

kendo-iaí-naginata

The journal of the Eikoku Kendo Renmei

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Soushinkan Dojo, Fukuoka city, Japan

By Paul Whiteman, Go-dan

After my first year and a half of kendo training under Okimitsu Fujii sensei over at the Dartford Kenseikai dojo in 1988, one of my seniors, a Mr Phil Wright, then 4th dan, was head an shoulders better than anyone else in the dojo.

I asked Fujii sensei how Phil had reached such a level of kendo and he told me that he had trained in Japan for a couple of years at a dojo near Tokyo. My immediate response to this was that I wish I could do the same. Sensei's reply was "You can if you want!"

And so began a most wonderful fifteen year period of my life starting with a one year training period at the Saga Kenseikai dojo under the watchful eyes of Sakai sensei and Terada sensei. Terada sensei was a tough old bird and would regularly run me into the ground with kakari-geiko.

His attention to detail on correct cutting and posture was second to none. Loads of kirikaeshi and plenty of whacks across the sides of the legs when my footwork went astray.

After a wonderful years' training, I knew I would be staying in Japan indefinitely and probably in Fukuoka city so Terada sensei kindly introduced to Kaneko sensei, his "Busen no kohai" .

Kaneko sensei, then a sprightly seventy year old who, even after taking a thirty year break from kendo managed to attain the rank of 7th dan, had built his own dojo.

Now, by anyone's standards, a good dojo in Japan has one 8th dan teacher. This dojo boasted no less than six 8th dans and ten 7th dans at each practise session!!



The sheer power of a couple of the 8th dan teachers was awesome. You could literally feel the strength radiating from them. It was incredible and to keep your nerve whilst practising jigeiko with them was a real test of one's metal.

Main practises were Monday and Wednesday evenings. The juniors, including myself, would normally arrive early and sweep the dojo floor before practise.

This dojo followed the rule that age was more important than grade. A truly humbling sight when a young, 50ish 8th dan begs an older 6th or 7th dan to sit above them in the line up. What usually follows is a time consuming "Sensei, please, please, sit here", "Oh, no, I couldn't possibly", "No, please, I insist", "No, honestly" Kaneko sensei usually intervened saying "Come on, for god's sake"

And so the training sessions began. With six or seven motodachi on one side of the dojo, most of which were 8th dans, each 'practise' always began with kirikaeshi, followed by jigeiko and finished off with uchikomi geiko or kakarigeiko. At the end of the session, everyone would be doing kakarigeiko and all would be trying to out do the other in terms of strength and stamina. To watch the younger 8th dans and 7th dans doing the same kind of practise as a humble 5th dan like myself really put things into perspective. It really does show that you can never stop learning. An entire life time devoted to the study and practise of kendo is not long enough for a human to reach their full potential as a kendoka so it's important to utilise any spare time you have.

The rather mundane practise of suburi may at first seem superficial but each correctly executed men cut brings you closer to achieving your potential as a kendoka.

The difference between the men cuts of a person who practises suburi regularly and those of someone who doesn't is huge. The more you put in, the more you'll get out. Another advantage of being able to cut men properly is the psychological one. When you land a good men cut on your opponent, they will be able to 'feel' that you know exactly what you're doing and that you, as a kendoka, are a force to be reckoned with.

'Hitting' someone's men is easy. 'Cutting' someone's men is a different animal altogether.

At Soushinkan dojo, the sheer volume of basic training, even by the highest grades, ensured that everyone's men cuts were the best they could possibly be.

Saturday's practise was focussed on basic training, Busen style. For those of you not familiar with Busen, or the *Budo Senmon Gakko* to give it its full name, this was a martial arts college, if you like, where kendo students would train three times a day, every day. The first year would consist entirely of kirikaeshi and cleaning up after the seniors. The second year would be kirikaeshi and kakari geiko and it wasn't until the third year that they finally got to do some jigeiko along with hideous amounts of kihon!

This style of training resulted in such a strong foundation in kendo that the students could build upon and it is these graduates who were able to reach great heights within the world of kendo.

