-viewing tower at Maizuru and the Fuji-viewing tower at Edo.

4. Halls

Despite Sen-no-Hime, the Japanese did not generally regard the fortified parts of castles as places to live in, and one of the middle baileys would normally contain a range of residential buildings of an appropriate spendour. The only ones which are known to me to survive are those in the Nijo-jo in Kyoto, but these are the most magnificent of all Japanese secular buildings. (It is possible, though not certain, that they originally came from Fushimi). The main buildings in the Nijo-jo are five square single-storied halls, set in a diagonal line and linked at the corners with the huge swooping roofs. The more eminent the visitor, the further into the buildings he got; the fifth hall was reserved for the Shogun and his household. All of them were decorated by eminent painters of the Kano school, except the unlit rooms in the centre of each block which were for guards and such. Other castles no doubt had similar buildings, though of course of lower quality.

5. Keeps

The keep is the heart of the castle and the most impressive-looking part of it. It is constructed like the rest of the castle - solid, stone-faced plinth, massive timber framing, and wooden walls, sometimes but not always covered with clay. It was normally rectangular in plan, with the long side about half as long again as the short, and sometimes formed part of a complex with one or two subsidiary and interlinked keeps. The main keep generally has five stories, reducing in size and furiously gabled, and the roof of the topmost story will be crowned with a dolphin at each end of the ridge. The dolphins are normally of the same blue clay as the rest of the tiles, though the ones at Nagoya are famous for being gilded.

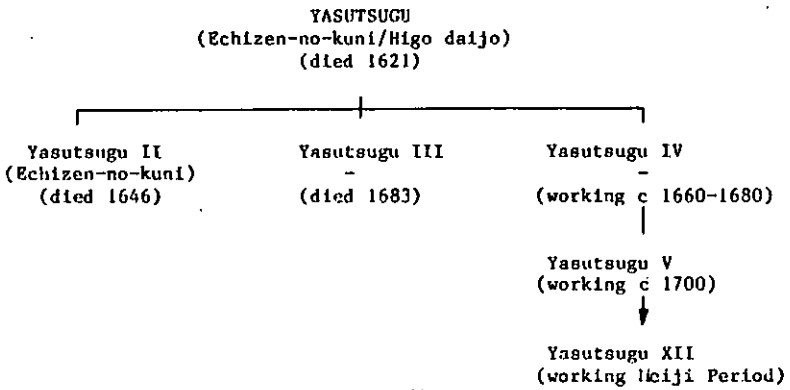
Originally, the keep was a sort of multi-storied hall with a watchtower on top, not meant for serious fighting. Aizuchi had seven stories, all with many windows, splendid paintings, and the top floor gilt inside and out. Later keeps were more designed for defence, though the top storey, which the lord would occupy if the castle were attacked, generally had bigger windows and more elaborate fittings.

One of the problems of building structures of this height and volume in Japan was to stop them falling down in earthquakes. The best way to do this

Shodai YASUTSUGA'S hamon is varied, but his yakiba is mostly nie sprinkled upon nioi. He produced; O-notare, O-midare hiro-suguha, suguha and gonome. The hamon edge is punctuated with hakikake and nijuba with uchinoke as shown in Fig. 4, this is his Yamoto den. Sometimes he experimented with hitatsura, but somehow failed to get the displays of nie found upon early soshu blades. His tanto hamon is often better made than those on katama and also have a greater density of ashi. Echizen work is generally characterised by notare mixed with gonome which becomes disorderly in places. Put this together with a dark, unclear nioiguchi, which is unique to shodai YASUTSUGU, and you have the basic characteristic of his hamon. Fig. 5 shows this style of Mino-den inspired hamon. Fig. 6 shows it again in one of his SADAMUNE copies. Figs. 7 and 8 illustrate the flamboyance of his soshu-hitatsura style. This blade is interesting because on its tang it has the Aoe mon of the Tokugawa and also written reference to his Honda patron, Narishige. The inscription reads Namba tetsu, O motte shu Edo ni oite Echizen YASUTSUGU (made in Edo from foreign steel). Futatsu-do tabitabi ni oyobu masse-no-ken kore nori, Honda Hida-no-kami shoji-uchi. In many other cases the Honda connection is acknowledged by also placing the Honda mon near to the tip of the nakago, as shown in Fig. 8.

