

Tō-Ron

Monthly Newsletter of the

Northern California Japanese Sword Club

September 2010

NCJSC P.O. Box 7156 San Carlos, CA 94070 www.ncjsc.org info@ncjsc.org General Meeting: 12:30pm to 3:30pm

September 19, 2010



September Topic: Kagoshima - Satsuma

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Kagoshima city, capitol of Kagoshima prefecture in Southern Kyushu. Currently with a population of some 600,000 it became the chief town of Satsuma han when the Shimazu family built a castle there in 1602. Because of the defeat at Sekigahara the Shimazu family holdings were greatly reduced, forcing them to give up ancestral lands. Nearly all the families under their control chose to live in reduced circumstances under the Shimazu rather than stay with their fiefs and serve new lords. Already remote, this new Satsuma became a country of Samurai-farmers with their own unique dialect and a decidedly martial culture.

See Page 3 for full details

October Meeting: Topic: Kuwana - Isa, Muramasa

Kuwana, castle town of the Ise family and gateway to the Grand Shrine at Ise. Sadahide, Munehide, Munemasa, Munetomo, Masayuki Mitsusada of the Hazama school made tsuba nearby in Kameyama, while Nobutoki worked in Kuwana itself. Kanezane, Kanenaga, Kanekore and Masamori swordmakers of the Ujiin school worked here. Also Masashige, Masazane,

See Page 3 for full details

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

2010 Annual Dues

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

President

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

2010 Board Members

Fred Weissberg

Duane Hanson Gregory Fretz

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

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

Higo (肥後国; Higo no kuni) was an old province of Japan in the area that is today Kumamoto Prefecture on the island of <u>Kyūshū</u>. Higo bordered on <u>Chikugo</u>, <u>Bungo</u>, <u>Hyūga</u>, <u>Ōsumi</u>, and Satsuma Provinces.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higo_Province

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.

2010 Meeting Agenda

ZOTO Wiceti	
January, 2010	2010 NCJSC Elections, all local members are asked to attend Year of the Tiger , bring items related to
February	Hiroshima/Mihara - city tour , Swords and Kodogu
March	Hagi - city tour, Swords and Kodogu
April	Cherry Blossom Display - No General Meeting
May	Fukuoka - Sa, Chikzen, Swords and Kodogu
June	Saga - Hizen, Swords and Kodogu
July	Kumamoto - Higo, hosakawa, Jingo, Hayashi, Enju, Dotanuki
August	NCJSC SF Token Kai – No General Meeting
September	Kagoshima - Satsuma , Swords and Kodogu
October	Kuwana - Isa, Muramasa, Swords and Kodogu
November	Nagoya - Owari, Swords and Kodogu
December	Seki - Mino, Swords and Kodogu
January, 2011	2010 NCJSC Elections, all local members are asked to attend Year of the Rabbit , bring items related to

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.

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Announcements / Requests

September 2010 Meeting Topic

Kagoshima city, capitol of Kagoshima prefecture in Southern Kyushu. Currently with a population of some 600,000 it became the chief town of Satsuma han when the Shimazu family built a castle there in 1602. Because of the defeat at Sekigahara the Shimazu family holdings were greatly reduced, forcing them to give up ancestral lands. Nearly all the families under their control chose to live in reduced circumstances under the Shimazu rather than stay with their fiefs and serve new lords. Already remote, this new Satsuma became a country of Samurai-farmers with their own unique dialect and a decidedly martial culture.

During the Koto period there was the Naminohira school in Satsuma and in the Shinto era there was a new flowering of swordmaking with artists like; Motohira, Masachika, Motonao, Maruta Masafusa, Masayuki, Ichinohira Yasuyo and a new line of Naminohira smiths started by Yasuyuki. While there was no established school of tsuba makers in Satsuma during koto times, the Shimazu did invite artists to work for them including; Naoka, Naotaka and Naokatsu of the Ota school, and Kanesue, Kanenori, Kanetake, Kaneatsu, and Kaneoki of the Chishiki school.

For 240 years Kagoshima samurai perfected their special brand of swordsmanship, and their special hatred of the Tokugawa government. When the time came the leaders of the new Meiji Government came forth from Kagoshima, and not long after the leaders of the rebellion against it with their distinctive swords.

Make the trip with us to our last stop on the southern route and explore the history, the soldiers and the arms of Kagoshima.

