



# Tō-Ron

Monthly Newsletter of the

## Northern California Japanese Sword Club

**July 2011**

NCJSC  
P.O. Box 7156  
San Carlos, CA 94070  
www.ncjsc.org  
info@ncjsc.org

General Meeting: 12:30pm to 3:30pm

July 17, 2011



**July Topic:** Tokyo (Edo) - Shin-Shinto Swords and Kodogu

### Contents

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This month we continue our exploration of Edo but now with a focus on the New, the new Japanese society, the new government lead by the emperor and the new schools of sword-making; Suishinshi Masahide, Hosokawa Masayoshi, Ozaki Suketaka, Minamoto Kiyomaro and their many students and for students of kodogu we will look at Unno Yoshiori and his many students, as well as Kano Natsuo and his many students.

### **NO General Meeting in August**

Northern California Japanese Sword Club  
SAN FRANCISCO TOKEN KAI (sword show)  
August 4 - 7, 2011

(See last page)

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## Monthly Meetings

Meetings are held on the third Sunday of the month on the second floor (outside stairs). Directions can be found on the club website.

Japanese Cultural & Community Center  
of Northern California  
1840 Sutter Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115

## 2011 Annual Dues

Domestic: \$42.00  
Canada: \$50.00  
International \$60.00

Dues are due in January of each year.

## Contact Information

All messages and inquires should be directed to the Corresponding Secretary.

Northern California Japanese Sword Club  
P.O. Box 7156  
San Carlos, CA 94070

info@ncjsc.org

## 2011 Board Members

President	Fred Weissberg
Corresponding Secretary	Fred Weissberg
Treasurer	Sean Sweeny
Program Director	Tom Helm
Newsletter editor and Publisher	Bob McCoy
Boards Members	Bill Browning Cyril Skladany Gregory Fretz

## NCJSC Website

The club website contains information on NCJSC history, meetings, membership, gallery, visual glossary, library, sword events, publications and the NCJSC Token-Kai (sword show) details.

<http://www.ncjsc.org>

## Factoid

**Kamakura** (鎌倉市, Kamakura-shi) is a city located in Kanagawa, Japan, about 50 kilometers (31 mi) south-south-west of Tokyo. It used to be also called **Renpu** (鎌府) (short for Kamakura Bakufu (鎌倉幕府, or Kamakura Shogunate)).



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamakura,\\_Kanagawa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamakura,_Kanagawa)

## Submitting Articles

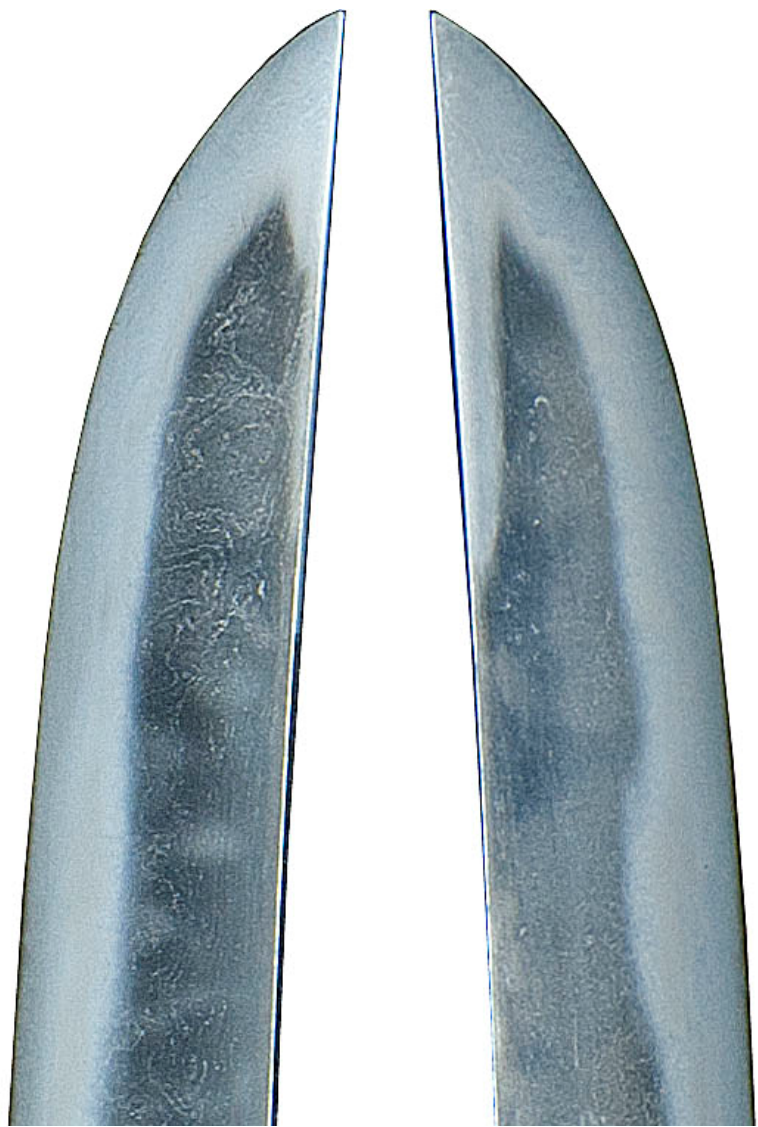
Anyone can submit an article for publication in the NCJSC Tō-Ron Newsletter. Members who are not able to attend meetings are encouraged to submit. These can be one page event reports, description of an interesting Japanese sword or related item or topic, ideas for an article not written yet, history topics, study guides or any information that our club members might find interesting.

