



Tō-Ron



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE:

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA JAPANESE SWORD CLUB

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February 2006

PLEASE NOTE: All regular meetings are now held on the
THIRD Sunday of each month!

Meeting Date: Sunday, *February 19, 2006*, from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm.
1840 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA (upstairs)

Show and Tell: We begin each meeting with a “Show and Tell” session. Any items that you find interesting are welcome.

Topics: **Iron and Steel.** Examples would be: Tsuba with “bones”, hada, or other unusual features; blades showing prominent structures in the steel; iron fittings such as menuki, fuchi/kashira, kozuka, etc.; or any other iron/steel object showing interesting features of the material.

Board Meeting: The Board of Directors will meet immediately following the general meeting, at approximately 3:45 pm.

In this issue:

1. Review of the January 2006 Meeting.
2. Kantei blades from the January 2006 meeting: Five Jūyō and Tokubetsu Jūyō Ichimonji blades.
3. *TŌKEN KAISHI*: #298, March 1, 1926, pp. 12-14. *CLUB LECTURES—A BUNDLE of RANDOM THOUGHTS*. Kōwa—Zuikan Issoku 講話 隋感一束. By Akiyama Kyūsaku 秋山久作. Translated by Ryuko and Thomas C. Helm. Edited and annotated by Alan Harvie.
4. “*Hompō Sōken Kinkō Ryakushi*” by Wada Tsunahirō, translated by Henri L. Joly. Edited, annotated, and additional translation by Alan L. Harvie. Originally published by Adachi Jinzō, Shinbi Shoin, Tōkyō, 1913. Serialized installment, pages 5 - 8, 2005/6 edition.

Notes and Announcements, February, 2006:

January Meeting Notes:

2006 Board of Directors: The 2005 board of Directors was unanimously re-elected for 2006. They are (in alphabetical order): Ralph Bell (President), Bill Browning, Duane Hanson, Tom Helm, Bob McCoy, Sean Sweeny (Treasurer), and Fred Weissberg (Corresponding Secretary).

New Treasurer: Longtime Treasurer, Duane Hanson, submitted his resignation (as Treasurer), effective at the end of January. The club owes Duane a debt of gratitude for the many years he has served as Treasurer for our club! Duane's duties will be assumed by Sean Sweeny.

Meeting Dates Change: It was decided that our regular meeting dates would **PERMANENTLY CHANGE TO THE THIRD SUNDAY** of each month, starting immediately. This avoids conflicts with several holidays, and ties in well with our show dates in April and August.

It's membership renewal time:

By now everyone should have renewed their NCJSC memberships for 2006. If you have not sent in your renewal check, and your newsletter mailing-label has a **red** date of **(2005/12)**, please use the form at the end of this newsletter to renew your membership. **Dues not received by February 15th, 2006 will result in your not receiving the March Newsletter.** We cannot guarantee that back issues will be available for those renewing late.

Policy: The NCJSC does not endorse, necessarily agree with or validate the content of articles published in this newsletter. The individual authors are solely responsible for the content of their articles and any statements contained therein. The sole intent of the NCJSC, its Board and the membership, is to further the study and appreciation of the Japanese Sword by publishing current relevant information for its members.

Review of the January, 2006 meeting displays:

The meeting topic was “all things Ichi”. Tom Helm gave a short talk on the “Number One”, and how it is used in Japan. Tom also worked with Fred Weissberg to present an informal kantei session, with a twist. Fred's write-up follows the meeting review.

Display items:

Note: Photos are not to scale.



Iron tsuba signed 一龍 花押 Ichiryū w/Kaō. I could find no information for this artist. Decorations in gold, shakudō, copper and silver.



Menuki by 山崎一賀 Yamazaki Ichiga, circa 1750. (Haynes 01671.0). Shakudō with gold and silver highlights. He was a student of Gotō Jujō (Haynes 02267.0) and worked in the Gotō school style. He did “excellent work, equal to the quality of the Gotō School in his time”. NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon.



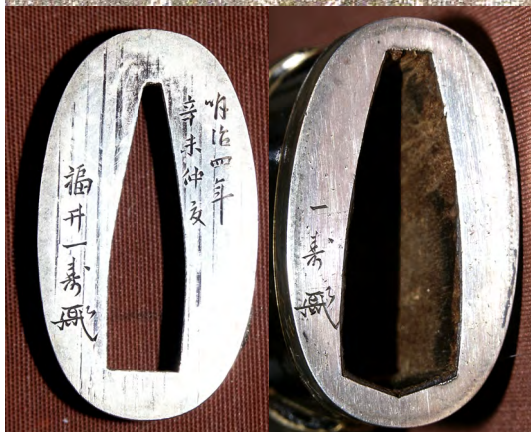
A favorite fuchi having an intricately carved basket-weave ground, with insect and flower decorations. Shakudō ground with gold and silver highlights.

Display items continued:

Note: Photos are not to scale.



Kozuka signed 染谷一信 w/花押 Someya Kazunobu (Isshin) w/Kaō. (Haynes 03018.0) Copper front with shakudō back. The front has gold highlights, and the back has a gold inlayed Kaō. Kazunobu was a student of his uncle Someya Tomonobu (Haynes 10032.0), and worked around 1850.



Higo style topei koshirae having the fuchi, kashira, koiguchi, kurikata and kojiri made by 福井一壽 花押 Fukui Ichiju w/Kaō. (Haynes 01698.0) The fuchi is dated *Meiji Shi Nen / Kanoto-Hitsuji Chuto* (4th year of Meiji, 8th year of the Zodiac, mid winter, or 1871). The menuki are shakudō and gold, with the remainder of the fittings being done in silver with katakiri bori and hira-zōgan done in gold, shakudō and copper, and having applied gold butterflies. The theme appears to be Summer or Fall grasses and flowers.