October 2010 Meeting Topic

Kuwana, castle town of the Ise family and gateway to the Grand Shrine at Ise. Sadahide, Munehide, Munemasa, Munetomo, Masayuki Mitsusada of the Hazama school made tsuba nearby in Kameyama, while Nobutoki worked in Kuwana itself. Kanezane, Kanenaga, Kanekore and Masamori swordmakers of the Ujiin school worked here. Also Masashige, Masazane, Fujimasa, Masatoshi and Murazane of the Sengo school were here of course along with the infamous Muramasa. Crowds of pilgrims travelled to Ise to sample the restaurants, purchase souvenirs and to pray before Japan's most sacred shrines. Take a walk with us now to Ise and the town of Kuwana.



Iron hirozogan sukashi tsuba, measures 7.92cm wide by 7.99cm tall and is 0.49cm with a raised rim. ca 1580



Iron Higo sukashi tsuba late 18'th or early 19'th century, measures 8.39cm wide by 8.27cm tall and is 0.30cm thick.

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Iron Higo tsuba, kamiyoshi school of Higo tsuba makers, with Hosokawa mon, sea cucumber theme, measures 7.35cm wide by 8.1cm tall and is 0.43cm thick.



Iron Higo tsuba, Higo Jingo plate, Kaga brass inlay, Water dragon theme, Measures 7.68cm wide by 8.25cm tall and is 0.35cm thick, ca. 1750

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Iron Higo Kanshiro from the Nishigaki school, sukashi tsuba, measures 6.89cm wide by 7.21cm tall and 0.51cm (seppa dai) and 0.41cm thick at the rim, ca. 1750



Higo forged (folded) brass shippo (Cloisonné) inlay tsuba. Measures 7.25cm wide by 7.74cm tall and is 0.31cm thick. ca. 1600

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Higo (?) iron tsuba with a raised rim, distinctive yasuri mei (concentric circles) measures 8.12cm wide by 8.14cm tall and 0.46cm thick at the rim.



Yamagani sukashi tsuba, this style of tsuba was found on a Spanish Galleon the "San Diego", A unique feature on this tsuba is the surface finish, (punch mark design) that extends thru the seppa dai area. Measures 5.79cm wide by 5.90cm tall, 0.4cm thick and 0.34cm thick at the rim.

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Iron Higo Mokko shape sukashi kiri, polonia crest, measures 7.75cm wide by 7.97cm tall and is 0.39cm thick



A Hirata Hikozo Higo Iron sukasghi tsuba with a sea cucumber theme, measures 7.64cm side by 8.06cm tall and is 0.55cm thick, ca. Genroku period

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Iron Higo Yashiro Jingo tsuba with a two gourds theme, measures 4.82cm wide by 5.63cm tall, 0.47cm thick at the seppa dai. ca 18'th century



Iron Higo Yashiro Jingo tsuba, san dai (3rd generation) there is a butterfly theme, measures 6.86cm wide by 7.26cm tall and is 0.61cm thick.

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Iron tsuba, cupped in shape, measures $6.63 \, \text{cm}$ wide by $7.84 \, \text{cm}$ tall and is $0.25 \, \text{cm}$ thick at the rim , the depth of the cupped tsuba is $0.68 \, \text{cm}$



Iron tsuba measures 7.11cm wide by 7.21cm tall and is 0.26cm thick, 0.22cm thick at the rim

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An iron tsuba **by Musashi**, not just a tsuba made in the style, but one made by Musahi. It measures 7.18cm wide by 7.38cm tall and is 0.41cm thick.



Another tsuba by Musashi, yamagani plate (hikozo plate) there is a shakudo rim, measures 6.26cm wide by 6.16cm tall and is 0.48cm with a raised rim.

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The image on the left is a Higo Umabari with brass inlay, measuring 16.2cm long by 0.92cm wide and is 0.29cm thick. The Higo Umabari on the right measures 13.4cm long by 0.84cm wide and is -.27cm thick.



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This Higo Umabari measures 20.64cm long, 1.19cm wide and 0.29cm thick. As an exercise, you are encouraged to translate the above images and the answer will be listed in a future issue of this newsletter.





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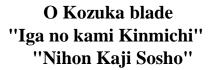
O-kozuka measures 10.37cm long by 2.28cm wide and is 0.66cm thick





mid-edo period o-kozuka of shakudo and gold construction with dragons done in high relief.