If accepted for publication you will be contacted with further details, the NCJSC contact information is on the left side of this page.

## 2011 Meeting Agenda

August	NCJSC SF Token Kai – <b>No General Meeting</b>
October	<b>Kuwana</b> - Isa, Muramasa, Swords and Kodogu
November	<b>Nagoya</b> - Owari, Swords and Kodogu
December	<b>Seki</b> - Mino, Swords and Kodogu
January, 2011	2010 NCJSC Elections, all local members are asked to attend <b>Year of the Rabbit</b> , bring items related to
February	<b>Kanazawa</b> - Kaga, Fujishima Tomoshige, Kiyosada, Yoshisada, the Maeda family
March	Fukui City
April	Cherry Blossom Display - <b>No General Meeting</b>
May	Kamakura - Swords and Kodogu
June	Tokyo (Edo) - Swords and Kodogu PART I
July	Tokyo (Edo) - Shin-Shinto Swords and Kodogu PART II
August	NCJSC SF Token Kai – <b>No General Meeting</b>

**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 publishing current relevant information for its members.



Soshu mumei, Hiromasa (NTHK paper)  
12 3/4" nagasa, Bunan Jidai (1444-1449)

HIROMASA SÔSHÛ [KANSHÔ 1460 SAGAMI]  
SUEKOTÔ JÔJÔSAKU.

He is probably of one extended family of Hiromitsu. When the opening of his era is considered, it happens to be about that of the grandson of Hiromitsu. His works are Bun'an, Hôtoku, Chôroku and to around Bunmei. There are many wakizashi and tantô which have sô no kenmakiryû, ken nado. Hamon is suguba ko-nie majiri and hitatsura nado.

Signatures: HIROMASA  
SÔSHÛ JÛ HIROMASA





Suruga (Sunshu) province is next to Sagami (Soshu) province along the Tokaido road. The major swordsmiths are Yoshisuke, Hirosuke and Sukemune. All these smiths lived in the Shimada region. The Yoshisuke line served the Imagawa family in Suruga for many. Their existing work closely resembles that of sue-Soshu swordsmiths such as Hiromasa and Tsunahiro. There are signed examples of both the second and third generation for 1523.

From the Nihonto Koza translations by Harry Watson

KEIZU OF SHIMADA YOSHISUKE KEI 島田義助系



YOSHISUKE 義助: Around KÔSHÔ 康正 (1455-1457).

[TN: His common name was KEIKIN]

YOSHISUKE 義助: Around EISHÔ 永正 (1504-1521).

YOSHISUKE 義助: Around TENMON 天文 (1532-1535).

HIROSUKE 広助: Around KÔJI 弘治 (1555-1558).

KUNISUKE 国助: Around TENSHÔ 天正 (1573-1592).

TERUYOSHI 輝吉: Around KÔJI 弘治 (1555-1558).

He also inscribed HIROSUKE 広助.

TERUSUKE 輝助: No remarks.

SUKEMITSU 助光: No remarks.

YOSHITSUNA 義綱: Around TENMON 天文 (1532-1535).

