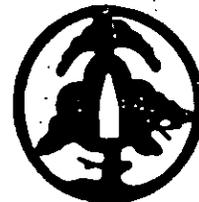


SWORD POLISHING

THE TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

for the Study and Preservation of Japanese Swords and Fittings



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PROGRAMME 98

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1977

Programme Editor

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January Meeting: Owing to the room at the Mason's Arms not being available, the meeting has had to be cancelled.

Coincident with a change of management at the Mason's Arms, the meeting room will no longer be available to the Society. Notice of the February and March meetings will be circulated as soon as suitable accommodation has been found.

Editorial

The November meeting was an informal chat between the members present. There were a number of interesting objects brought along including a Mino katana that was mounted with a tsuba designed as an inaccurate compass and a Hoko (an L shaped yari). Mole Benn stole the show with two spectacular pieces, a recently polished Ozaka blade in shira-saya signed, if my memory serves me - Ozaki Gengoomon Fujiwara Suketaka, Takanobu School, late shinto period. He also brought his aikuchi of amazing proportions, that many of us have seen before and that was in the Ashmolean Museum exhibition of 1968 (No.136). It was described in the catalogue as follows:-

"A sword of fantastic proportions mounted as an aikuchi. The metal fittings inlaid in the Higo style with tendrils, kiku-mon and kiri-mon in gold. The hilt and scabbard of gold nashiji-lacquer, decorated with circular panels depicting the twelve animals of the Zodiac in gold and other lacquers. Total length of the sword 32 inches, width of scabbard 3 inches. Blade: in proportion to the scabbard, overall length 30 inches, width 2½ inches. Signed Sagami no Kuni no Junin Masamune and dated. Horimono of a dragon ridden by Fudo, on the reverse a cherry tree in blossom. Jitetsu is tightly forged mokume. Midare hamon is very active in Koniye with extensive sunegashi.

It is difficult to say for what purpose a sword of this proportion was made. It appears to be an enlarged copy of one of the tanto of the Emperor Godaigo Temo, the blade of which was by Masamune, of the same shape and with a cherry tree horimono. This blade is of 19th Century workmanship, probably connected with the Naotane School (because of the quality horimono? - Ed.) and is of excellent quality. It is typical of the many normally sized tanto of the 19th Century which have a similar metal structure and elaborate horimono, and which are usually signed Masamune or Sadamune".

Mole said at the meeting that he had an unofficial attribution that the blade was made by Gassan Sadakatsu.

My thanks to Han Bing Siong from the Netherlands who contributed the following to our programme:-

ATTACK ON TANKS WITH JAPANESE SWORDS IN WORLD WAR II

In his article "THE SHIN-GUNTO OR "MILITARY SWORDS" " published in Volume I No.4 of the Journal of our Society, Mr. Holtaway wrote: "It is a fascinating thought that some of these old blades had been in the owners family for centuries, relics from old wars, once again mounted for battle and carried by the latest in a long line of warriors. That these latter day Samurai were true to their ancient traditions of self abnegation in battle is well attested, indeed it is on record that Japanese officers have been seen, in the closing stages of the war, to charge tanks, armed only with the Shin-gunto".

During a recent holiday in England I visited the Museum of the Cheshire Regiment in Chester. There I saw a sword that was used for such an attack on a tank. For those who may perhaps have questioned the effectivity of an attack on a tank with a sword, I quote the explanation of the museum:

"A Japanese officer only armed with this sword climbed onto a tank and stabbed both Captain Carnaby and his gunner before being shot by L/cpl. Jenkins MM in hand to hand combat in the tank".

According to the explanation the sword concerned has a mumei o-suriage blade of the 14th century. The mounting is the usual Shin-gunto mounting. The tassels, very unfortunately, are lacking.