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This is a very large Mishina School ko gatana by Iga no kami Kinmichi. This line of Mishina smiths were permitted to use the inscription "Nihon Kaji Sohsho" (Master of Japanese Swordsmiths) as shown on this blade. This title was given to the shodai Kinmichi by Tokugawa Iyeyasu and the authority to register swordsmiths and grant titles came with it. This power was passed on to future generations of the line. The Kinmichi smiths were also granted the use of imperial mon and sometimes inscribed the "eda kiku" mon as in this example. There were 10 generations of the Iga no kami Kinmichi line. The Shodai was active around 1590 and the 10th generation received his title of "Iga no kami" in July of 1844. Judging from the health of the blade and the condition of the nakago, we would guess this kozuka is by one of the later generations. This workmanship of the blade features a suguha hamon with kogunome mixed in. There are ko ashi and some small togari. The tip is deeply tempered. The jigane is itame with ample ji nie. Maru mune.

Nagasa: 18.6 cm Nakago length: 9.2 cm Motohaba: 1.9cm

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THE HIZEN SCHOOL

by Fred Weissberg

PREFACE

Before we delve into the specifics of the Hizen School perhaps it would be a good idea to discuss some important historical events of the Keicho Era that led to the differentiation between what we classify as Koto (Old Sword Period) swords and Shinto (New Sword Period) swords.

The Keicho Era started in 1596 and swords made before this time are called Koto while those made after this time are called Shinto. There is a great significance in fixing Keicho as the transition period, and the distinction should not be made merely on the basis of whether the swords are older than that period or not. The distinction is based not only on the changes in style and appearance of the swords, but also on some fundamental and substantial social and historical changes that were occurring at the time.

During the Koto period the centers of sword manufacture tended to be in places controlled by powerful clans or religious institutions. They had local production of quality sand iron to be used as raw material in the swordmaking process. With the advent of the Azuchi/Momoyama Era of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and most importantly, the long period of peace brought about by the Tokugawa Bakufu during the Edo Era, the power distribution within the nation changed dramatically. The large temples and shrines were deprived of their right to maintain their own armies. Instead, the Daimyo were endowed with authority from the central government to govern certain localities as feudal lords in communities surrounding a castle. Thus Jo-ka Machi or "Castle Towns" came into being. For the first time in history, these castle towns together with such great cities as Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka became the centers of sword manufacture.

The second major change is in the raw material used for sword making in that it became substantially different from what was used during the Koto period. Due to the relative peace throughout the country and improved roads creating easy transportation, raw material could be transported from its area of origin to the castle towns and other centers of swordmaking. For the first time in history it was no longer necessary for a major swordmaking area to be able to provide the sand iron. It could now be imported. This, in turn, brought forth a drastic change in the quality and nature of the steel produced from raw iron. The so-called local colors that were apparent in the steel of the Koto blades faded with the advent of the new sword period. Add to this the fact that this was also the time of the beginning of international trade with the West. This led to the importation and use of foreign steel known as Namban-tetsu from Holland and Portugal.

A third factor is the changes in the forging methods themselves. During the age of the country at war (Sengoku Jidai), which lasted about one hundred and thirty years, swords were in great demand. In order to meet that demand quality was often sacrificed for quantity. Traditional swordmaking techniques were ignored and almost completely lost. The relative peace of the Shinto Era allowed these almost forgotten arts to be re-kindled and new methods of forging such as "Hon-sanmai-kitae" (three piece forging), etc. were developed.

The fourth factor causing differences between Koto and Shinto is the change in battle strategies and the development of swordsmanship (kendo). The very style of wearing swords changed. The highly curved Koto blades of the mounted Samurai were worn slung from the hip with the cutting edge down. This gave way to the new Shinto swords, which had less curvature and were worn thrust through the sash with the cutting edge upward.

Battles and the very nature of swordsmanship changed. Infantry actions became common wherein large numbers of unmounted Samurai needed to be able to draw their swords quickly and hold them with two hands. This led to less curvature, longer nakago, and the center of gravity being placed somewhat closer to the tip of the sword.

These changes can be seen in the many remaining examples of long Nanbokucho tachi that were shortened and worn by the unmounted Samurai. In fact, what is known as the Keicho-Shinto shape can be seen as coming directly from the shape of this shortened older tachi. They tend to be wide with very little difference in width from the machi to the boshi. As the Shinto Era progressed the influences from the Momoyama culture decreased and swords began to show their own unique characteristics.