Another point of controversy in YASUTSUGU's blades is the quite common presence of very well cut horimono. The Sanjo and Sadamune copies are typical as is that on the tanto shown in Fig. 9 which is surely his most memorable work. This was made in 1606 and quenched in the presence of Iyeyasu being intended for presentation to the Atsuta Grand Shrine[9]. But did he carve these horimono himself or was it cut by a Kinai artist as Yamamaka asserts was often the case[1].

YASUTSUGU died in 1621 and the generations which followed him steadfastly tried to reproduce his characteristics:



He most probably had access to some of the finest intact old blades, so it would be surprising if he was not aware of the characteristics of the koto genii. He was apparently able to take the burnt 'Ichigo Hitofuri' by Awataguchi Yoshimitsu and give it back a 'great deal' of its former glory. How much is difficult to define. Another Osaka castle fire blade he requenched is the dubious Meibutsu Ebina Ko-Kaji by Sanjo Munechika which is currently preserved in the Tokugawa Reimeikai Foundation[2]. It would be interesting to examine this and hear expert opinion upon how many of Sanjo's characteristics in hamon and hada were re-established.

The second of YASUTSUGU'S attributes was copying fine old blades, particularly by Sadamune. Fig. 2 shows his copy of the finely carved, katakiriha-zukuri katana by Sadamune. Outwardly it looks fine, but what about the detail? I have not found expert opinion on this blade, but his copy of the Sanjo Munechika tanto referred to earlier is apparently blatantly superficial[2], see Fig. 3. Yasutsugu's coy statement on the nakago "made quite close in quality to Sanjo ko-kaji's work", is made all the more intriguing. Was he making no serious attempt to reproduce the detail of the Sanjo characteristics in the knowledge that his masters wouldn't notice and formality prevented anyone contradicting their apparent contentment?.

In his lifetime, (he died in 1621) Shodai YASUTSUGU tempered his Mino-den training with experiments in Soshu-den and Yamato-den. The shape of his early blades followed koto style, but later on those blades which were not copies took on the growing shinto tradition of; shallow sori, thick kasane and hiraniku (even swelling). In many cases the blade is in shinogi-zukuri form, but he also produced some in moro-ha (double edged) and katakiriha-zukuri where the shinogi is close to the cutting edge on one side of the blade, e.g. Figs 1 and 2. (Katakiriha-zukuri was temporarily popular in the Kamakura-Nambokucho periods and was readopted in Momoyuma times). The hada which he produced is mokume with masame mixed in, often displaying ji-nie and chikei. Like most Edo blades the hada in the shinogi-ji is masame. The hada is clear and "whiteish in colour, but mixed with dark hue[2]". This is Echizen-gane or Hokkuku-gane, (steel produced in the North). It is not clear from the sources available to me how this relates to his use of Namban-tetsu which he acknowledged on the nakago of many of his swords. This colouring is one of the ways of identifying Yasutsugu blades.

was to put one or two massive central timber columns up the centre of the building, but while this improved the building's chances of survival in earthquakes it made it even more vulnerable to fire. External fire-arrows might be dealt with by careful nigurome-zukuri, but carelessly placed braziers or carefully placed bombs between them did for most Japanese keeps.