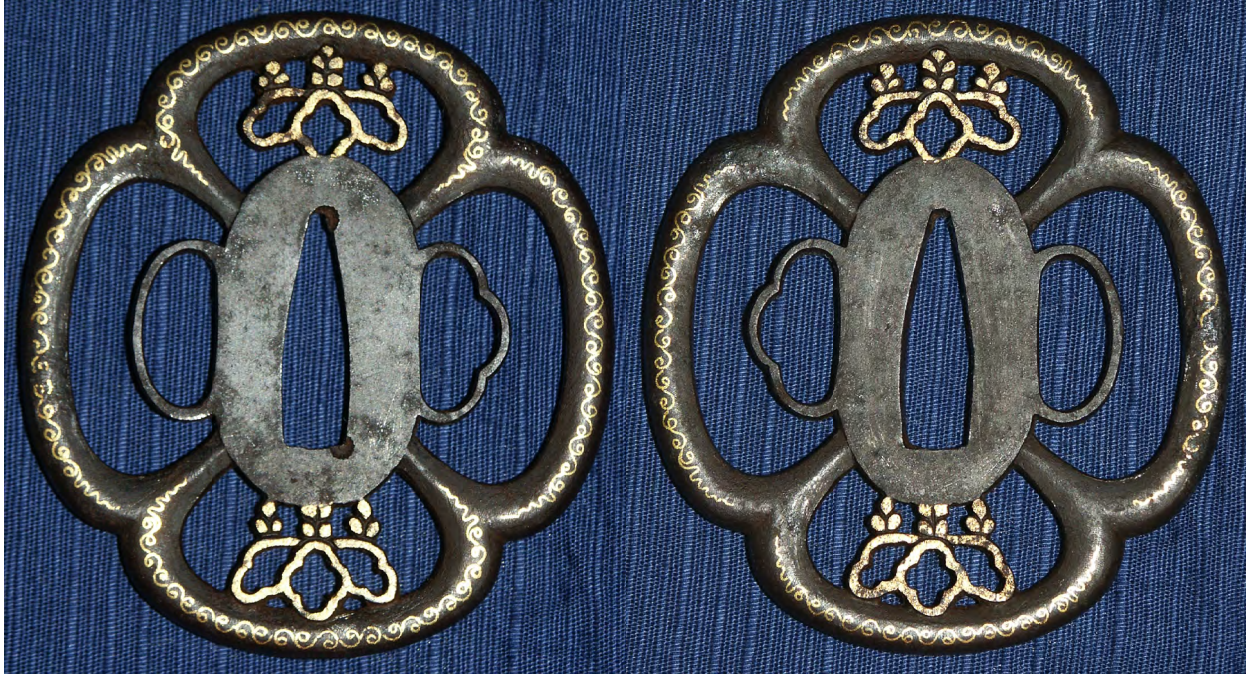
Ichiju was a student of Gotō Ichijō, whose style he used frequently, and was skilled at taka-bori iroe (the use of applied soft-metals to 'paint' a subject). This koshirae is accompanied by a (suriage) shodai Tadayoshi katana. Both the koshirae and blade are NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon.



Shakudō kozuka, nanako ground, with various mon highlighted in gold and silver.

Display items continued:

Note: Photos are not to scale.



Iron sukashi tsuba described as being Higo Shōami, and having a “shadow” or “kage-kiri” mon. Highlights are in gold.



Katana signed 石堂藤原是一作之 *Ishidō Fujiwara Korekazu Saku Kore*. Late Edo.



Katana by Munetsugu, 1441. No data presented.



Blade signed katana-meiji 肥前國住人忠吉 *Hizen Kuni Jūnin Tadayoshi* in guntō mounts. No information was presented at the meeting.

Display items continued:

Note: Photos are not to scale.



Katana engraved with Kiku-Ichi and signed 河内守祐定 *Kawachi no Kami Sukesada*. This blade is mounted in guntō mounts having custom fittings, including a pierced tsuba, 6 seppa, and a silver *Sakai mon* on the kashira. The Sakai family “recently” presided over various locations including: Matsumini, in Dewa; Himeji, in Harima; Isezaki, in Kōzuke; Katsuyama, in Awa; and Obama, in Wakasa.

The notes presented with this blade say:

This is the same smith who signed *Bizen Kuni Jū Osafune Kawachi no Kami Sukesada*, and worked around 1688. This blade does not have the Kanbun shape that is associated with this time period, but is more kotō in its looks and feel.

The hada is a “Bizen style” mokume, with a hamon of yahazu midare in the style of Hikozaemon, done in nioi-deki with ko-nie, and possessing an Ōsaka style yakidashi. Also present are ko-itame and ko-mokume hada. The nakago is ubu.

It was a great boon to the shintō Osafune smiths when the Ichijo family, one of five regents to the Emperor, ordered swords to be forged by Kōzuke Daijō Sukesada, giving the group a certain amount of respect, allowing the group to prosper. Kawachi no Kami Sukesada was the son of Sōzaemon Sukesada, and forges swords in Ōsaka as well as Tsuyama in Sakushū.