HISTORY

Hizen province was more or less under the control of Todaiji temple after the Kamakura period. During the Sengoku period, the Ryuzoji clan of Saga tried to expand its influence but was defeated by Toyotomi Hideyoshi who divided the province and gave it to the Nabeshima, Matsuura, Omura, and Goto families. Of these, the Nabeshima was the biggest and most powerful and even under the subsequent reign of the Tokugawa was able to maintain its huge landholdings assessed at 350,000 koku of annual rice production.

Geographically Hizen Province has always been one of the most significant areas in Japan's long history. It is located on Kyushu Island between the important ancient trade ports of Hakata (later Fukuoka) and Fukae (later Nagasaki). Control of such an important highway linking these two ports resulted in the construction of Saga castle, which became the seat of the Nabeshima clan from the Keicho period up until the Meiji Restoration.

The Hizen School of swordmaking (generally known as the Tadayoshi School) was a flourishing industry that was a valuable earner of currency for the Nabeshima clan. This was a result of the efforts expended by the Hizen Daimyo to place a priority on the promotion and development of the sword and ceramics (Imari-yaki, Nabeshima-yaki, Arita-yaki) industries. The Nabeshima Daimyo realized that a solid economic base would be necessary if they were to recover the huge amounts of funds they were forced to expend on Toyotomi Hideyoshi's failed Korean invasions in which they played a major role. Based upon the generous patronage of the Nabeshima family, the Tadayoshi line of smiths were able to devote themselves to the sword making industry.

There are a strikingly large number of Hizen school swords extant today. Among these, the works of the second generation, Omi Daijo, are conspicuous for their number. During the Edo period, the evaluation of the second generation was extremely high and these blades enjoyed wide use. They were worn in every area of the country, which indicates that the entire school (some say as many as sixty smiths) were engaged in helping the second generation meet this demand. I mention this anecdote to emphasize that we are truly talking about a sword making industry.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIZEN SCHOOL

SUGATA: The sori is torii-zori or chu-zori. The kissaki varies with ko-kissaki, chu-kissaki and o-kissaki, but the chu-kissaki is, by far, the most common. Tanto are comparatively few, but occasionally, in addition to hira-zukuri, kiriba-zukuri is seen. As for katana and wakizashi, iori-zukuri is usual, but in tanto, there are also mitsu-mune.

JITETSU: It is extremely fine and tight. It is comprised of a dense ko-mokume hada, which is known as konuka-hada. Occasionally, there might be one in which a ko-itame hada appears. Dark spots called sumigane resembling those seen in the work of Enju and Aoe appear here and there and are one of the characteristic features of Hizen swords.

HAMON: Suguba, suguba hotsure, o-notare, and choji-midare are the most common. Occasionally there are some with gunome-midare and o-midare. Chu-suguba consisting of Yamashiro-tradition nie is most likely to be classified as a Hizen specialty. In every case there is ko-nie in the habuchi without any clustering, and the nioi line is wide. When it is choji-midare, the kashira of the choji are round with long ashi. When it is suguba, there are some with absolutely no ashi, but the usual is for ashi to be inserted here and there. Another interesting feature to be observed in some of the Hizen smith's blades is the presence of what is known as abu-no-me (wasp eyes) present in the gunome. These are pools of nie (Yo) that are present within a double gunome structure. Occasionally some of the generations of Tadayoshi smiths will have tobiyaki in the form of a sun (circle) of nie on one side of the blade and a moon (crescent) on the other side of the blade. These are important kantei points to look for.

BOSHI: Those returning in ko-maru are the most common, but there are also some that are midarekomi. The often used term, "Hizen Boshi" has a uniform width from the yokote to the tip and is a standard ko-maru boshi.

HORIMONO: There are various types, but shin no ryu, kurikata, sanko tsuka ken, and bonji are the most common. Generally speaking, they are skillfully executed. In particular those of the early period are all beautifully done and the pattern is the Umetada style. This can be attributed to the fact that the Shodai Tadayoshi studied with Umetada Myoju for about three years starting in 1596.

NAKAGO: As for the mune, kaku-mune is the most common, but there are also ko-maru mune. The saki is kurijiri, kengata, or katayamagata. The yasurime is usually yoko or sujikai without any kessho yasuri.

MEI: Rarely there is a ni-ji mei (two character signature), but usually a naga-mei is inscribed. Customarily in wakizashi and tanto the mei is inscribed on the sashi omote which is the same as the works of various other schools. Katana, however, are always inscribed on the sashi-ura, in other words, in the so-called tachi-mei.