Sadly though, Busen was abolished by McArthur during the occupation of Japan after the Second World War. Several of the older teachers at Soushinkan said it was because “we scared the c—p out of them”. I’m inclined to agree as that amount of training per week is enough to scare even the hardest of men

If such a training regime were available here in England now, I would be the first to sign up even though I’ve trained for just over twenty years. I like to think that after all this time I’m starting to get the hang of kendo but in the scheme of things I am but a beginner.

Ridiculous amounts of basics is the only way to go if you have any intention of mastering kendo. A ratio of 70% basics and 30% free practise would seem about right to keep things interesting for us Westerners. Our culture causes us to want instant results all the time. Face it, it ain’t gonna happen!

Too much jigeiko will only produce kendo that resembles a chicken fight at best.

For a two year period during my time at Soushinkan, I trained at another dojo where 90% of their practise was jigeiko. On my return, all of the teachers said “ what the hell happened to your kendo?” Needless to say, it took me another two years and three attempts before I passed 5th dan.

As Miyamoto Musashi would say “ meditate on this observation”

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Naginata versus Kendō

In the Summer edition of this Journal (No. 293), we described something of mixed-discipline matches, where we might see Nitō-versus-Ittō Kendō, Naginata-v-Nitō, Naginata-v-Ittō, Yari-v-Naginata, and even Kendō-daitō-v-shotō. This relatively short piece produced some interest from members – a very encouraging event.

When the shinai opposes the naginata in such mixed-discipline matches, the Kendōka

experiences some additional problems to the normal shinai-versus-shinai engagements. Firstly, the swordsman must remember that his lower legs are a valid target for the halberd, hence the pair of *suneate* that he has to wear. Secondly, not only the ‘blade’ of the naginata, but also the end ferrule (*ishizuki*), and the shaft (*nakago*), may be employed to strike the opponent, and the naginata may thrust *tsuki* at both chest and throat (*men-tare*). Lastly, and by no means least, the naginata is, on average, twice the length of the shinai; meaning that the Naginata-ka is at a very much longer interval (*maai*) from the Kendōka, a distance that must be closed by the latter in making his attack. The Kendōka has to be



totally alert, his *zanshin* honed to a knife-edge, and he must be ready to exploit the slightest 'chink' in his opponent's concentration. His only advantage, if all else is equal, is the fact that in general the halberd is employed to make 'open' sweeping cuts. In other words, the 'blade' has to be lifted in order to deliver the attack. This used to be termed delivering 'outside' attacks – where the cutting arc is large and delivered from outside the confines of the torso 'box'. In Kendō, on the other hand, the shinai is used for 'inside' attacks, that is, within the torso 'box'. It follows – in theory, at least – that when the halberd attack is launched, the swordsman must instantly step in, thus closing the *maai*, and strike the exposed target. That is the theory; the practice is that in lifting the halberd to deliver the attack, the other end of the halberd, *the ishizuki*, becomes a very effective defence!



The Kendōka's *suneate* are another small problem, as you may well have guessed. Often the instinctive defence against a leg cut made whilst delivering one's own, say, *men*, attack, is to try to avoid the leg strike by lifting the target leg and stepping over the sweeping halberd 'blade'. This was the teaching of a number of high-ranking swordsmen, by the way – Arai Shigeo *sensei* amongst them. Result: a hard cut striking the exposed ankle! (The teaching instruction theory will work but only *after* a good seven years attention to practice). Complaints about

'unfairness' are always met with the retort that '*you shouldn't have jumped; it's your own fault!*' So next time in the same situation, the Kendōka doesn't jump – and is struck smartly across the side of his advanced knee. The inevitable complaint, usually limited to a loud '*Ouch!*' is always met with: '*You usually jump, so I aimed a little higher . . . ! It is your own fault again!*'

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The Kendō Reader by Noma Hisashi

Chapters Sixteen to Nineteen: Kote Waza, Dō Waza, Tsuki Waza, and Jōdan

Chapter Sixteen: Kote Waza

Kote techniques.

Kote: direct strike to the *kote*. Perceiving a weakness at the opponent's *kote*, advance immediately and strike it.