THE MIOCHIN FAMILY

A book called "Miochin Rekidai Zokufu" (Records of the Miochin Family) contains a number of doubtful facts about this celebrated family, and dates its origins from the misty times of mythology, relating the founder of the house to the God Takaru who taught him the art of working in metals. A more likely account says that it was from the founder of the Ki family, Munenori, son of Hikofuto Oshinobu no Mikoto, grandson of eighth Emperor, Kogen (BC 214 - 158) that they descended. This ancestor was called Masuda Takenouchi no Sukune who was supposed to have served six successive Emperors from AD 71 to AD 399. This unlikely fact may be explained by the supposition that Sukune was a hereditary title, passed from generation to generation. Tradition states that Masada made a suit of armour for the Emperess Jingo on her expedition to Korea, although there is some doubt even of the existence of Jingo and her trip. When the first Miochin, Murotsuke was appointed armourer to the Shogun in the latter half of the 16th century, he claimed there had been an uninterrupted succession of armourers in the Masuda family for 1080 years.

The earliest signed examples of Miochin work are by Nobuiye who lived from 1504 - 1564 and was first called Yasuiye. He made a helmet for Takeda Harunobu (Takeda Shingen) after which he was given a character from his patron's name and thereafter was called Nobuiye. At the same time, and in the nearby province of Hitachi, lived Miochin Yoshimichi (working 1521 - 1531) who was head of a branch of the family (Nobuiye was head of the main line) who also signed his work.

It is probable that the family did in fact go back as far as about AD 75. It should be remembered that adoption into the family, in order to pass the art along, was common practice and that blood-line did not always count.

The following list corresponds to the characters shown overleaf:-

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Mune-Nori | 17. Mune-Tsugu (working AD 668-672) |
| 2. Mune-Yoshi | 18. Mune-Toshi |
| 3. Mune-Kazo | 19. Mune-Matsu |
| 4. Mune-Aki | 20. Mune-Shige |
| 5. Mune-Taka | 21. Mune-Maru (working AD 782-876) |
| 6. Mune-Taka | 22. Mune-Yo |
| 7. Mune-Moto | 23. Mune-Kazu |
| 8. Mune-Tada | 24. Mune-Kuni (working AD 931-946) |
| 9. Mune-Katsu | 25. Mune-Nagu |
| 10. Mune-Kado | 26. Mune-Tora |
| 11. Mune-Aki | 27. Mune-Yori |
| 12. Mune-Haru | 28. Mune-Moto |
| 13. Mune-Hira | 29. Mune-Mori |
| 14. Mune-Toshi | 30. Mune-Suye |
| 15. Mune-Chika | 31. Mune-Zane (working AD 947-988) |
| 16. Mune-Michi | 32. Mune-Kazu (working AD 987) |

List contd...