MISC.: Hizen blades are said to have the most stylish shape of all Shinto works, which opinion is probably based on their perfectly balanced curvature. The most popular length was 2 shaku and 2-3 sun (66.7-69.7cm). The Hizen works have a beautiful jihada, but since the kawagane (skin steel) is thin, there are frequently works where shintetsu has crept out. Not withstanding this trait, Hizen blades have, throughout their history, been highly sought by both Samurai and modern day collectors.

The preceding paper is, primarily, a compilation of materials from several sources. I threw in a few original ideas and thoughts just to keep it interesting and to make me stretch the boundaries of my scholastic skills.

The following sources were liberally sampled:

- JSSUS Art and The Sword Volume 4
- Nagayama, K. The Connoisseur's Book of Japanese Swords
- NBTHK Token Bijutsu, Volume 7,
- Robertshaw, R. Hizen Tadayoshi
- Watson, H. Nihon To Koza, Vol. 4, Shinto (Translation)

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE NCJSC

Tsuba, An Aesthetic Study

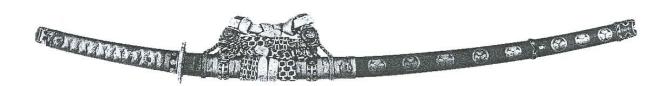
by

Kazutaro Torigoye and Robert E. Haynes

150 pages, con	mb-bound,	reprinted 11/2007.	Sub Totals:
Domestic (USA)	Quantity: _	at \$25.00 (US). Includes shipping:	
International	Quantity: _	at \$35.00 (US). Includes shipping:	
		elation of the "Kinkō Meikan" (TEXT ONLY) by Sonishiro Masumeta and Kanishi Kakuba 1974	
192 pages spi		Senichiro Masumoto and Kenichi Kokubo, 1974 Compiled from the 1982 thru 1988 newsletter series, and it	includes
the corrected j		compiled from the 1702 tind 1700 he willedge deries, and	Sub Totals:
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Canada		at \$230.00/set (US). Includes shipping and insurance:	
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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



TAMPA JAPANESE SWORD SHOW

Pre-Registration Exclusively for Show Exhibitors

The Tampa Japanese Sword Show will take place on February 11, 12 & 13, 2011 in Tampa Florida at the Tampa Airport Marriott Hotel.

Exhibitors are being offered the opportunity of Advance Pre-Registration prior to releasing tables for sale. To ensure having your table at the 2011 show, please return the Exhibitor Pre-Registration Form (see bottom of page) along with your payment before the advance registration deadline.

Advance Registration will end on Friday, October 22, 2010

Advance negistration will end off inday, October 22, 2010				
HOTEL RESERVATIONS:	New Show Discount Rate: \$152/Night Toll-free Reservations: 800-228-9290 Hotel Direct Reservations: 813-879-5151 Hotel fax 813-873-0945 Cut-off date for discount rate is Jan. 19, 2011			
TRANS: SECURITY: EXHIBIT TABLES:	No transportation required as hotel is in the Airport Terminal Building 24 Hour Security for Exhibit Showroom \$175 per 6' table, 2 Exhibitor Badges per table only. Honored Guest Badges			
PARKING: THE SHOW:	good for all three days including dealer set-up hours -\$50. Marriott Hotel Public Parking - \$6 All Day with hotel provided coupon This will be an <u>Open Show!</u> Welcoming all sword organizations, all collectors and dealers from the U.S., Canada, Europe, Japan, and Internationally. Also, open to the public!			
SHOW HOURS:	Friday, Feb. 11, 2011 - Exhibitor Set-up only 9AM-Noon Noon-10PM - General Admission Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011 - Dealers only 9AM-10AM 10AM-10PM - General Admission			
SPECIAL EVENTS:	Sunday, Feb. 13, 2011 - 9AM-3PM - General Admission Educational and Lecture programs in Meibutsu Room by NBTHK American Branch. Sword Etiquette program by JSSS/US			
Tampa Japanese Sword Show Table Reservations and Exhibitor Pre-Registration Form				
Name		_		
Address		_		
Tel/Cell				
Number of 6' tables @ \$175 per table (includes 2 Exhibitor Badges @ table) = \$Number of Honored Guest Badges-Good for all 3 days including dealer set-up @ \$50 each = \$				
	TOTAL \$			
		_		
Exhibitor Signature	Date c payable to Al Bardi - Mail to Al Bardi, 6551 Shoreline Drive, #6402,			
St Petersburg FL 33708 - Cell 808-372-1340				
Website: www.tampaiapaneseswordshow.com				

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