SADAHIRO 定広: Around TENMON 天文 (1532-1535).

YASUHIRO 康広: Around EIROKU 永禄 (1558-1570).

HIROTSUGU 広次: Around TENMON 天文 (1532-1535).

TERUHIRO 輝広: Around TENMON 天文 (1532-1535).



SunShu Shimada ju Yoshisuke  
Taiei ni nen ni gatsu hi (feb 1523)



Soshu mumei, hitatsura hamon,  
Covered in ji-nei, nei deki,  
16" nagasa, Muromachi Jidai





Soshu Ju Tomihiro (Odawara Soshu Group), 15" nagasa, Bun-gi to Tenmon Jidai There are two smiths listed as working in Sagami, the first from the Sukehiro school from around 1501, the second smith is Odawara from 1532.

There is an carved saying on the blade in front of the Ken horimono, It says Daigan Jōjū , meaning (a prayer for) Realization of a Great Ambition.

Daigan Jōjū , 大願成就  
meaning (a prayer for)  
Realization of a Great Ambition.







YOSHIHIRO IKKANSAI [BUNSEI 1818 MUSASHI]  
SHINSHINTÔ CHÛJÔSAKU

From Fujishiro Yoshihiro is said to be Imperial Archives Keeper Nakayama, is called Yoshihiro, and as if cherishing the memory of Etchû Yoshihiro, his works are made ô-itame with a remarkable hada, and the hamon is ô-midare, bringing memories of the Soshû Den of the kotô period. Moreover, his works are nothing but beautiful. It is also suggested that his that there are some of his works which are mumei ôsuriage, have been presented as older Soshu works.

Soshu mumei hitatsura hamon, The photograph does not show the work very well. Nakayama Yoshihiro (NTHK paper), 16.5" nagasa

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## YES OR NO

By Skip Holbrook 07/11

Recently, a cross form tsuba with an NBTHK shinsa certificate attributing the work to Hirata came to the United States. Both sides of that tsuba are decorated with cloud form inlays of shakudo, possibly representing one of the major promises of the Christian missionaries—a place in heaven for true believers. The shinsa team must be given great credit for an attribution to Hirata; a less controversial assignment to Ko-shoami could have been easily made.



Since Christianity in Japan was dealt a severe setback at the battle of Sekigahara in 1600 and later banned outright by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1613-1614, the first Hirata Hikocho must have made this tsuba in the Momoyama era.

The extent of Christian influence in the Higo area is well known. In fact Hosokawa Tadaoki's wife, Gracia, and their two sons were baptized Christians. This cross tsuba is rare if not unique but such a piece seems to fit well in the Higo history of that time.

Hosokawa Tadaoki was a Daimyo of great renown serving some of the most important men of that period. Hirata's ties to the Hosokawa extend back to Tango province in the 1580's, later to Kokura in 1600, and then to Higo in 1615. Hirata and Hosokawa both had a deep interest in the arts and it is said that Hirata left his career as a samurai to become a sword fittings artist. Hirata's work shows the influence of both the Ko-shoami and Tachikanagushi schools but it is not certain from who he learned the technology of making tsuba.

In addition to making a large number of sword fittings himself, Hirata also taught his nephew Ni-bei Shimazu (the founder of the Jingo school) and Nishigaki Kanshiro (the founder of the Kanshiro school). Hirata may have also instructed or helped Hosokawa create some tsuba.

The brass tsuba with the theme of Kinko Sennin returning from a visit to the king of the fishes has several Hirata features including a separate rim cover, saddle flap outline, an unusual shape implement hole, and punch marks on either side of the tang hole that served as his signature. A feature that tsuba



this shares with the Hirata cross tsuba is that on both tsuba the inlays have been outlined. In a recent discussion with Bob Haynes about the Kinko Sennin tsuba, he noted that he had not before seen inlay outlining on work this early.



The iron tsuba with the theme of Nitta Shiro killing a wild boar was sold at Haynes auction #7 in 1983. In the auction catalog Bob Haynes described this tsuba to be somehow related to the Jingo work of Higo. Comparing the depiction of the face and hand on both this tsuba and the Sennin tsuba, the similarity might well indicate the work of the same ma, i.e. Hirata Hikoza.



