

To-ken Society Meeting

27 April 2016

The meeting commenced with an update by Paul Bowman about nihonto-related events being organised by the Society, amongst which a forthcoming half day at the Ashmolean museum dedicated to tosogu and kodogu. Some of the Ashmolean presenters are likely to include Mike Rudberg and Justin Orr and the event itself is being scheduled for 10 September 2016. Another event, at the Leeds Armouries, is being conceived for late winter – early spring 2017.

Paul then made a presentation about similarities and disparities between the Yamashiro tradition and the Enju school. The introduction delineated the genealogy of some of the most pre-eminent Yamashiro smiths such as Rai Kuniyuki, Rai Kunitoshi, Kunimitsu, Kuninaga, Ryokai and their offshoots Echizen Rai, Chikuzen Nobukuni and Nakajima Rai. The Enju school and its parallels to the Rai school were also described, with an emphasis on leading smiths Kunimura, Kunitoki and Kunisuke.

There are many similarities in the forging techniques and output of the two schools: elegant sugata, fine nagare/masame hada, suguha ko-nie hamon with tight nioiguchi. Paul highlighted some of the key differences setting them apart: shirake (fainter nie forming whitish frosty look) utsuri in Enju versus the more pronounced nie utsuri for Rai, as well as o-maru boshi in Enju versus ko-maru in Rai.

The discussion was illustrated by a fine Tokubetsu Hozon Enju wakizashi.

Thereafter, Clive Sinclair described his two Hizen-to (the Hizen school was inspired by the Yamashiro den) – a shodai Tadayoshi and a nidai Tadayoshi. The blades evinced typical ko-nie hamon and fine konuka hada.

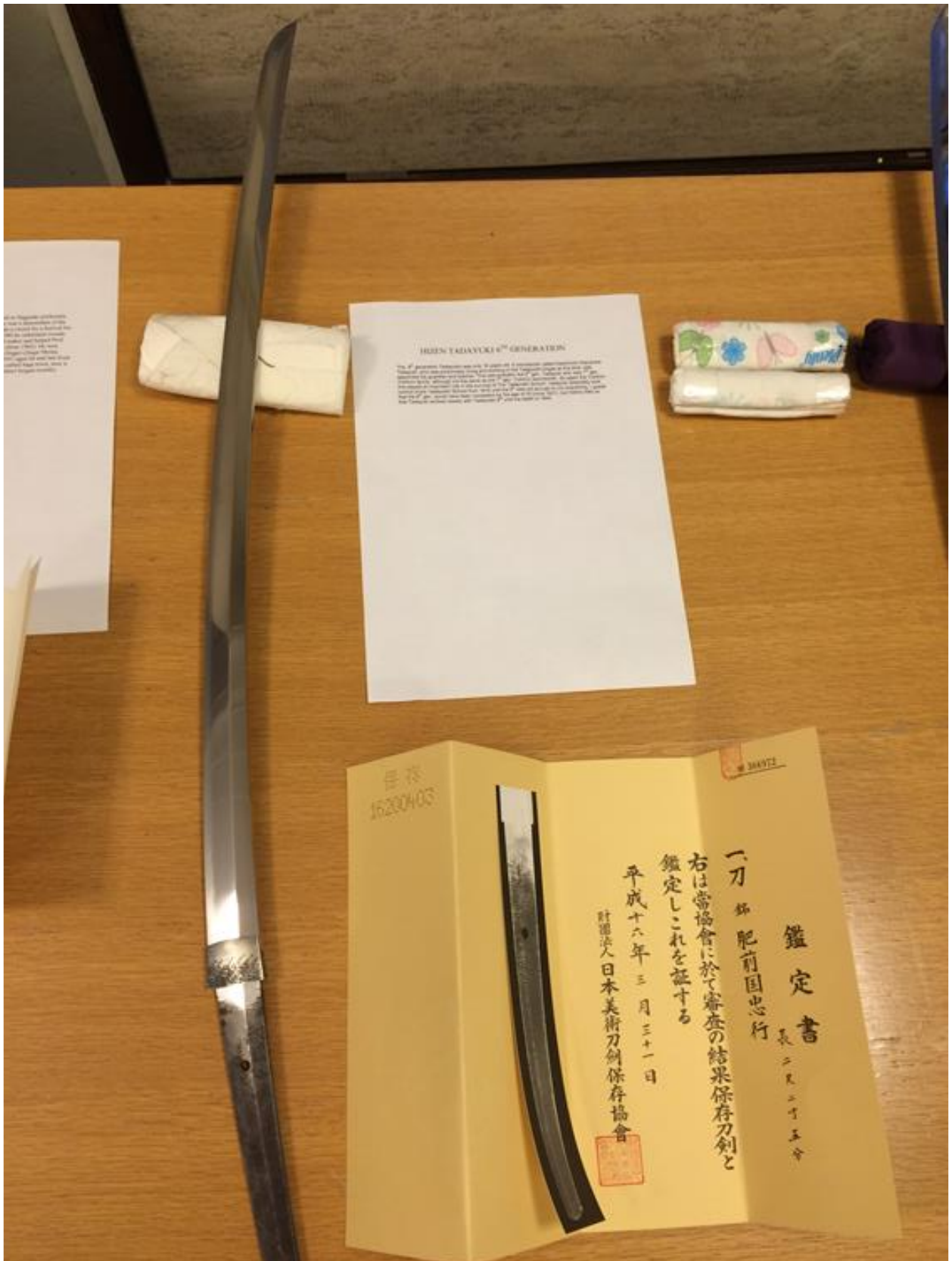
The swords David Maynard had brought formed a continuation on the theme: an 8th generation Tadayoshi wakizashi and an Yoshitada katana (made in 1945 by a descendant of Tadayoshi). The late Tadayoshi had a larger hada and slightly elongated kissaki compared to earlier generations while the Yoshitada featured a ko-kissaki and tight hada.