6. Plan

It may seem a little odd to include the plan of a castle among its physical elements, but the plan of a castle (its nawabari) was a matter to which its builders devoted great attention. Castles were classified according to their location, into mountain castles (yama-jiro); plain castles (hira-jiro; and (surprise!) mountain-plain castles (hirayama-jiro), in which the inner fortifications were on a hillock, while the outer walls spread out into the surrounding plain. This last was the most common kind for a daimyo's principal castle, since it combined the defensibility of the mountain with the social advantages of the plain. A daimyo's castle was the administrative centre of his territory and so needed to be complemented by a town occupied by the lower orders - the craftsmen who served the lord and his retainers and the merchants who might provide cash and exotic luxuries like firearms. Such people were hard to attract to the top of the mountain.

In any case, wherever the castle was, a great deal of ingenuity was devoted to seeing that the attacker had to surmount as many obstacles as possible. At Himeiji (which is the only castle known to me which retains its walls round the outer baileys), the shortest possible route to the main keep leads through four gates, and the official route through seven, most of the route under fire from two or even three sides. The route is also full of twists and doubles, so that an attacker who was not perfectly briefed was very likely to find himself charging towards a dead end or out of the castle (Fig. 2 shows a plan of Osaka Castle and Fig. 3 a plan of Himeji.)

This care over plan extended beyond the walls of the castle to the surrounding town. In an ordinary castle town, the castle would be surrounded by the mansions of the major samurai, with the merchants farther away and lower down, and the minor samurai on the very edge of town to act as a sort of human wall. In Edo, outside daimyo and Tokugawa clansmen were carefully arranged so that the outside daimyo neither formed a solid block nor got too near to the shogunal castle. In all castle towns (including Edo) streets were short, irregularly arranged, and narrow, and never led

directly to the castle. Happily for the traffic planners of modern Tokyo, the earthquake and fire of 1923 permitted the planners to replan the town on a grid system.

The reasons for the town plan are obvious and sensible, but it seems to me that castle planning was more elaborate than it needed to be. The reason usually given by Japanese authors is that the weakness of the walls made it necessary to substitute cunning for strength, but a study of Japanese sieges suggests that Japanese methods of defence were quite strong enough for Japanese methods of attack, and I would suggest that the real reason for the elaboration, probably unconscious, was that the builders wanted to show that they could afford it. A castle was, after all, a status symbol, and one does not apply cost-effectiveness tests to status symbols; one gets the finest one can bring oneself to buy.

Sieges

The surprising thing about Japanese sieges is how few of them were successful. The failure of the Bakufu troops against Kusonoki Masashige may be attributed to the loss of drive which seems so often to have afflicted samurai fighting for the Establishment, but very few castles fell in the Time of War, when a siege was often the opening of a campaign. What would happen was that Daimyo A would march against neighbouring Daimyo B. Soon after crossing the border Daimyo A would find that his route went past Hirajima Castle, held for B. If A were Hideyoshi, he would leave a few troops to mask the castle and press on, but lesser generals would try and fail to take the castle by storm and would then sit down to try and starve it out. The constable of the castle would send a message to B calling for help; B would march out to relieve the castle; and the battle would happen somewhere nearby. What rarely happened was that the castle was captured by anything but starvation, unless Hideyosi was besieging it. He used mining to take Kameyama; he starved out the Hojo clan in Odawara, taking a year at the job and running the whole thing like a super-picnic; but his most brilliant coup was a Takamatsu, where he built an embankment round the low-lying castle, dammed the nearby river, and waited for the rainy season.

The siege of Osaka Castle by Ieyasu, on the other hand, as a siege was a failure, redeemed only by duplicity. The first siege was making no progress until it was ended by a peace treaty which Ieyasu rapidly and unscrupulously broke; and the so-called second siege was effectively a pitched battle.