Until now there has been no acknowledged connection made between the design ideas of Hirata and his student Shimazu. Perhaps this cross tsuba is an example of that. Much can be said about both Hosokawa Tadaoki and Hirata Hikoza. They were giants at one of the most important centers of change for the entire nation of Japan, both politically and in the arts.

The identification by the NBTHK of the Hirata cross has opened the possibility that here are three very rare works by Hirata Hikoza I; offering more to consider about an interesting and complex time in Japanese history.



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## THE PRICE OF NADAKAI

By Bob Haynes

The price of WHAT? Nadakai (名高) is the Japanese word for famous, noted, well known, renowned, or notorious.

When I was last in Japan, several years ago, after an absence of almost twenty-five years, I was to meet again the sensei that I have the greatest respect for, to this very day, as we have known each other for over fifty years. That person is Tanobe Michihiro Sensei (田野辺道宏先生) who I first was to meet with my teacher, Dr. Kazutaro Torigoye, in 1960. At that time we were both about thirty years of age and had just finished our formal traditional studies, mine in fittings, and Tanobe Sensei in blades. We met at the original offices of the N.B.T.H.K., which at that time were still in the National Museum building at Ueno Park. Dr. Torigoye had taken me there to see the fittings collection of the Museum, which at that time, still held the Marquis Hosokawa collection. All this with the aid of Dr. Kanzan Sato, who was in charge of the fittings at the Museum. Since Tanobe Sensei spoke excellent English, the three of us had an all-round talk fest on the spot. I was still a great novelty in Japan at that time, and having just completed my formal studies with Dr. Torigoye, we could compare notes about our studies and what the future was to hold for us.

That future is now the past. Tanobe sensei is now retired from an illustrious career at the N.B.T.H.K. Our last meeting was in the gallery area of that museum where I had gone to see the new Juyo and other fittings with my very good friend Stuart Broms. Quite by chance Tanobe sensei came up to us, and as we shook hands and I gave him my card, he said: "oh, Mr. Haynes, you are famous". I thought, here in Japan. where everyone I have known, except you, are dead ! Who would know, who would care? As it turned out I was right, too many years had passed and I was far from the well known novelty that I had been fifty years before. When you are eighty such things are not of much importance, and I am sure I shall not return to Japan again.

## BIZEN OSAFUNE YASUMITSU

### 備前長船康光

By Fred Weissberg 6/11



Shodai Bizen Yasumitsu (備前康光) traces his lineage to Shigeyoshi (重吉) of the Kagen era (嘉元) of 1303, who descends from Mitsutada (光忠). Shigeyoshi (重吉) was the son of Kagehide (景秀) of the Kamakura era. During the Oei era (応永) beginning in about 1394, we find a sudden flourish of excellent sword making by Yasumitsu (康光) and Morimitsu (盛光). There were several generations of smiths in Bizen by the name of Yasumitsu (康光) but the shodai is considered to have been the most skilled. Most of his works are signed in two characters but he did use a longer mei on occasion.

Yasumitsu (康光) worked from the latter part of the Oei era (応永) into the Eikyo era (永享) and the majority of his works will be dated. Yasumitsu (康光), together with the smiths Morimitsu (盛光) and Moromitsu (師光), were known as the Oei no San Mitsu (応永の三光) smiths and all are considered very famous and excellent. The Nidai Yasumitsu (康光) followed the shodai in the Eikyo era (永享). It is thought that there were an additional two generations of Yasumitsu (康光) smiths but works by the generations after the nidai are not often seen.

The smiths, Yasumitsu (康光) and Morimitsu (盛光) are both regarded as the most skilled and representative smiths of the Oei Bizen (応永備前) period. Their works are very similar and differentiating between the two smiths can be very difficult. While there are a great many examples surviving from both of these smiths, there are a greater number of works of Morimitsu (盛光) remaining than those of Yasumitsu (康光). There are good pieces among the nijimei works of both of these smiths.