33. Mune-Mura
34. Mune-Naka
35. Mune Tsune
36. Mune-Yoshi (working AD 1110 - 1184)
37. Mune-Suke (1st Miochin, AD 1154 - 1189)
38. Mune-Kiyo
2nd Miochin, 1190 - 1200 called Giobu no Tayee, of Kamakura
in Sagami.
39. Mune-Yoshi
Formerly called Uchu and later Tanomo, lived at Kamakura
about 1190 - 1198.
40. Mune-Yasu called Tanomo from Sagami about 1204.
41. Yosni-Tsugu called Shune or Heidayu from Sagami about 1204.
42. Mune-Hide formerly called Sarai and later Kwando from
Sagami about 1204.
43. Yoshi-Kiyo called Hiobu no Tayu and later Heinai, from Sagami
about 1204.
44. Mune-Yuki 3rd Miochin, called Hiobu-no-Tayu, lived at Horikawa,
Ichijo and Kyoto about 1207 - 1210.
45. Mune-Nao called Daikaku or Sayemon lived at Horikawa, Ichijo,
and Kyoto about 1204 - 1231.
46. Mune-Masu 4th Miochin, called Hioye-no-Jo lived at Katayama in
the province of Kii, about 1219 - 1233.
47. Mune-Kane called Heidayu or Heita, province of Kii, about 1233.
48. Mune-Sani called Sana-no-suke, or Heita, province of Kii, about 1234.
49. Mune-Shige 5th Miochin called Saiko-no-Tayu, lived at Odawara
about 1247.
50. Mune-To called Sama-no-Suke, lived at Odawara about 1249 - 1255.
51. Mune-Tada 6th Miochin, called Shindayu, lived at Sano in Mino
province, about 1278 - 1287.
52. Shige-Iye called Katayu or Motome from Mino province, about 1298 - 1287.
53. Yoshi-Shige called Kwaku or Kataro from Mino province, about 1299 - 1301.
54. Mune-Tada 7th Miochin, called Ukon-no-Tayu, lived at Kujo,
Kyoto about 1306.
55. Mune-Yoshi called Hiogo or Tsashima, lived at Kujo, Kyoto,
about 1321 - 1323.
56. Mune-Mitsu 8th Miochin, called Hiobu-no-Tayu, lived at Kujo, Kyoto
1321 - 23.
57. Mune-Nori called Sakonji or Tamiya, lived Kujo, Kyoto about 1326 - 1328.
58. Mune-Masa 9th Miochin, called Sakon-no-Tayu, lived at Horokawa,
Ichijo and Kyoto about 1387.
59. Mune-Yasu 10th Miochin, called Hioye-no-suke, lived at Horikawa,
Ichijo and Kyoto about 1387.
60. Mune-Toki formerly called Mambu and later Shikibu-no-Tayu, lived
at Horikawa about 1387 - 1388.
61. Yoshi-Hiro 11th Miochin, called Sakio-no-Tayu, lived at Horikawa,
Ichijo and Kyoto, about 1390 - 1393.
62. Yoshi-Tada 12th Miochin, called Sahioye-no-Jo, lived at Horikawa,
Ichijo and Kyoto about 1394 - 1427.

63. Yoshi-Nori 13th Miochin, called Goro, lived at Horikawa, Ichijo and Kyoto, about 1428.
64. Yoshi-Naga 14th Miochin, called Rokuro Dayu, lived at Horikawa, about 1449 - 51.
65. Taka-Yoshi called Skikibu-no-Tayu lived at Horikawa and Ichijo about 1449 - 51. He was one of the "Three Renowned Artists" (Nahi-no-San Saku) the other two being Yoshi-michi and Nobuiye. (Nos. 89 and 106 respectively).
66. Yoshi-Mochi 15th Miochin called Shinjiro lived at Kamakura, about 1469 - 86.
67. Yoshi-Yasu called Saburo-dayu.
68. Yoshi-Hisa called Shinkuro or Shimpachi, lived at Horikawa, Ichijo and Kyoto about 1469 - 86.
69. Nari-Kuni called Jiro-tayu, lived at Kotaba in Kozuke province about 1528 - 31.
70. Nari-Kuni called Sentaro.
71. Kuni-Chika called Horai Saburo, lived at Kobata about 1525 - 31.
72. Nari-Chika called Hachiro, lived in Kozuke province about 1532 - 54.
73. Nori-Shige)
74. Chika-Shige)
75. Nori-Kuni) All pupils of Nari-Chika (No.72)
76. Shige-Kuni)
77. Shige-Nori)
78. Mune-Yoshi)
79. Mune-Toki) Pupils of Shige-Nori (No.77)
80. Nari-Shige called Horai Taro, of Kobata, Kozuke province about 1558 - 69.
81. Nobu-Fusa pupil of Norishige
82. Fusa-Shige
83. Kuni-Hisa called Horai Kuro, lived in Kozuke and Kaga province, about 1532 - 54.
84. Kuni-Hiro pupil of Kuni-Hisa.
85. Hisa-Iye called Denshishiro, lived at Yukinoshita in Sagami, about 1596 - 1614.
86. Masa-Iye
87. Tsugu-Kiyo
88. Yoshi-Yasu 16th Miochin, called Saburo-Dayu and lived at Fuchu in Hidachi province and at Odawara, about 1489 - 91.
89. Yoshi-Michi called Sakon, lived at Horikawa, Ichijo, Kyoto, Fucho in Hidachi and in the province of Kozuke, about 1521 - 31. Known as one of the "Three Renowned Artists" (No.65 and 105) he is one of the first artists known to have signed his work.
90. Katsu-Yoshi called Matashiro and later Shindayu, lived at Fuchu in Hidachi province, about 1521 - 31.
91. Katsu-Masa called Goro, studied under Katsuiye, became a pupil of Nobaiye, lived at Kozuke, about 1532 - 54.
92. called Jiro, lived in Kozuke, about 1532 - 54.
93. Katsu-Yoshi a pupil of Katsu-Hisa.
94. Yoshi-Iye lived at Yawata, province of Kozuke, about 1573 - 91.
95. Mune-Hisa called Hiobu-no-To lived in Kozuke, about 1521 - 27.
96. Mune-Toki called Saburo, lived in Kozuke, about 1532 - 54,