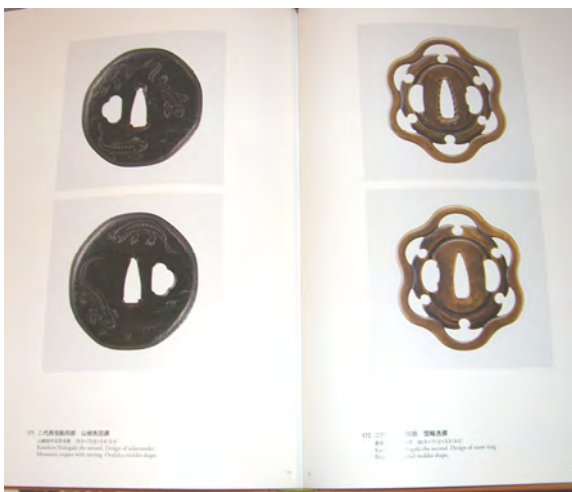
A tantō by *O Kanemitsu*, dated January 1, 1358. According to its owner: “This particular tantō is unusual and rare because of the Nengo. As most students of the Japanese sword are aware, most dated pieces carry either a February or August date. As with all aspects of Japanese swords, nothing is cast in concrete and there are always exceptions to almost everything. While we occasionally run across a month other than February or August, a date such as the one on this tantō is exceedingly rare. It is dated the third year of Enbun on New Year’s Day. That would mean it was made on January 1, 1358. As far as I could find out through research there is only one other tantō by this smith dated in this manner.” NBTHK Jūyō Tōken.

Display items continued:

Note: Photos are not to scale.



Four blades brought into the meeting for opinion and information. The Wakizashi was mounted with very nice fittings (shown below), including what look like Gotō menuki, and fuchi/kashira signed 常直 Tsunenao (a student of Ichinomiya Nagatsune, which, coincidentally, fits right in with this month's theme). The tsuba is iron with a shakudō fukurin, and the hitsu are lined with gold.



A recently published book “Works of Kanshirō Nishigaki”.
(No other information was noted for this publication.)

Display items continued:

Note: Photos are not to scale.



January's kantei session (with a twist). We were presented with five Ichimonji blades, four were Jūyō Token, and one was Tokubetsu Jūyō Tōken! We were given a handout describing the characteristics of three of the Ichimonji schools. Our task was to figure out which of these schools each blade fit into. Our choices were Fukuoka Ichimonji, Yoshioka Ichimonji and Kamakura Ichimonji. In the above photo, from the foreground back (the blade being held is the second blade), they are: Fukuoka, Fukuoka (tokubetsu jūyō), Kamakura, Fukuoka, and Yoshioka. Fred Weissberg's write-up (handout) follows.

**THE FUKUOKA, YOSHIOKA, AND
KAMAKURA ICHIMONJI SCHOOLS**

(一文字)

By Fred Weissberg
01/06

THE FUKUOKA ICHIMONJI SCHOOL (福岡一文字)

The Ichimonji School (一文字) in Bizen Province was a large school that was founded in the beginning of the Kamakura period and lasted through the Nanbokuchō period. From the beginning of the Kamakura period and up until the middle of the Kamakura period, works by this school are commonly referred to as Ko-Ichimonji (古一文字) works. From the beginning of the Kamakura period and through the middle of the Kamakura period, the center of the production done by this school was located in the area called Fukuoka (福岡). From the end of the Kamakura period and through the early part of the Nanbokuchō period, the center of production moved to Yoshioka (吉岡).

The name of the school is derived from the fact that many of the swords extant today are signed only with the Kanji character “Ichi” (一).. To this day there is uncertainty as to whether any of the smiths who signed with individual names are one and the same as any of these practically anonymous artisans who signed with only an “Ichi” (一)..

Norimune (則宗) has long been highly reputed to be the symbolic founder of the Fukuoka Ichimonji School (福岡一文字). His early swords were of the Ko-Ichimonji (古一文字) style with a modest *sori*, a *nioi* based *hamon* of *suguba* mixed with *ko-midare* and *ko-choji* lined with plenty of *nie* and embellished with varied *nie* structures in the *ji* of *hotsure*, *sunagashi*, and *kinsuji*.

Around the middle of the Kamakura period the shape and workmanship style changed to become more flamboyant with a more robust *sugata* and large and closely packed *choji* formations known as *juka-choji*, *o-choji midare*, *o-busa choji*, etc. These are the swords that we commonly refer to as being of the Fukuoka Ichimonji School (福岡一文字).

The notable smiths who followed Norimune (則宗) such as Yoshifusa (吉房), Sukezane (助真), Norifusa (則房), Yoshiiye (吉家), Sukefusa (助房), Nobufusa (信房), Yoshimune (吉宗), and others developed what we today refer to as the Fukuoka Ichimonji (福岡一文字) style. These smiths

produced the *nioi* dominant *hamon* consisting of *o-busa*, *juka*, *kawazuka*, and *kukuro* variations of *choji-midare* tempered in diversified widths and heights. The vivid *midare-utsuri* in the *ji* further increases the gorgeous and magnificent quality of their works.

Sugata: The tachi *sugata* is grand but not excessive, it remains elegant. They are typically *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune* with *koshi-zori*. There will be some *funbari* ending in a medium sized *kissaki* in the *ikubi* style.