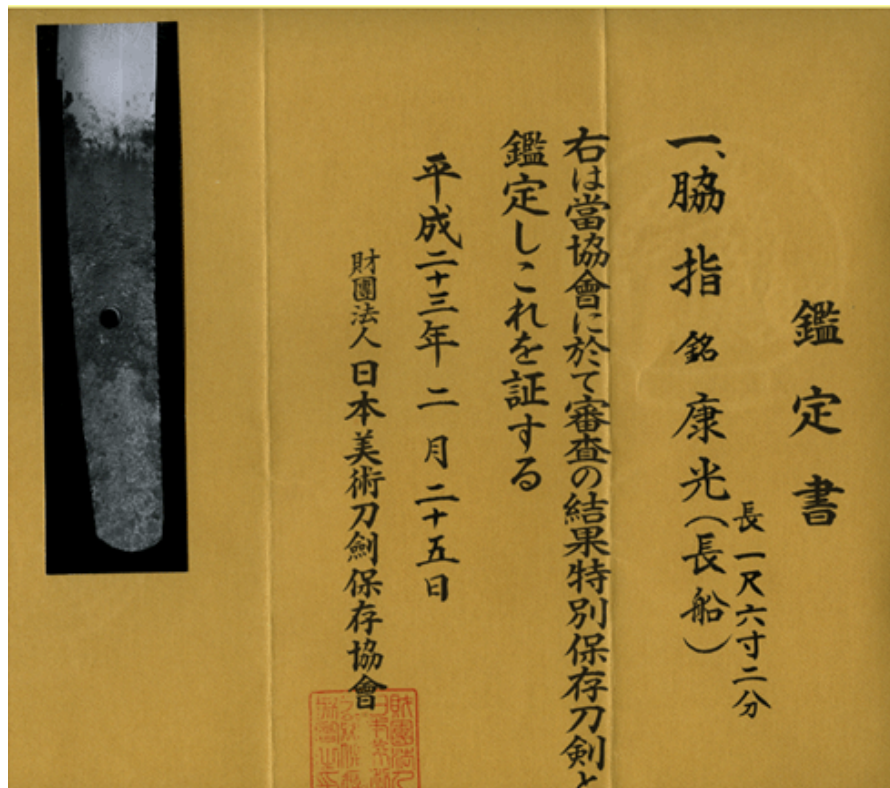
The following are some of the major characteristics of the Oei-Bizen (応永備前) school:

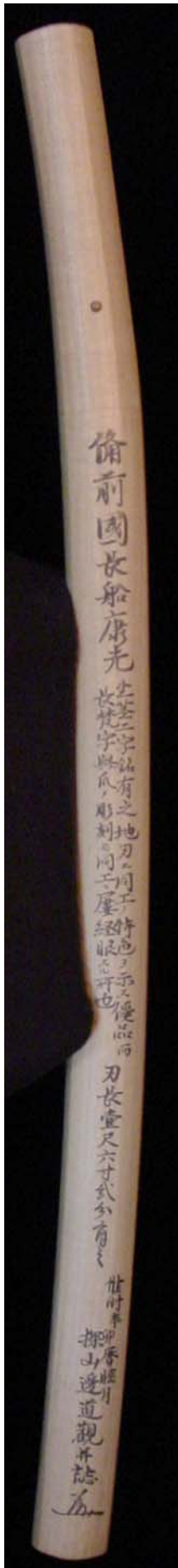
**SUGATA:** There are *tachi*, *katana*, and *wakizashi* of both *shinogi-zukuri* and *hira-zukuri*, but *tanto* of less than 30 cm in length are rare. There are no extant examples of *nagamaki*. The exaggerated and ostentatious *sugata* that was in fashion in the preceding Nanbokuchō period disappeared and was replaced by thinner blades exhibiting a pronounced *saki-zori*. These smiths seem to have set out to copy the *tachi sugata* of the Kamakura period, but theirs is differentiated by a shallow *saki-zori*. Generally the *nagasa* is about 70 cm in *tachi*, and 50 cm in *wakizashi*. The production of *katana* and *wakizashi* was begun in this period. *Katana* are similar to *tachi*, but their *saki-zori* is deeper and the *nagasa* is shorter than seen in *tachi*. *Wakizashi* generally have a narrow *mihaba*, small *kissaki*, and *saki-zori*. The *nagasa* of *hira-zukuri ko-wakizashi* became longer than in the preceding period, but the *mihaba* grew narrower and the *sori* is very shallow, sometimes even *mu-zori*.