97. Yoshi-Hisa called Matahachiro, lived at Kamakura in Sagami province, about 1532 - 54.
98. Yoshi-Michi called Kichibei, lived at Iwaki in Mutsu province.
99. Yoshi-Shige called Kiujiro, lived at Yukinoshita, Sagami province, about 1573 - 91.
100. Yoshi-Yuki)
101. Yoshi-Sada)
102. Hisa-Yoshi) Pupils of Nobuiye (No.106)
103. Nobu-Yoshi)
104. Nobu-Hisa)
105. Fusa-Iye
106. Nobu-Iye 17th Miochin, called Sakon-no-Shogen or Kakui after he retired. He lived at Shirai in Kozuke province, about 1521 - 54. He was the third of the "Three Renowned Artists" and along with Yoshimichi was the first known to have signed his work. Originally called Yasuiye he later changed his name to Nobuiye (see opening section). It is thought that many of the pieces carrying his signature were actually made by his pupils.
107. Fusa-Nobu called Shingoro and later Tokichi, lived in Kozuke.
108. Katsu-Iye called Magoshiro and later Kotayu, lived at Kobata in Kozuke province. Said to have been a pupil of Katsuyoshi (No.93).
109. Mune-Nori called Kwoka, lived in Kozuke province.
110. Nobu-Tada lived at Fuchie in Kai province.
111. Nobu-Fusa called Shingoro, lived at Fuchie.
112. Nobu-Yasu Founder of the Saotome family, the other great armourer family of Japan was, therefore, a branch of the Miochin.
113. Fusa-Iye called Hanshiro of Kozuke.
114. Fusa-Yoshi called Hanrokuro of Kozuke, about 1521 - 54.
115. Fusa-Mune called Handayu, lived in Odawara, about 1558 - 69.
116. Iye-Fusa called Bungoro, lived in Odawara, about 1558 - 69.
117. Nobu-Hiro called Bunshishiro, lived in Kamakura, about 1558 - 69.
118. Nobu-Yoshi called Kuhachiro, lived in Odawara, about 1521 - 54.
119. Nobu-Yuki
120. Nobu-Tsuna
121. Nobu-Masa
122. Nobu-Mitsu

From Nobu-Fusa (No.111) to Nobu-Mitsu (No.122) they were all pupils of Nobuiye (No.106).

123. Sada-Iye 18th Miochin, called Matahachiro and Heiroku, living at Odawara and then in Iga province.
124. Uji-Iye)
125. Kaga-Iye) Pupils of Sada Iye
126. Sada-Yuki)
127. Mune-Iye 19th Miochin, called Kiutaro, lived in the province of Omi, about 1572 - 1623.
128. Mune-Nobu 20th Miochin, titled Osumi-no-Kami, lived at Osaka and later at Yedo, about 1616 - 23.
129. Mune-Kiyo called Masayemon and later Tango, also lived at Osaka and then at Yedo, about 1592 - 1614.