- Jitetsu:** The *kitae* is mainly tight *itame-hada* mixed with *mokume-hada*. Occasionally a slight amount of *o-hada* or loose grained area will be present. There will be pronounced *utsuri* in the form of *choji-utsuri*, *midare-utsuri*, *jifu-utsuri* or *botan-utsuri*.
- Hamon:** Narrow *ko-choji* is rare. Typically the *hamon* will be a robust *choji-midare* which will be in the form of a combination of *juka*, *kawazuko*, *gunome*, and other variations. The width of the *hamon* will vary. The predominately *nioi* structured *nioi-guchi* is lined with fine *ko-nie* and contains a great many *ashi* and *yo*. *Sunagashi*, *kinsuji*, and other forms of *nie* based *hataraki* will be seen.
- Boshi:** The *boshi* will tend to be somewhat stubby or *ikubi* in shape. It is *midare-komi* in proportion to the *hamon* and either *yakisume* or it will have a short *kaeri*.
- Horimono:** Original *horimono* will not be found with the exception of *bo-hi* or *futatsu-hi*. The top of the *hi* will be sharp and well shaped. The bottom of the *hi* becomes *maru-dome*, *kaku-dome*, or *kaki-nagashi*.

THE YOSHIOKA ICHIMONJI SCHOOL (吉岡一文字)

From the end of the Kamakura period and through the early part of the Nanbokucho period, the center of production moved to Yoshioka (吉岡).

The founder of this school was Sukeyoshi (助吉) who is said to be the grandson of Sukemune (助宗) of the Fukuoka Ichimonji School (福岡一文字). The smiths of this school lived in Yoshioka (吉岡). in Bizen province and were active from the latter part of the Kamakura period through the Nanbokucho period. Most of them inscribe their works with the character “ichi” (一) followed by their names. Some representative smiths were Sukemitsu (助光), Sukeshige (助茂), Sukeyoshi (助義), and Sukeshige (助重).

The swords of the Yoshioka Ichimonji School (吉岡一文字) show workmanship that is magnificent and flamboyant. They followed the fashion of the period in terms of their shape and *sugata*.

- Sugata:** The *tachi sugata* is grand but not excessive, it remains elegant. The width at top and bottom does not vary greatly. *Kodachi*, *nagamaki*, and *tanto* are occasionally seen.

- Jitetsu:** *Mokume-hada* mixed with *o-hada* and *chikei* will be seen. There will be *utsuri* in the form of *choji-utsuri*, or *jifu-utsuri*.
- Hamon:** The *nioi* line is tighter than that of the Fukuoka Ichimonji school. *O-choji midare* is mixed with *koshi-no-hiraita midare*. This is a pattern which is similar to *notare* with the valleys being gentler than the peaks. It is often mixed, in the upper area, with *choji* or *gunome*. *Suguha-choji midare* is also seen. *Koshiba* is sometimes tempered at the bottom.
- Boshi:** The *kissaki* will tend to be somewhat stubby or *ikubi* in shape. The *boshi* will be *midare-komi* and it will have a relatively long *kaeri*.
- Horimono:** Original *horimono* will not be found with the exception of *bo-hi*, *soe-hi*, or *futatsu-hi*. The top of the *hi* descends slightly from the *ko-shinogi*.. The bottom of the *hi* becomes *maru-dome*, or *kaki-nagashi*.

THE KAMAKURA ICHIMONJI SMITHS (鎌倉一文字) SUKEZANE AND SUKETSUNA (助真) and (助綱)

Sukezane (助真) was the son of Fukuoka Ichimonji Sukefusa (福岡一文字 助房). He was a renowned smith of the Fukuoka Ichimonji School (福岡一文字). Around the year 1266 Koreyasu Shinno, who had assumed the duties of Shogun (he was the 7th Kamakura Shogun), called Sukezane (助真) of the Bizen Fukuoka Ichimonji to Kamakura. After moving to Kamakura, Sukezane (助真) together with his most famous student, Suketsuna (助綱) became known as the Kamakura Ichimonji smiths (鎌倉一文字).

The extant works of Sukezane (助真) and Suketsuna (助綱) are almost all *tachi*, there are no *tanto*. The style and workmanship shown in all of the swords by these smiths continued to bear the old Ichimonji school (一文字) characteristics. The unique shape of their works with the pronounced width showing almost no tapering toward the point, together with the modest thickness of the cross section, is highlighted by the shape of the medium-sized point called the *Ikubi Kissaki* (bull head).

There are a good number of works remaining by Sukezane (助真); however, signed examples are relatively rare. No dated examples have been found to date. One of the

most famous swords by this smith is called the Nikko Sukezane as it is housed at Nikko Shrine, the burial place of Tokugawa Ieyasu. This sword was a favorite of Tokugawa Ieyasu and is considered to be the best of the extant works of Sukezane (助真). Of Sukezane's (助真) remaining works, two have been designated as Kokuho (National Treasures), four Tachi and five Katana are Juyo Bunkazai, and three Tachi and five Katana are Juyo Bijitsuhin.

Suketsuna (助綱) worked around the Genko Era or 1321. He was the true son of Fujiwara Tsugusuke. He was the adopted son and top

student of Sukezane (助真). His remaining works are few and signed examples are exceedingly rare. Like Sukezane (助真), his *mei* is signed with a boldly carved two-character signature. Also like Sukezane (助真) his Tachi are in the style of the mid Kamakura Period and are of a very sturdy and rugged shape known as Ikubi Kissaki Tachi. Of his remaining swords one tachi has been designated Juyo Bunkazai and two have been designated Juyo Bijitsuhin.

SUGATA: Tachi are made in the style of the Mid Kamakura style. There will be strong *koshi zori* and very little narrowing of the blade from the *hamachi* to the *kissaki*. There will not be much *hira-niku*, but there will be *ha-niku*

JITETSU: The steel texture will be well worked in *itame hada* mixed with *mokume hada*. In areas *o-mokume hada* will be found and it will stand out. There will be *chikei* and *midare-utsuri* that will be pronounced.