Men-o-Semete Kote: threaten to strike the *men* and strike *kote*. Make as if to strike *men* and cause the opponent to protect this thus revealing a weakness at his *kote* which one strikes immediately.

Tsuki-o-Semete Kote: threaten to thrust *tsuki* and strike *kote*.

Harai-Kote: sweep aside the opponent's sword and strike *kote*. Sweep the opponent's sword to the side and swiftly strike his *kote*.

Osae-Kote: strike *kote* as the opponent's sword falls. As the opponent strikes for *men*, strike his *kote* while stepping to the side.

Age-Kote: strike the *kote* at the onset of the attack. Just as the opponent is about to launch an attack to the *men* or *dō*, strike his *kote* at the instant his sword rises to the attack.

Ojigote: parry and strike *kote*. As the opponent tries to strike *kote*, *men*, or *migi-dō*, parry his sword and strike *kote*.

Katsugi-Kote: striking the *kote* from the shoulder. Raise the sword to the left shoulder and as the opponent is confused by the variation strike *kote* with abandon.

Chapter Seventeen: Dō waza

Dō techniques.

Nuki-Dō: avoiding the opponent's attack strike *dō*. As the opponent attacks *men*, sink slightly at the waist and advance to the right-front. With a feeling of brushing shoulders with the opponent strike the right side of his *dō*.

Tobikomi-Dō: leap to strike *dō*. With abandon raise the sword above your head, as the opponent raises his hands in defence a weakness will be revealed at his *dō* which must be struck immediately.

Oji-Dō: parry and strike *dō*. As the opponent attacks *men*, parry his sword and strike *dō* as you advance to the right front.

Men-o-Semete-Dō: threaten to strike *men* and strike *dō*. Make as if to strike *men* and strike at the revealed opening at his side.

Tsubazeriai-Dō: strike *dō* from the *tsubazeriai* position. At the position of *tsubazeriai*, oppress the opponent's hands and as the pressure is returned immediately withdraw striking *dō*.

Gyaku-Dō: strike the left side of the *dō*. As the opponent tries to strike *migi-yokomen* with a single-handed technique, parry his sword to the right, return the hands and strike the left side of his *dō*. Again, if the opponent attempts a single-handed thrust to *tsuki*, parry this in the same way and strike the left *dō*.

Chapter Eighteen: Tsuki-waza

Thrusting techniques.

Morote-tsuki: double-handed thrust. If a weakness is revealed at the *men-tare* (throat protector), thrust forward the arms and thrust the *men-tare*, remembering to wring inwards with the wrists. Also, do not forget to withdraw the sword immediately.

Omote-tsuki: thrust to the right side of the opponent's sword. Thrust past the right side of the opponent's *tsuba*, and thrust with the blade angled to the right.

Ura-tsuki: thrust to the left side of the opponent's sword. Same as above but to the opposite side.

Hidari-katate-tsuki: thrust made with the left hand. Thrust with the left-hand only, with a turning inward action of the fist, at the same time release the grip of the right hand and keep it at the waist.

Kote-o-Semete-tsuki: threaten attack to the *kote* and thrust *tsuki*. Threaten an attack to the *kote* and thrust *tsuki* at the appearance of an opening at the *men-tare*.

Harai-tsuki: sweep aside the opponent's sword and thrust *tsuki*. Sweep the opponent's sword to the side and thrust *tsuki*.

Tsuki-kaeshi-tsuki: counter thrust with a thrust. As the opponent thrusts in *tsuki*, deflect with a snap of the wrists and return the thrust immediately.

Chapter Nineteen: Jōdan-no-waza

Jōdan techniques.

There are various techniques that can be made from the *jōdan* position, here are a few of the more standard examples from *hidari-jōdan*.

Jōdan-kara-men: striking *men* from *jōdan*. Strike *men* by extending just the left single-hand upon the onset of the opponent's technique, that is, as he is about to retreat or at any other instant when there appears an opening at his *men*. At the moment of striking, the right fist should be held tightly at the waist, and the chest braced forward.

Jōdan-kara-kote: striking *kote* from *jōdan*. Make as if to attack *men* and draw the opponent's guard to his *men*. A weakness will be created at his *kote* which is immediately struck, as one advances forward and slightly to the left.