6. The Yasutsugu's

by G. Curtis

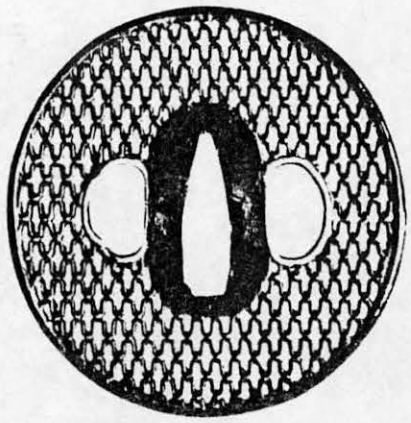
"Though YASUTSUGU may have been a very able politician by becoming Ieyasu's pet, his ability to forge swords falls far short of the abilities of such smiths as KOTETSU, HANKEI or KUNIHIRO." This is Albert Yamanaka's assessment[1] of the Shinto renaissance smith Shodai Echizen YASUTSUGU. It is a fascinating exercise to try to explain how it was that a Mino-den trained smith living in Echizen could be so highly regarded by the Shogun if he had only mediocre talent. Nevertheless Yamanaka is not alone in this judgement, Fujishiro[7] also lists him as 上々作 where his contemporaries KOTETSU, HANKEI and KUNIHIRO are all rated, 最上作. Robinson[8] lists the fifteen top shinto smiths and Shodai YASUTSUGU still does not feature. So what are the characteristics of the Shodai and his descendents?.

Shodai YASUTSUGU was born towards the end of the Momoyama Era in OMI province but swordsmithing eventually declined there and he moved to the village of Shimosaka (下坂) in Echizen province (越前) see Fig. 1. His father, Yamato Hironaga came from MINO, so it is to be expected that YASUTSUGU'S basic training was in Mino den. Mino methods of forging and quenching were commonly adopted in the main island and most shinto Echizen smiths adhered to Mino den[1].

At this time Toyotomi Hideyoshi gave Musashi province to Tokugawa Ieyasu and Ieyasu in his turn gave Echizen to his son Yuki Hideyasu. By some means YASUTSUGU started making swords for Hideyasu. Despite his apparent lack of skill by 1603 he was acknowledged by the Tokagawa to such an extent that on the 27th December 1603 he was allowed to use the same character YASU in his name as did Ieyasu and also to cut the Aoe mon on the nakago of his blades. Nine years later Hideyasu gave Maruoka Castle in Echizen to Honda Narishige who had supported him in his war against the Toyotomi. It then became Narishige who gave YASUTSUGU patronage in Echizen and he was able to spend alternate years at a forge he set up in Edo for his Tokagawa patrons in the capital. (The Honda patronage carried over to the second generation[5]).

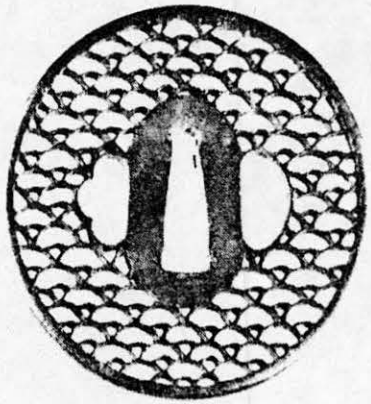
The wars had resulted in many great blades being partially destroyed in fires, notably in the Osaka castle blaze. It is from the latter on the 16th June 1615 that YASUTSUGU sorted out[3] those blades worth requenching and we see one his two grudgingly acknowledged skills emerge - i.e. requenching.

J

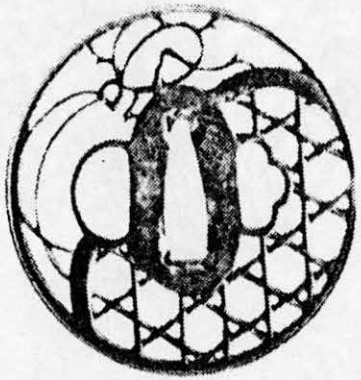


K

L



M



N

The last siege in premodern Japanese history was Shimabara, when a crowd of ill-equipped Christians in a ramshackle castle in Kyushi held off the forces of the shogunate until finally beaten by starvation. The authorities were for some time assisted by Dutch gunners, who had no objection to killing fellow-Christians so long as they were Papists; but in the end the Dutch were sent back to Deshima because the Shogun's troops could not admit that they needed foreign help.