HAMON: The tempered pattern will generally be a combination of *midare-choji* and *juka-choji*. The *hamon* as a whole is of thick *nioi* structure, showing some small *nie* grains along with short, shiny lines (*kinsuji*). In the works of Sukezane (助真) especially, the tops of some of the *choji* will appear to be almost freestanding balls of temper. The works of Suketsuna (助綱) will have a somewhat narrower line of *nioi* with little *nie* so that the grain of the steel in the *hamon* will show up. *Inazuma* are seen along the *hamon* and from the deep *nioi*, *ashi* will run towards the cutting edge.

BOSHI: **Sukezane (助真):** Generally *midare-komi* or the continuation of the *hamon* into the *boshi* ending with *yakizume* (no turn back) or a slight *kaeri*. *Hakikake* and *inazuma* can also be seen on occasion. **Suketsuna (助綱):** Generally *midare-komi* with a slight *kaeri*.

NAKAGO: Made long and with *sori*. Also made *kiji-momo* and the tip will be *kurijiri*. The file marks will be *sujikai*. The inscription will be cut in two bold characters.

MEI: As stated, bold *ni-ji mei* was used by both smiths and there are no dated examples for either smith.

HORIMONO: *Bo hi* (single-wide grooves) and *futatsu hi* (double grooves) are found on occasion.

TŌKEN KAISHI: #-298, March 1, 1926, pp. 12-14.

CLUB LECTURES—A BUNDLE of RANDOM THOUGHTS.

Kōwa—Zuikan Issoku 講話 隋感一束.

By Akiyama Kyūsaku 秋山久作.

Translated by Ryuko Takahashi and Thomas C. Helm.

Edited and annotated by Alan Harvie.

Last year, a fellow enthusiast in *Nagoya* sent me *shōsaku*¹ *Myōchin Nobuie tsuba* on several occasions. For approximately the past twenty years I have traveled there and back as well as sending tsuba back and forth as there were three or four *tsuba-ka* living there who had never seen a genuine *Nobuie*. Formerly, my teacher, *Kishimoto Gensuke Ō* 岸本源助翁, told me of a certain merchant of *Nagoya* who owned a *Nobuie* tsuba with a *Fuji-mi Saigyō*² pattern, which was so rare he consequently presented it to his lord's household. Originally in *Owari* there were pieces by *Kawaguchi Hōan*, *Yamasaka Kichibei*, *et al*, which resemble those of *Nobuie*. That the *Hōan* infiltrated *Kai* about the time of the fall of the *Takeda* family is reliably known and, of course, there is this deep belief that *Nobuie* tsuba are to be found. I find it greatly amusing to envision *Nobuie* coming [to *Nagoya*].

There is an interesting phenomena concerning *Nobuie* tsuba from that same area. About the time of the *shinsai*³ it seemed that nine out of ten *Nobuie* tsuba that came from there was small in size; how is it that only the small pieces survived? There must be an explanation here. I believe that in this area, from around *Kambun*, the *Yagyū* tsuba came into vogue, that the rims of the old *kogata*⁴ pieces were altered. Even the *Nenuke*⁵ tsuba, the old work *ji sukashi* tsuba that were said to have no equals under heaven, were overwhelmed by this trend, so much so that not a soul was left who knew that there were once old *ji sukashi* tsuba in this area. With this in mind, and knowing that good *Nobuie* pieces are almost always large-sized, *mokkō*-shaped pieces with an *uchikaeshi-mimi*,⁶ meaning that they were not in concert with the fashion of the era, they joined the *ji sukashi* tsuba in their fate, leaving only the *kogata* pieces to survive.

However, and furthermore, when examining tsuba made by *Nobuie*, there are those deemed *shōsaku* by many whose signatures do not adhere to just one style; there are six to seven variations. For one person's *mei-furi*⁷ to vary so much is the question of all questions. Some say it is due to his longevity, variations due to the different stages in his life, and so forth. I have waited for some years in the hope of a more convincing theory. Now this *Nobuie* is the legitimate 17th generation of the *Myōchin* family who moved from *Sagami* to *Kōzuke* and, finally, on to *Kai*, in obedience to an invitation of the *Takeda* family; he was a *taika*.⁸ Hence, even if numerous tsuba remain today, leading people to speculate that he was a tsuba smith, he was of an honorable family of a continuous line of armor makers. Furthermore, this was the period of incessant warfare and *katchūshi*⁹ were kept very busy. It is difficult to believe that he would abandon his main occupation of creating armor to engage in making tsuba. It seems to me that since *Nobuie* certainly had many pupils, he might have had them do this work on his behalf.

Among his tsuba with various types of *mei*, there are a small number of so-called *katchū-meī*¹⁰ pieces. These signatures have the same characteristics as those on his armor and the tsuba styles are also slightly different; if one were to carefully examine the *shōsaku* of *Nobuie* these should be attributed as his own and, as a matter of course, all other *mei-furi* pieces as those by his disciples. Another thing, among the *daisaku*¹¹ work I believe one can make a distinction: there are many separated *mei* with *ko-sukashi*, *kikka uchikomi*,¹² and so forth; that there are other signatures with many *kikkō*¹³ patterns, many with *monji*¹⁴ designs, and some with *jimon*.¹⁵ As a rule, to create a piece to deceive, one should try to create an extremely believable work, but these *Nobuie* have various *mei-furi* with no evidence of copying; they all seem to endeavor to demonstrate their skill. Thus, perhaps, it is closer to the truth to see them not as forgeries but as *daisaku*.