- 130. Mune-Nagu called Tajima.
- 131. Mune-Hide called Bingo.
- 132. Masa-Iye called Suketaro, lived in Yukinoshita in Sagami,
about 1596 - 1614.
- 133. Masa-Tsugu called Sakichi, as above and same period.
- 134. Kuni-Michi 21st Miochin, titled Nagato-no-Kami or Yamoto-no-Kami,
lived in Kanada, Yedo, about 1624 - 43.
- 135. Mori-Suke called Kichizayemon; lived at Yedo.
- 136. Haru-Nobu called Toma, lived first at Osaka and later at Yedo.
- 137. Mune-Suke 22nd Miochin, called Shikibu and later Osumi-no-Kami,
lived at Kanada and Oyama about 1688 - 1735.
- 138. Mune-Aki called Shikibu and Kosaburo, lived at Yedo about
1673 - 1740.
- 139. Mune-Kata called Yohei, lived first at Yedo and later at Tsugari
in Mutsu province, about 1681 - 1683.
- 140. Mune-Zare called Tozo, lived at Yedo, about 1684 - 87.
- 141. Mune-Naga called Shimpei, lived at Yedo about 1684 - 1763.
- 142. Mune-Suni called Tanono, lived at Yedo.

Mune-Aki (No.138) to Mune-Suni (No.142) were all pupils of Munesuke (No.137).

- 143. Kuni-Michi called Shiki-no-Jo, and Uma-no-Suke died whilst young.
- 144. Mune-Masa 23rd Miochin, titled Osumi-no-Kam, or Uma-no-Suke
and formerly Sarai, lived at Yushima, Yedo about 1716 - 35.
- 145. Mune-Masa 24th Miochin, called Seijiro, and later Nagato-no-Kami
lived at Yushima, Yedo about 1688 - 1740.
- 146. Mune-Masa 26th Miochin, known as Osume-no-Kami, Uma-no-Suke
and Surai, about 1716 - 35.
- 147. Mune-Chika known as Osume-no-Kami, and Kinsuke about 1779 - 80.
- 148. Mune-Yuki called Shizuma, lived at Ibi, in the province of
Hiuga, about 1744 - 47.
- 149. Mune-Yasu called Oye, lived in Kochi, in Tosa province about 1751-63.
- 150. Mune-Kuni called Iwami, lived at Aizu in Mutsu province
about 1751 - 63.

Munemasa (No.146) to MuneKuni (No,150) were all pupils of Munemasa (No.145)

- 151. Mune-Taye called Osumi-no-Kami, formerly Mondo, lived at
Yushima, Yedo about 1794.
- 152. Mune-Hiro lived at Tosa.
- 153. Mune-Fusa about 1800.
- 154. Kune-Katsu about 1800.
- 155. Mune-Yasu about 1833 - 38.
- 156. Mune-Tane 29th Miochin, titled the "Premier Armour Expert
of Japan" lived at Yeishima, Yedo about 1840.
- 157. Mune-Hisa about 1850.
- 158. Mune-Yoshi lived at Yedo, about 1851 - 58.

No. 151 to No. 158 all Mune.

159. Mune-Haru called Mondo about 1860.
160. Mune-Romo about 1860.
161. Mune-Yoshi worked in Tokyo, about 1852 - 1940.
162. Mune-Yuki worked in Tokyo, about 1917 - 40, with his father Muneyoshi (No. 161) made the famous armour presented to the puppet emperor of Manchuko, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

No. 159 to 162 all Mune.

(All dates shown are approximate working dates).

It may be seen from the above lengthy list the Miochins were masters of fine metal work from the earliest times right up to the modern period. The book mentioned at the beginning of this article, (Miochin Rekidai Zokufu) is, however, thought by some informed sources, to have been written in the 17th century and be an almost complete work of fiction, the writer merely trying to produce an impression genealogy. Be that as it may, generally it is accepted that no great trust should be placed on the artists before 1500, that is to say before Yoshimichi and Nobuiye.