It seems to me that the castle was ill-suited both to Japanese building methods and to the Japanese style of war, and the surviving Japanese castles are rather like Edo-period armour - splendid; beautifully and ingeniously made; but not very practicable for fighting. Still, they are a souvenir of the most exciting period of Japanese history, and they mut be among the world's most picturesque, if not it is most sensible, forms of military architecture.

Select Bibliography and References

1. "Castles in Japan" Morton S. Schmorleitz. Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, 1974.
   A fairly full and thorough account but to my mind deficient in original thought on the military functions of the castle - or on anything else.
2. "The Samurai" Stephen Turnbull. London, 1977
   The best general study in English of the art of war in mediaeval Japan, including sieges, and especially the siege of Osaka castle.
3. "Castles of Japan" (photo collection, ed. Yoshitaro Okamura)
   Tokyo, 1970
   A very full picture book.
4. "Feudal Architecture of Japan" Kiyoshai Hirai. Tokyo, 1973
   (Volume 13 of the Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art)
   Probably the easiest to obtain of the architectural accounts, and as good as any.
5. "The Nobility of Failure" Ivan Morris. London, 1975
   Apart from its general merits, it includes chapters on Kusonoki Masashige and Shimabara which are fuller than anything else I know.
6. "From Castle to Teahouse" J.B. Kirby. Tokyo and Rutland, Vermont, 1962
   A detailed study of the surviving buildings of Momoyama Japan, in particular what may be left of Fushimi.

7. "Kyoto - A Contemplative Guide" Gouverneur Mosher. Tokyo and Rutland, Vermont, 1964

Includes accounts of the Nijo-jo and the Nijo Jinya; the latter one of the funniest buildings I know. It is an inn built for samurai visiting Kyoto who had reason to fear assassination, and has more and weirder booby-traps than a James Bond film.

OSAKA CASTLE: THE CHERRY GATE.