I have always thought it strange that, in the time of civil war when transportation was extremely inconvenient, there existed in both the provinces of *Kai* and *Aki*, works of the same period, the same style and the same signature that were difficult to distinguish unless examined minutely. It has been proven that *Geishū*¹⁶ *Nobuie* moved from *Kai* after the installment of the *Asano* family [in *Aki*]. That is to say, as all the *Myōchin* family, including the 18th generation on, resided in *Edo*, this person who moved down to *Aki* is definitely not the 17th generation *Nobuie*, but undoubtedly one of his pupils. Now, if one is to accept this as fact, then there was not just one *daisaku* smith, but certainly several. Among the many *Nobuie* signatures, there is *Yanagawa Nobuie*, who engraved *Chikuzen*,¹⁷ who may have been such a smith, but not many of his works have circulated. There was another smith who moved to *Owari* producing tsuba there, many of the ones I have seen shared *mei* of the same thick, *nikubuto*,¹⁸ handwriting style. There still remains a great need for research.

NOTES

01. Shōsaku 正作: Genuine work.
 02. Fuji-mi Saigyō 不二西行: Saigyō Hoshi's contemplation of Mt. Fuji.
 03. Shinsai 震災: Refers to the great Kantō earthquake of 1923.
 04. Kogata 小形: Small size.
 05. Nenuke 根拔: Old guards of excellent quality but with unknown provenance.
 06. Uchikaeshi-mimi 打返耳: Beaten back rim.
 07. Mei-furi 銘振り: Appearance, or style of a signature.
 08. Taika 大家: Great master.
 09. Katchūshi 甲冑師: Armor maker.
 10. Katchū-meī 甲冑銘: Armor maker's signature.
 11. Daisaku 代作: Ghostwriting; a stand-in; a double.
 12. Kikka no uchikomi 菊花の打込み: Chrysanthemum pattern hammered in
 13. Kikkō 龜甲 Tortoise shell.
 14. Monji 文字: Japanese written characters.
 15. Jimon 地紋: Patterned surface.
 16. Geishū 藝州: Province of Aki 安藝. Haynes # H 07062.0.
 17. Chikuzen 筑前: Province on the island of Kyūshū.. Haynes # H 07063.0.
 18. Nikubuto 肉太: Bold faced [type].
- a. Kambun 寛文: 1661-1662.

Part II: *Tsuba-Kō*

The origin of *tsuba* was simultaneous with that of the sword: concerning most ancient *tsuba* found during the excavation of old tombs, see the previous section. The *tsuba* of the modern sword is difficult to date as there is meager material in which to investigate for data, but by the study of pieces kept in old temples we may say that the beginning was in the *Gempei*¹ period.

The *tsuba* of that period are either circular or *mokkō* in shape, made of several iron plates wrapped with leather, some of them are entirely made of leather, the so-called *neri tsuba* (that of the *onimaru tsukuri*² is not made of iron but of *udō*). Later, they discontinued the use of leather and made the *tsuba* of a single iron plate, these were made by the sword smiths at the same time as the blade and there was no artistic design applied, they were for actual use. They are called *ita tsuba*; usually large, circular and thin, sometimes with very simple perforations. From the *Kamakura* period [1192-1333] to the middle of the *Ashikaga* period [1337-1573] they were made by armor makers; those *katchūshi tsuba* still in existence may have been made in that period.

Subsequently, during the time of the *Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshinori*, there were *tsuba* makers in *Heianjō* whose specialty was *sukashi tsuba*. In addition, about the *Ōnin period* [1467-1477], they created the decoration of iron *tsuba* called *suemon-zōgan*³ and later with *hira-zōgan*⁴. They flourished under the *Ashikaga* which, at its end, saw the culmination of the *Heianjō sukashi tsuba*, *Ōnin-zōgan*⁵ and various *tsuba-kō* whose work interested the *Ashikaga*. About the middle of the *Ashikaga* period, *Kaneie* appeared with new, realistic designs done in high relief.

In the previously noted explanations given by *Hayashi Tadamasa* upon the presentation of his collection to the Louvre, he states that the oldest unsigned *sukashi tsuba* could be assigned to the *Gempei* period and downward to the *Nambokuchō*, *Kamakura*, *Ashikaga*, and so forth, periods respectively [ca 1192-1573]. According to this opinion the oldest one is more than nine hundred years old. I wonder on what evidence he based it. I must say it is a mistake! In the *Hompō Tōken Kō*, quoting from the *Muromachi Keki*, it is said that to perforate *tsuba* was not known in olden days, but began only in *Ashikaga Yoshinori's Shogunate* due to his ideas and preferences. Previously, *tsuba* made before that period were of plain iron plate or leather and either circular or *mokkō* in shape; this assertion by Mr. *Hayashi*, without proof, is nonsense.

Sukashi tsuba now in existence are not older than the *Yoshinori* style, most of them were made after the middle of the *Ashikaga* period, but that does not mean that there were no *sukashi tsuba* before *Yoshinori* because very old *tsuba*, made by sword smiths or armor makers, have very small and simple perforations, so we must distinguish between *ita tsuba* and *sukashi tsuba*.