Clive Sinclair

1 宗德
 2 宗忍
 3 宗風
 4 宗杳
 5 宗剛
 6 宗高
 7 宗元
 8 宗内
 9 宗勝
 10 宗門
 11 宗明
 12 宗春
 13 宗平
 14 宗利

15 宗近
 16 宗通
 17 宗次
 18 宗歳
 19 宗松
 20 宗木木
 21 宗木木
 22 宗代
 23 宗品
 24 宗國
 25 宗水
 26 宗虎
 27 宗依
 28 宗下

29 宗盛
 30 宗李
 31 宗實
 32 宗一
 33 宗屯
 34 宗仲
 35 宗常
 36 宗吉
 37 宗水
 38 宗清
 39 宗良
 40 宗泰
 41 吉次
 42 宗茂

Up to the Time of MUNEYUKI (No.37) the family name was MASUJA 増田; he was the first called MIOCHIN 日月至.

43/ 吉清
44/ 宗行
45/ 宗直
46/ 宗益
47/ 宗兼
48/ 宗隅
49/ 宗重
50/ 宗遠
51/ 宗忠
52/ 重家
53/ 吉重
54/ 宗組
55/ 宗義
56/ 宗比

57/ 宗則
58/ 宗政
59/ 宗安
60/ 宗時
61/ 義弘
62/ 義紀
63/ 義則
64/ 義長
65/ 高義
66/ 義右
67/ 義保
68/ 義久
69/ 成國
70/ 成國

71/ 國近
72/ 成近
73/ 憲重
74/ 近重
75/ 憲國
76/ 重國
77/ 重則
78/ 宗義
79/ 宗時
80/ 成重
81/ 信房
82/ 房重
83/ 國久
84/ 國廣

85 久家

86 正家

87 次清

88 義保

89 義通

90 月勝義

91 月勝正

92 月勝久

93 月勝義

94 義家

95 宗久

96 宗時

97 吉久

98 吉道

99 吉重

100 吉之

101 吉貞

102 久吉

103 信吉

104 信廣

105 房家

106 信家

107 房信

108 月勝家

109 宗則

110 信忠

111 信房

112 信康

113 房家

114 房吉

115 房宗

116 家房

117 信廣

118 信吉

119 信行

120 信細

121 信正

122 信光

123 貞家

124 日家

125 景家

126 貞行

127 宗家

128 宗信

129 宗清

130 宗長

131 宗秀

132 正文家

133 政家

134 邦衛

135 守助

136 春信

137 宗次

138 宗察

139 宗賢

140 宗實

141 宗長

142 宗隅

143 宗衛

144 宗正

145 宗正文

146 宗土曾

147 宗近

148 宗行

149 宗安

150 宗國

151 宗妙

152 宗廣

153 宗房

154 宗月勝

155 宗安

156 宗實

157 宗久

158 宗吉

159 宗春

160 宗友

161 宗吉

162 宗行

THE POLISHING OF JAPANESE SWORDS

(The following is a free translation, made by Syd. Howe, of a chapter from the book 'Shūmi no Nihonto' by Shibata Mitsuo).

The true values of Japanese swords can only be displayed through the skilful work of smith and polisher. Although the Japanese sword blade is - by virtue of its unique construction - the best in the world, yet skilled polishing adds lustre to the legends of the sword. There are several laborious stages involved in bringing a blade to a high degree of sharpness and polish for appraisal.

First the basic shape of the blade must be adjusted and established, and then the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of the particular smith's work must be brought faithfully to life in the jihada and hamon. To show correctly the period and style of the smith requires great maturity of skill on the part of the polisher, who must work as one with the smith. Irresponsible polishing of a blade may result in the total loss of its artistic value by changing its shape and style, and worse still, this may easily be irretrievable, beyond even the powers of a skilled polisher to restore. Polishing, therefore, should only be entrusted to an acknowledged expert. Unfortunately, one all too often comes across blades which have been operated on by amateur polishers, who often seem to think that by removing "the worst of the rust and pits" they will save themselves some polishing costs. In fact, the costs of polishing a blade depends far more on its length and style than just rust and pit removal, and such amateur work will usually result in higher costs rather than lower ones - if the blade is not altogether ruined. Through the long hours of polishing the polisher develops a great knowledge of the blade. The memory of hard work and tension have an indelible memory of the various styles, flavours of jitetsu and delicacies of hamon etc. ("from the hardness of the jitetsu, this looks like a Sagami blade ...") From the touch of the stone on an unsigned piece the polisher can appraise it, and this ability of appraisal is recognised in the fact that present day sword appraisers include many sword polishers.