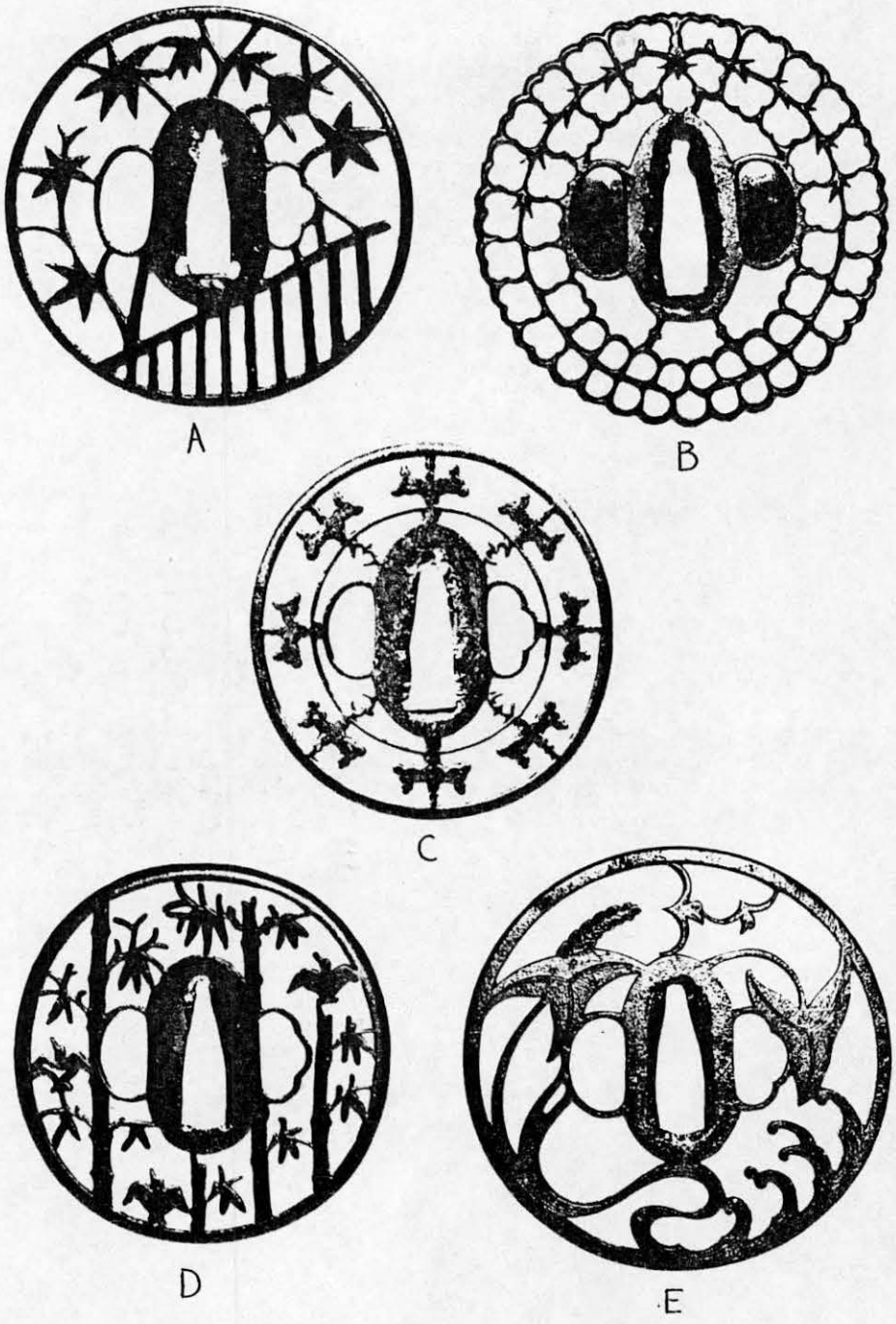
Fig. 1

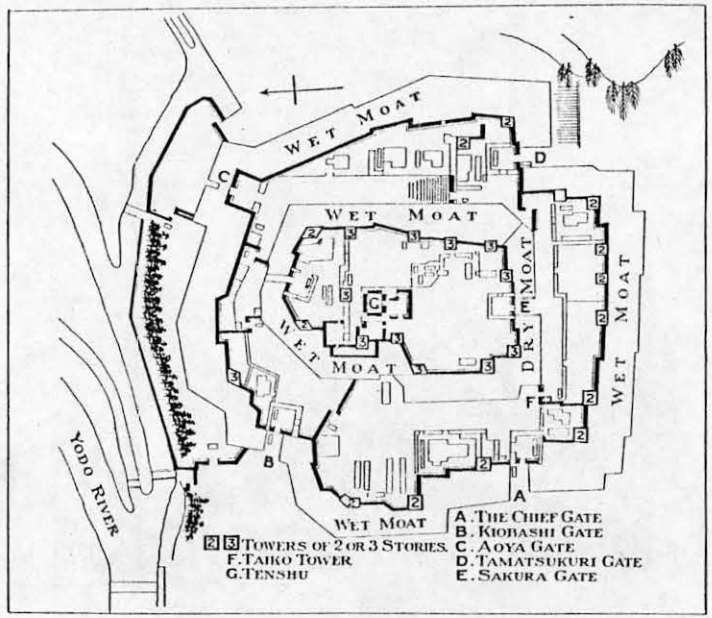
F

G

H

I





PLAN OF OSAKA CASTLE.