In the *Hompō Tōken Kō* critiquing *Yoshinori's* ideas, it is said “It was the beginning of making *tsuba* for decoration rather than for actual use” but the *sukashi tsuba*

is not only for ornament; the *Hōncho Bugu Yosetsu* (Kansei 6, by Higashima Tatsu of Nakatomi, Awa) says: “When Takeda Shingen⁶ was deciding on arms and armor and stating what was good and what was bad, in the Temmon era [1532-1555], he ordered five of his retainers (*Obata Yamashiro no Kami*, *Hara Mino no Kami*, *Yokota Bitchū no Kami*, *Tada Awaji no Kami* and *Yamamoto Kansuke*) to seriously consider and argue [various points], and the following is a copy of the manuscript decision on *tsuba*, being the opinion of *Yamamoto Kansuke* and *Hara Mino no Kami*: *Yamamoto Kansuke* says “The *tsuba* is best with a large (diameter) according to the ideas of some so-called clever people. *Akai Akuemon*’s opinion on swords is that it is of no use to argue whether or not it will cut well, the main point is that it should be well-forged and neither broken nor bent. If one fights hard it is not difficult to kill the enemy.

“A sword must have a *tsuba*, but when examining the results of fighting even a thin one was never found to be cut through. A thick *tsuba*, or plain, or narrow when cut receives the force of the enemy’s sword very strongly and the *mekugi* cannot stand the impact. If the *mekugi* is too strong then the sword either breaks or bends at the *tsuba moto*, so that *Akuemon* used thin *tsuba* with *sukashi*. The *tsuba* which receives the sword is only one in ten and a strong *tsuba* when struck strongly transmits it too strongly to the wrist, so that a thin, well-forged *sukashi tsuba* is preferable. *Hara Mino no Kami* says: the above opinion is right, as I thought one *mekugi* would not be enough I had usually two. I examined several swords after fighting, sometimes the *mekugi* remains unhurt, sometimes one of them hardly remains, in the latter case there had been a hard blow.”

Considering these two opinions the *sukashi-bori* of ancient sword or armor maker’s *tsuba* was not only for ornamentation. To use other metals other than iron for *tsuba* seems to have begun in the middle of the *Ashikaga* period. At that time a yellowish alloy, tinged with brown, similar to *sahari*, *yamagane*, bronze, copper, and so forth were used. *Shakudō* was only used later.

Tsuba for the *tachi*, according to the type, were *shitogi* or *mokkō*. In the *Tokugawa* period *tachi* for *Daimyō* were attached with a plain circular *tsuba* of *shakudō*, popularly called *Daimyō tsuba*. The above is a brief history of the *tsuba*.

In the production of *tsuba* there were specialized craftsmen who worked outside the scope of the armor makers, sword smiths, *kinkō*, *abumi*⁷ makers and sometimes even amateurs who made *tsuba* for amusement; they were called *tsuba kō*. These specialists first appeared making the *Heianjō tsuba* and they divided into schools and became scattered in many provinces. Most of them came from the *Shōami* family during the early *Tokugawa* period. As there are so many *tsuba* artisans of various classes it is best to consider only two points: good or bad from the practical point of view and their artistic merits.

The most important points considered by specialists are quality of metal, well-forged, the appearance of the shape, a perfect *mimi* and good proportions of the *hitsu-ana*. No matter what shape, *mokkō* or round, *tsuba* like *Myōju*’s are best. With *hitsu-ana* the best are a little longer than usual, like those of *Myōju* and *Heianjō*.

As there were so many workers of various classes, many made poor stuff, *shiire tsuba*⁸, and it is almost impossible to deal with all the *tsuba* in existence. In fact it would be useless to do so, so we give examples of special work of good makers in each school.

Systemizing the classification of *tsuba*: *Tsuba* can be arranged into two groups; by period and by school. Before the early days of the *Tokugawa* period we can easily classify *tsuba* in that way, but after that it is difficult to do so and we must adopt a system of classification by period, school and place of origin. In foreign countries *tsuba* are often classified by design and style of work, but we shall not do so as an artisan often made several designs, styles and engravings.

First Period: Old *Tsuba*. Prior to Ashikaga Yoshinori. A.D. 1 up to 1427.

Tsuba of the First Period were made by sword smiths and armor makers. They were unsigned and the oldest are large sized and circular.

Tōshō Work *Ita tsuba* of circular shape with rounded *mimi* and very simple *sukashi* (usually one penetration only). The oldest pieces known are probably six to seven hundred years old with very well forged ground metal, but no artistic merit.

Katchūshi work: The oldest pieces in existence are six to seven hundred years old, *ita tsuba*, circular in shape and with square, *sukikaeshi*⁹ or *dote mimi*¹⁰ and, normally, one simple *sukashi* figure; the older ones have a simple flower or leaf on the upper part of the *hitsu rea*. There are many *tsuba* in *mokkō* shape with plum blossoms all over, these are of later date. There are some other shapes as well.

Katchūshi work is a little thinner in comparison with *tōshō* work and at the same time the *sukashi* carving is somewhat more artistic. The designs are similar to those found on helmets, cheek defenses and *menpō*¹¹; the iron is very well-forged. Amongst the armor makers was *Munesuke* in *Kenkyū* [1190-1198], who originated the *Myōchin* school and became the founder of that family which existed until the last days of the *Tokugawa*. This man through the 10th are considered the best and are called *Kami Jū Dai*¹² or *Sōriu*¹³.

The oldest *tsuba* in existence are made by them, but most of them are later than the 7th *Myōchin*. There is a *tsuba* with a dragonfly in *sukashi* which is unsigned but is attributed to *Muneyasu*. According to the *Myōchin* family records *Munesuke* was the descendant of *Takenouchi no Sukune*¹⁴, and the restorer of the family although, from the beginning, meanings were twisted with opinions and truth.

