

Nagasa:	70.4 cm	Saki-haba:	2.2	Moto-haba:	3.1 cm
Sugata:	Shinogi-zukuri, chu-kissaki, iori-mune and shallow koshi-zori.				
Jihada:	Some o-hada with itame and muji-hada.				
Hamon:	Nioi-deki, gunome-midare, sunagaeshi and kinsuji, many ashi. The boshi and monouchi on the omote is somewhat confused and difficult to define and there appear to be some isolated parts on the shinogi. The boshi on both sides appears to be ko-maru with kaeri.				
Nakago:	Ubu, with one mekugi-ana, ha-agari kuri-jiri, quite shallow sujikai yasuri-me. Signed on the omote: BIZEN OSAFUNE JU YOKOYAMA SUKEKANE and on the ura: TOMONARI HACHI JU DAI MAGO with a date BUNKYU NINEN NIGATSU HI.				

This sword has a strong and robust sugata and displays many of the characteristics of shinshinto workmanship. The hamon, being in nioi with many gunome, would suggest that it was made in the Bizen tradition of swordmaking. Although the sword appears quite healthy, the monouchi area on the omote seems “confused” and indistinct. Overall, the hamon does not look like the normal workmanship of Sukekane, which appears more like the Kobuta gata-choji of Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke from Osaka shinto.

This sword is by the Sukekane who was the 13th mainline master of the Bizen Yokoyama school, which was founded in the later 16th century by Yosozaemon no Jo Sukesada. It is said that Sukesada relocated to the nearby village of Yokoyama after the great flooding of Osafune at this time. Sukesada’s great-grandson, Sanzaemon no Jo Sukesada, whose personal name was Toshiro and was the 4th generation, was the first representative of the school to work in shinto times. The most renowned shinto smith was Kozuke Daijo Sukesada (1577-1674), the 6th generation.

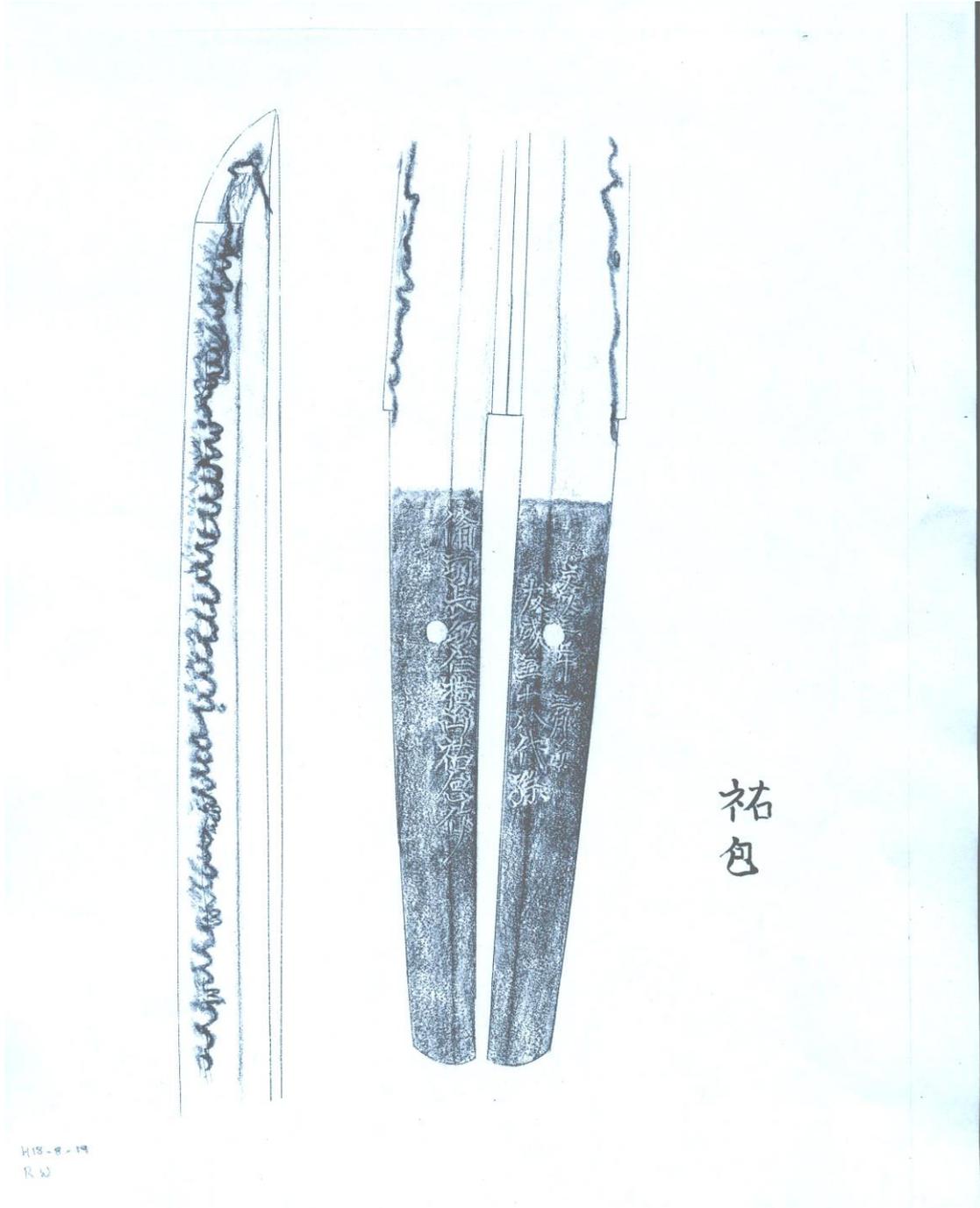
All these smiths were named Sukesada and as they entered the shinshinto period, although they retained the character “Suke” in their names, many used a different second character instead of “Sada”. However, although living and signing their work with Yokoyama, they appreciated that their spiritual and cultural home was still Osafune, by including this in their mei.

This is the first of two generations named Sukekane and he died in 1872, ten years after making this blade. He was taught swordmaking by one Sukenaga who was actually from a corollary family to the mainline of Yokoyama smiths. Sukenaga also signed on his nakago that he was the 56th generation descended from Tomonari. Sukenaga’s brother, Sukemori, was adopted into the mainline school, as the 12th master and Sukekane, his natural son, became the 13th master.

On this sword, as was Sukenaga’s practise, Sukekane claimed direct lineage from Tomonari. As inscribed on this sword, he claimed to be 58th generation grandson of Tomonari”. Of course, this should not be taken too literally as a blood lineage as this would have covered some 950 years.

Fujishiro rates Sukekane as Chujosaku

Clive Sinclair, August 2006



(Reduced size)



後領羽長製在橫西君會行

美天二年三月
拔歲五十八代孫