Fig. 2

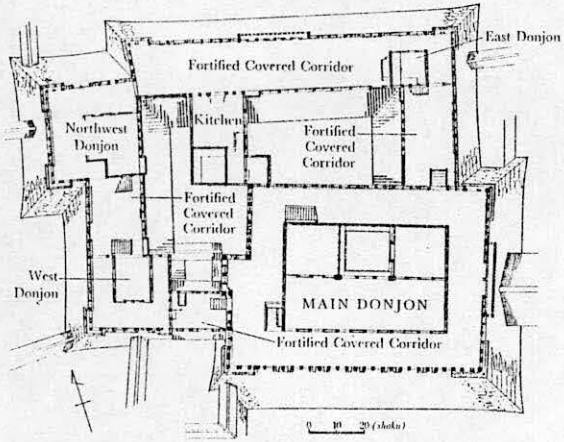


Fig. 3a *Ground plan of donjon complex of Himeji Castle completed in 1609.*

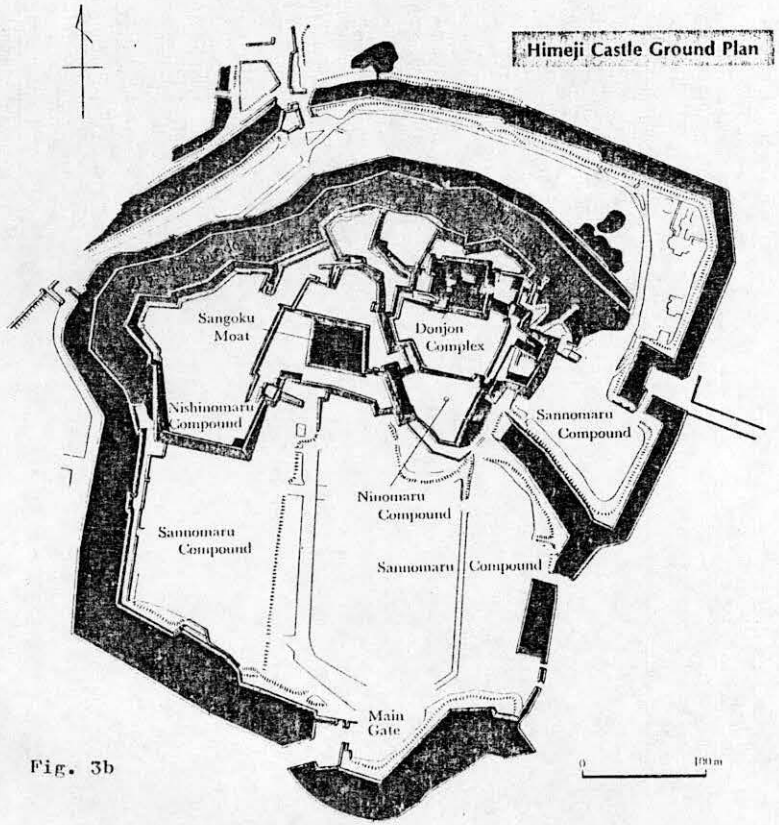


Fig. 3b

n) Cricket and Basket. 72mm; rounded rim with gilt fukurin 4.5mm thick. Possibly late Akasaka work. (5).

References

1) TORIGOE, KAZUTARO: TSUBA KANSHOKI 1975.

2) SASANO, Masayuki: SUKASHI TSUBA 1974.

3), 4) and 5) are Christies, Sotheby's and Butterfield and Butterfield Sale Catalogues respectively.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Hirome Hasegawa for translations from the Japanese. Apologies to the present owners of the tsuba illustrated whose permission it has not been possible to obtain.

Daigoro also had produced some extremely large tsuba away from his usual styles These sometimes employed carving as 'well as piercing techniques. They have designs of an auspicious nature and were made largely to the special order of foreigners. (Dr Torigoe; ref (1), plates 241, 242, illustrates two very impressive examples).

There is a kind of very late Kyo-Sukashi type tsuba called "Kikyoya tsuba". These have some similarities with Daigoro but are considered to be degenerate and of quite inferior quality.

To add further to any confusion that may exist, many ji-sukashi tsuba from other schools and traditions with more than usually complex patterns are often described erroneously as "Daigoro".