Amongst the armor makers were the *Hōrai* and *Haruta*. The *Hōrai* have a subordinate lineage [with the *Myōchin*], the *Haruta* do not. Their work in armor was not good, contrary to their *tsuba* which were good. At the end of the *Ashikaga* period the

Saotome school became one of the branches, their work, both in armor and with *tsuba*, was greatly appreciated.

Following is the *Myōchin* family lineage:

01. Gempei period 源平時代. Time of the great war between the Minamoto and Taira clans. It was the largest war of the 12th century and has been a source of inspiration for literature and art ever since.
02. Onimaru Tsukuri 鬼丸造. The name of one of Nitta Yoshisada's swords. See Joly, Henri L. *Legend in Japanese Art*. Rutland, Vt., and Tokyo, Japan: The Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1967. P. 376.
03. Suemon-Zōgan 据紋象嵌. "Affixed-design inlay." This is not a true inlay but sheet metal cut in the shape of the design and soldered in place. It may be more appropriately be translated as an overlay.
04. Hira-Zōgan 平象嵌. "Flat inlay." Inlay work in which the inlaid piece is even with the surface of the ground metal.
05. Ōnin Zōgan 應仁象嵌. A misnomer as Ōnin refers to a type of *tsuba* so-called from the Ōnin period (1467-68), utilizing several types of inlay using copper, brass and sentoku in simple designs of dots, borders, mon, figures, etc.
06. Takeda Harunobu (Shingen) 武田晴信 (信玄). (1521-1573). See Papinot, E. *Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Japan*. Rutland, Vt., and Tokyo, Japan. The Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1979. P. 636.
07. Abumi 鐙. "Stirrup."
08. Shirre *tsuba* 仕入鐙. "Ready made *tsuba*."
09. Sukikaeshi Mimi 鋤返耳. "Turned over rim." A technique in which the rim is hammered back creating a raised and rounded rim with a straight inner surface.
10. Dote Mimi 土手耳. "Embankment rim." A technique in which the rim of the *tsuba* is hammered back until the raised portion contacts the ground of the *tsuba* forming a round or oval raised rim.
11. Mempō 面頬. "Armor face mask." Sometimes formed into grotesque animal, bird, etc., shapes to intimidate the adversary.
12. Kami Jū Dai 上拾代. "Best ten generations."
13. Sōriu 宗類. "Important class."
14. Takenouchi no Sukane 武内宿禰. A historical personage of the second century. See Papinot, E. *Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Japan*, Rutland, Vt., and Tokyo, Japan. The Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1979. P. 639.

SAN FRANCISCO 2006 TOKEN KAI

REGISTRATION FORM

OVERVIEW: On **August 17, 18, 19, 20, 2006** the Northern California Japanese Sword Club (N.C.J.S.C) will be hosting its thirteenth annual Token Kai at the **S.F. Airport Marriott Hotel**

DIRECTIONS: To help us serve your needs and to guarantee a table at the 2006 Token Kai, please complete the exhibitor information section on page two. Last year's Token Kai was a sold out event, **so mail in your form early.**

Mail your completed form and check payable to the Northern California Japanese Sword Club to

Mr. Michael Krause
P.O. Box 6061
San Mateo, CA 94403
1 (650) 342-1657

OR

Mr. Fred M. Weissberg
P.O. Box 7156
San Carlos, CA 94070
1(650)595-1703
email: hageyama@mindspring.com

2006 TOKEN KAI COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT:

The 2006 Token Kai will be held at the same location as last year, the Marriott Hotel at the San Francisco Airport. The address is 1800 Old Bayshore Highway in Burlingame (1-650-692-9100).

EXHIBITOR INFORMATION:

NAME _____

PHONE # (W) () _____ PHONE # (H) () _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Names of Pass Holders:

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS:

- Number in your party _____.
- Will you be staying at the S.F. Airport Marriott Hotel? _____.

To arrange your hotel accommodations for the S.F. Airport Marriott call 1 (650) 692-9100. Do not call us. You must book your room directly with the hotel.

NOTE: The turnout for the 2006 Token Kai is expected to be the largest ever. **If you are planning to stay at the S.F. Airport Marriott, please book your rooms early.** In addition, make sure to mention, when making your reservations, that you are attending the S.F. Token Kai Show to receive the special show room rate of \$99.00 per night-single or double. **NOTE: Room rate expires 30 days prior to show. RESERVE NOW!**

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THERE WILL BE A MAXIMUM OF THREE PASSES PER TABLE!!!

TOTAL TABLES: _____ @ \$ _____/table = TOTAL FEE: \$ _____.

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Noon - 10pm **Show Hours**

Saturday: 8:30am - 9am Exhibitors Set-up

9am - 10pm **Show Hours**

Sunday: 9am-3pm **Show Hours**

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Northern California Japanese Sword Club

2006

Membership Renewal Notice

**NCJSC memberships expire at the end of December.
Now is the time to renew.**

If your mailing label has a **red** date of **2005/12** printed on it, and you have not yet sent your renewal check, please be sure your renewal arrives **before** mid-February, 2006. This will ensure the uninterrupted mailing of your newsletter, and save those of us involved in the paperwork and processing a great deal of time. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

For renewal, you need only indicate your **name** (as it appears on the label), and your **postal/zip code**, on the form below. If you use this form to join the NCJSC, or need to make changes to your address, please fill it out completely.

Send your dues check, along with the form below, to:

Corresponding Secretary
Northern California Japanese Sword Club
P.O. Box 7156
San Carlos, CA 94070
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Annual Dues: (US dollars)	\$42 Domestic (USA) \$50 Canada and Mexico \$60 International	Amount paid:	\$
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