The polishing technique is a rather difficult process, but I would like to give here an outline. First of all the room should be bright and clean to avoid attracting dust and grit which would cause scratches. There must be good water and drainage available and much light, both natural and artificial. Polishing can largely be divided into two stages - Shitajitogi, "Foundation Work", and Shiagetogi, "Finishing". Shitajitogi consists mainly of removing rust, tidying up and correcting the nikuoki, which is the thickness-shape relationship throughout the blade and vital to the overall style. Shiagetogi is the detail polishing to bring out all the details of jitetsu etc.

Polishing begins by wrapping a piece of cloth (saide) round the blade, for handling and the blade then is applied to the various stones. The stone in use is secured to a small wooden platform about 30 x 10 cm which in its turn is secured onto a larger platform, the Todai no Makwa, on which it is held by a piece of wood, somewhat swan-necked in appearance, one end of which presses on the stone, whilst the other end is held down on the floor by the polisher's foot. The polisher sits on a small adjustable stool and the correct posture is important, which must be held throughout the polishing, for if not, then body movement will occur, with resultant changes in the polishing angle, which in turn leads to distortion in the blade surface. Large quantities of water are used, and to avoid contamination by rust this is conveyed by wooden pipes and buckets.

Various stones are used, always in the same order. For the heavily rusted blade - or one straight from the smith - a very rough diamond/emery stone is sometimes used (a rough finish can be got, indeed with an electric grindstone, but this is quite contrary to the tradition of polishing and is, in fact, nothing but an abominable hangover from the war-time mass-production period). I will now detail the true sequence of polishing. The first stone used is Iyo, sometime called the "white stone". It is very rough, either in solid or powder form and leaves marks similar to those of a file. The next three stones are Kaisei-Nagura, Chu-Nagura (Chu = middle) and fine Nagura used in that order, to remove the marks of the rough grinding, and the Shitajitogi finishes with uchigumo ('inner-cloud' stone) which brings out the fine yakibu, ji-nie, ha-nie and the structure of the jitetsu.

Burning with anticipation, eyes riveted on the blade, the polisher, like a weary traveller groping through heavy mist, works a little faster, in anticipation of shortly reaching his destination.

On completion of the shitaji stage the polisher will take a short rest and changes his equipment for the next stage. Now he uses hazuya ("edge lustre") on the yakiba, this is fine flat flakes of uchikomo stuck with lacquer onto Yoshino paper. Using a small piece under his thumb he polishes the edge white, at the same time smearing it with a paste of uchikumo. Gradually the yakiba "floats" to life. After the hazuya, jizuya ("ji lustre") is used. This is similar to hazuya, but with flakes of a very fine, razor hone like stone, called nakitatsu ("roaring dragon") which bring the ji to a bluish finish, demonstrating the beautiful changes and brilliance of jihada and jitetsu. Nakitatsu can also be used on the blade as fine powder using a finger as lap.

Next comes the so-called "wiping", or nugui. Malachite (Kujaku = peacock) and magnetic iron oxide (called "Kinhada" by smiths, it is the anvil scale that drops off the hot metal during forging), or Tsushima stone, are finely ground and made into a paste with clove oil (chogi). This paste is wiped on and off the ji, one part at a time, slowly the boundary between ji and ha becomes distinct. The exact formulae of nugui pastes have, in the past, been kept as secrets between master and pupil, to be passed on only by word

of mouth. As it is a crucial stage in bringing out the colours of the jihada, the clarity of the Yakiba and any imperfections, it has been much studied. For example, if chromium oxide powder is used, the jitetsu begins to show bluish black, and as this looks rather good, blades so treated are often prized by amateurs.