- JIHADA:** The *jigane* is soft and the *jihada* is generally *itame hada* with some areas of *mokume-hada* mixed with *o-hada*. Clear *bo-utsuri* and *midare utsuri* appears. Sometimes even when the *hamon* is *midareba*, the *utsuri* can be *bo-utsuri*, but *midare utsuri* is also seen on blades with this *hamon*. An important *kantei* point of the Shodai Yasumitsu is the fact that one often finds areas of partially straight grains mixed in with the typical *itame*.
- HAMON:** The *hamon* is *nioi* based. The thick *nioi* line is soft and *hajimi* are seen inside the *hamon* at times. The shape tends to be *koshi-no-hirata midare* mixed with *choji-midare*. Also *suguha* mixed with *ko-midare* is also seen. One also notices the Oei trait of a wide spacing between the *midare* patterns.
- HORIMONO:** *Bo-hi* with *soe-hi* or *tsure-hi* is quite common. The top of the *hi* is located just above the *yokote*. The bottom of the *hi* is finished around the *machi*. *Horimono* are often seen on *wakizashi*, with the same design often appearing on both sides of the blade. *Ken-maki-ryu* or the names of the gods and deities are engraved on the *omote* and *ken* with *dokko*, *tsume*, or *bonji* on the *ura*, while *bo-hi* with *soe-hi* or *tsure-hi* whose bottoms are *maru-dome* are usually engraved in the above *horimono*.
- NAKAGO:** Shorter and less tapered *nakago* with *kurijiri*. *Cho-me* (long signature) including the date is found but a great many swords have only the *niji mei* Yasumitsu (康光). Because of the great number of *katana*, *wakizashi* and *tanto* produced, the *katana-me* became common yet *tachi-me* is still found on *tachi* as is appropriate.
- MEI:** BISHÛ OSAFUNE YASUMITSU  
備州長船康光
- BISHÛ OSAFUNE JÛ UEMONNOJÔ YASUMITSU  
備州長船住右衛門尉康光
- YASUMITSU  
康光
-











# PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE NCJSC

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## Tsuba, An Aesthetic Study

by

**Kazutaro Torigoye and Robert E. Haynes**

150 pages, comb-bound, reprinted 11/2007.

**Sub Totals:**

**Domestic (USA)** Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ at \$25.00 (US). Includes shipping: \_\_\_\_\_

**International** Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ at \$35.00 (US). Includes shipping: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Translation of the "Kinkō Meikan" (TEXT ONLY)

by

**Senichiro Masumoto and Kenichi Kokubo, 1974**

192 pages, spiral bound. Compiled from the 1982 thru 1988 newsletter series, and includes the corrected pages.

**Sub Totals:**

**Domestic (USA)** Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ at \$25.00 (US). Includes shipping: \_\_\_\_\_

**International** Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ at \$35.00 (US). Includes shipping: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Nihontō Newsletters ("Yamanaka Newsletters")

by

**Albert Yamanaka**

The complete set, nearly 2000 pages, reorganized by Paul Allman, in four volumes, unbound, with Table of Contents.

**Sub Totals:**

**Domestic (USA)** Quantity: \_\_\_ at \$211.00/set (US). Includes shipping and insurance: \_\_\_\_\_

**Canada** Quantity: \_\_\_ at \$230.00/set (US). Includes shipping and insurance: \_\_\_\_\_

**International** Quantity: \_\_\_ at \$253.00/set (US). Includes shipping (and insurance if available): \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Order Form

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail/Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form, along with your check or money-order in US dollars, to:

**Northern California Japanese Sword Club**

**P.O. Box 7156**

**San Carlos, CA 94070, USA**

## SAN FRANCISCO 2011 TOKEN KAI

**OVERVIEW:** On August 4,5,6,7, 2011 the Northern California Japanese Sword Club (N.C.J.S.C) will be hosting its 21st annual Token Kai at the **S.F. Airport Marriott Hotel**

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**DIRECTIONS:** To help us serve your needs and to guarantee a table at the 2011 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. Fred M. Weissberg  
P.O. Box 7156  
San Carlos, CA 94070  
1(650) 595-1703  
email: [hageyama@mindspring.com](mailto:hageyama@mindspring.com)

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### **2011 TOKEN KAI COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The 2011 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 2011 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 \$119.00 per night-single or double. **NOTE: Room rate expires 30 days prior to show. RESERVE NOW!**

**TABLE RESERVATIONS:**

Number of tables needed: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$175.00 with two passes/table\*

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$235.00\* with three passes/table

**\*NOTE NEW PRICE!!!**

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

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