Illustrations

a) Fruiting tree and fence, 80mm; squared rim, 4.8mm thick. Late Muromachi period. (2)

b) Wisteria. 85mm; rounded rim, 4.5mm thick. "Kyo-Shoami". Early Edo period. (1)

c) Kirimon. 72mm; rounded rim 5.8mm thick. Genroku period (2).

d) Bamboo and Sparrows. 75mm; rounded rim, 5.5mm thick. Late Edo period. (2)

e) Wild Geese, arrow plants and waves. 83mm; rounded rim, 3mm thick. Late Edo period. (1).

f) Faggots. 83mm; Squared rim, 4mm thick. Late Edo period. (1).

g) Peacock. 76mm; squared rim. Late Edo period. (4).

h) Plum-Blossom and Hedge; Kozuka hitsu-ana is a snowflake. 75mm; rounded rim with excellent gold fukurin. 4.5mm thick. Late Edo period. (Writer's collection).

i) Flowering Plants. 72mm; rounded rim. Late Edo period. (4).

j) "Key-Fret". 79mm; rounded rim, shakudo fukurin. (this design is often seen also in soft metals and often called "Ito-Sukashi"). Mid-Edo period. (3).

k) Fish-net. 78mm; rounded rim, 4mm thick. Although sometimes attributed to Daigoro, variations of this pattern are well known in, for example, the Higo and Bushu schools. Late Edo period. (5).

l) Grasses and Plants. 70mm. Late Edo period. (3).

m) "Chidori" or Shippo (Cloissonne) Pattern. 74mm; rounded rim. 5mm thick. The cataloguer says, rather aptly: "This type of tsuba shows the later Kyoto work when technology replaced imagination"! (5).

Fig. 3c

Ground plan of Himeji Castle and surrounding castle town about 1750.

5. Daigoro Tsuba

by D.H. Leggett

"Daigoro" (大五郎) is a contraction of Daimonjiya Gorobei (大文字屋五郎兵), the name of a Kyoto dealer in tsuba during the periods Kansei to Bunsei (late 18th and early 19th Centuries).

The tsuba sold by Gorobei are classed among "Betsuryu tsuba" which means tsuba made by artists working outside the mainstream schools. It is fairly clear, however, that the Daigoro style had its origins in the Jyo-Sukashi tradition (the classic pierced tsuba of Kyoto).

Gorobei himself is supposed to have made certain Sukashitsuba in shakudo with tree and bird patterns which are signed "Daigoro Hidesada" (大五郎英貞) but the vast majority of the works he sold were made in iron by now-anonymous artists working under his patronage. The best of these artists must have been skilful Tsubako in their own right, working to their own designs but others probably merely copied standard patterns.

It seems likely that Gorobei developed and popularised styles that existed already in prototype in Kyo-Sukashi tsuba from as early as the late Muromachi period (16th century) onward and some of these, if it were not for their more aged appearance can be easily confused with Daigoro. If one is to be pedantic, "Daigoro Tsuba" is a term that should be used only to describe tsuba produced by Gorobei; the earliest ones being called properly "Kyo-Sukashi". Confident attribution is difficult with Daigoro-style guards; the more so because they are rarely, if ever signed.

Typical Daigoro characteristics include fine quality, well-patinated iron and careful ji-sukashi piercing with elegant designs in the Kyoto taste. They differ from their Kyo antecedants mainly in the novelty and greater complexity of their patterns. Outlines tend to be circular and rims narrow. The plates are usually flat, and of average or lesser thickness. Any surface decoration is limited to engraving of the simplest kind. Rounded rims usually go with thicker tsuba and squared rims with thinner.

Those tsuba that having a diameter of about 80mm are a little larger than average, bearing such designs as Matsukaze (wind-blown Pine), Yodono Suisha (water-mill at Yodo), Kujaku (Peacock) and Sawagata ni Mizu (water and ravine) are said to be most prized. Other well-known designs include Ume (plum tree), Sakura (cherry), Akigusa (autumn grasses) and Edagiri (Paulowhia branch). The best Daigoro works are reckoned to stand comparison with good Kyo-Sukashi guards from the later period.