Trevor Read also presented a blade in Yamashiro style. The katana caused some debate with opinions ranging between late Koto and Shinto but the consensus seemed to trend to Echizen Kanbun Shinto.

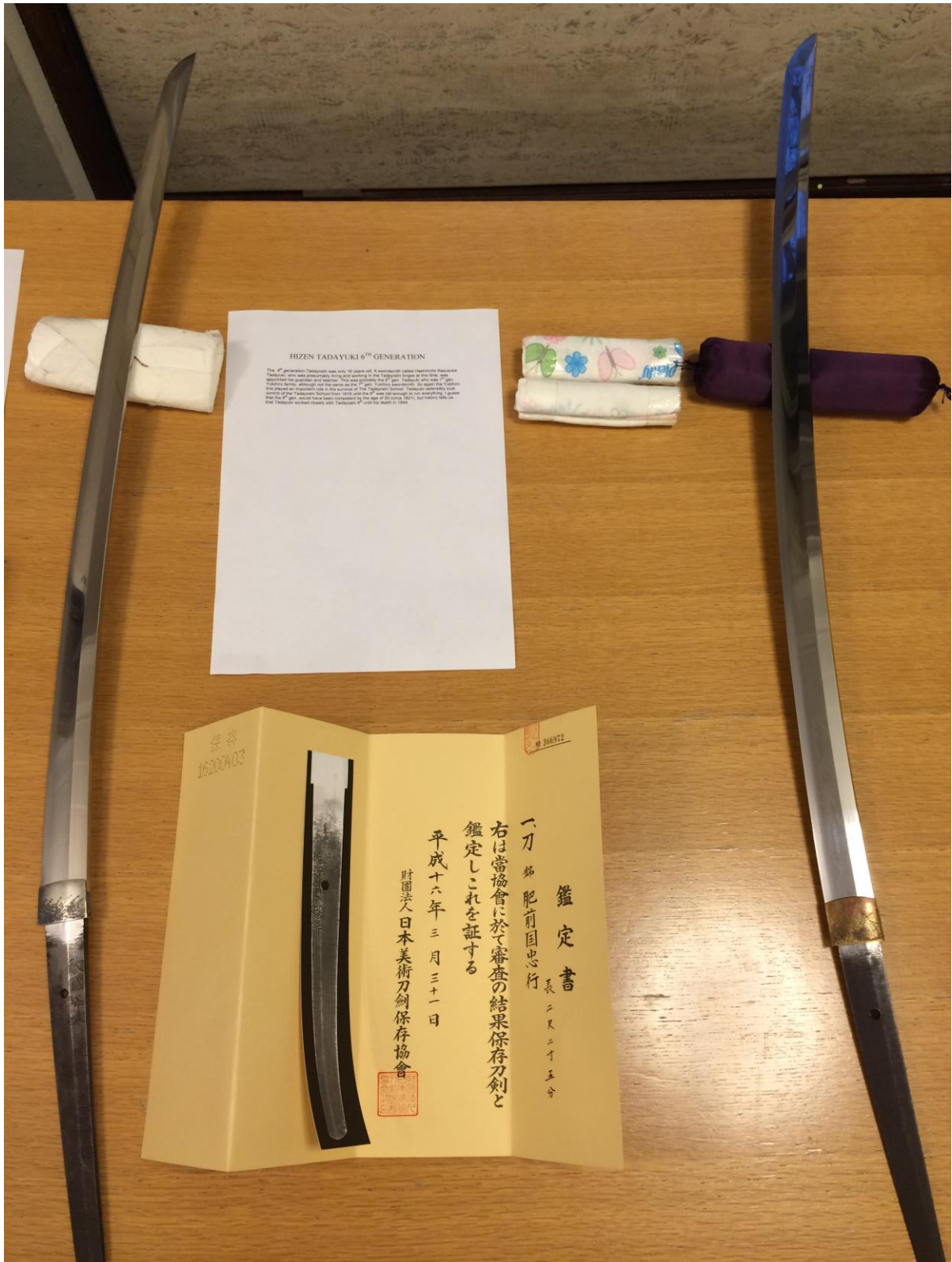
Enju wakizashi



Hizen Tadayoshi



Tadayuki and Tadayoshi





Echizen Shinto