Now comes the shitamigaki. Here a long (10 cm) steel needle - migakibo - with one rounded and one sharp end is used. Patiently the polisher works along the shinogi, burnishing small areas at a time - about 2 cm - using the sharp end of the needle (the rounded end is used for grooves etc.) until all is burnished bright. This is followed by a reworking with hazuya along the hamon to bring up its delicacies. This operation is known as hadori, and requires special skill, inexperienced polishers tend to fail in this, bringing up a sort of white effect in the ji. Next comes the yokotegiri - finishing off the yokote etc. and the kissaki. It is very difficult to bring out the straight lines of the yokote and the hamon in the kissaki, and a piece of smoked bamboo is used on the blade to get all the lines straight (like a set-square). Hazuya is applied with a bamboo spatula and the polishing recommences with uchikumo paste, the whole of the rest of the blade being wrapped in a cloth to avoid accidental damage. Once the boshi is finished the whole blade is examined and any necessary amendments made. When the polisher is finally satisfied with the polish, he burnishes 7/8 lines on the part of the shinogiji hidden by the habaki and otherwise left unburnished. This is called "nagashi".

TAGANE ON TSUBA

The article on the nakago-ana of tsuba in the last programme has prompted me to write one on those 'Tagane' or chisel marks that were placed on tsuba by the makers for decorative purposes, I think members may find this of use in identifying tsuba that are otherwise unsigned.

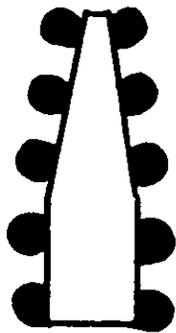
1. This type of tagane was used on soft metal tsuba from at least the early 16th century by the Tachikanagu-shi, Ko-kinko and Mino Goto workers, also by Hirata Hikozo and Nishigaki Kanshiro of Higo, the number of tagane varies. These are seldom found on iron tsuba.
2. Large copper plugs called 'sekigane' used by Bizen Suruga & Inshu Suruga Armourers schools, also by late Akasaka (rarely) and Tanaka schools. The Tanaka used plugs of well patinated copper decorated with gold and indented where the plug meets the plate metal of the tsuba.

TAGANE ON TSUBA CONTD...

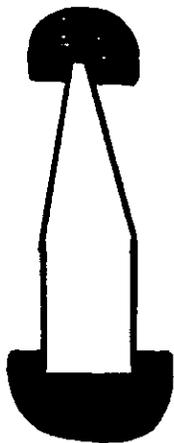
3. Kamiyoshi Fukanobu.
 4. Kamiyoshi Rakuju.
- Tsuba by these two Higo masters are mostly unsigned and, therefore, the rectangular marks known as 'kakushi tagane' are of prime importance in identification; since they are rather shallow they are often almost destroyed by re-fitting on a sword at a later date.
5. Bevelled sides to the nakago-ana used by Tsuchiya Yasuchika and pupils.
 6. Seen on Mino Goto tsuba of the Edo period.
 7. Mostly on Namban and Hizen tsuba, the shape of the frame will vary.
 8. Akasaka school. Since the later Akasaka often used Higo designs these heavy tagane make it easier to tell the two schools apart.

Needless to say, the above are general rules only - there are many exceptions.

Alan Bale



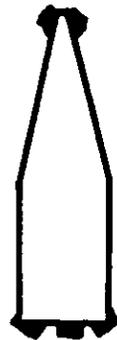
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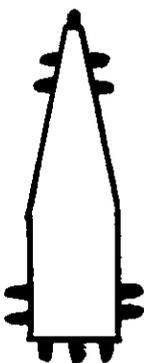
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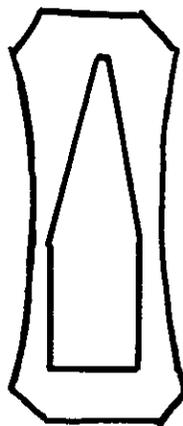
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8.