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Quite literally, the number of possible techniques is nearly infinite. In this Chapter I have briefly outlined a small number of the basic one-stroke techniques, upon grasping fully the elements of those described above I strongly recommend further effort and study in the development of *waza*.

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Editorial

There is always a problem to be overcome, at least in part, in producing a *Journal* such as this one. The pernicious, and sometimes overwhelming, 'vocabulary' of sport has tended, in the last thirty or forty years, to divert serious people who possess enquiring minds from trying to find out almost anything at all about the true background and nature of Budō leading them to unquestioningly accept at face value almost anything that is so blandly offered. The almost universal access to the Internet has opened the flood doors to vast volumes of sometimes distorted and questionable material about warrior Japan of the medieval period and to huge amounts of waffle on 'sports-Kendō', (competition-based kendō), in particular, if this is what the enquirer is looking for. The aspiring student might well feel that the entity he finds is the natural successor to an archaic irrelevant tradition and, therefore, this must be genuine swordsmanship. In actuality, what he finds is hardly satisfying and not enough to sustain any long term commitment

Unfortunately, some – but not all – of the Internet material is regurgitated from sources that might have been described in the first half of the last century as 'the work of somewhat over-enthusiastic students' who were intent 'on showing their particular founder and his style as being the best (or original) in comparison and contrast to most of the others'. There was always this added caveat so as not to seem overtly zealous. With the advent of the American Allied Occupation and the policy of de-militarising the Japanese after 1945, sport characteristics in such Budō that appeared became the order of the day; the imposition of 'sport' took precedence over everything else in the 'martial ways'. The result, inevitably, was the creation of what were known in the late Edo and early modern periods as 'machi-dōjō' – place where it was rare to find really serious practice but something akin to 'fun-dō'. The world's media completed the process or, at the very least, trivialised Budō to its present position. The media still do this and have never pursued a more informed and serious approach – not a wit more than they did back in the early 60's, for example.

If the aspiring student wants reliable fact-based 'background' history of the true 'Martial Arts' then he or she must read up on much of the excellent material researched and published in the 'benighted' days at the beginning of the last century. For much more modern and informed material there are the books edited and published by *Koryu Books*. In our *Journal*, however, the content is not intended to be dogmatic, it is certainly not driven by sport's concepts, it is not in some way thrusting forward any, even remote, commercial links; the aim is always to broaden our members understanding of Japanese culture and so to 'feed' all our student's interest.

Of course, access to the plethora of entries in the Internet are of great use but how can anyone tell exactly how reliable they are, particularly in the field of classical Kenjutsu and Kendō? If the student is looking for some sort of 'Rule Book' or a program syllabus that will guide him up the ranks on a 'need to know' basis to *shōdan*, he will not find such things here. This is one of the reasons that we publish in serial form the translation of '*The Kendō Reader*' chapter by chapter. Kendō can only be learnt in the dōjō; understanding comes only with experience, but that experience has to be nurtured and guided. Most

people will read an interesting book, sometimes remembering some salient points, but they will rarely re-read it, page by page, to properly absorb the deeper principles.

This *Journal* tries to present a broad picture where Kendō and the allied arts are part of the Japanese culture, concentrating often on those subjects that have always interested the more educated samurai of the feudal past and their successors. Additionally to this, we heartily recommend that all students, at whatever level, try to find out more about warrior history and everything they can. They will find a goldmine of interest to underpin their dōjō experience. Please *'feed your enthusiasm'* and we will try to help as best we can.

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Eikoku Kendō Renmei – Shōdan Shinsa

The second of our irregular practices, incorporating the Autumn examinations into Shōdan and above, was held at the Tonbridge Dōjō in Skinner's School, Tunbridge Wells on Sunday, the 15th November.

The examinations were conducted, as usual, under the Rules of this Renmei (following those of the Zen Nippon Kendō Renmei) as has been our custom for the last thirty-six years. This Shinsa was marked by being the smallest held, the main reason being that we are in an interim period where some of the *mudansha* (unranked) Kendōka are not yet ready for assessment and others in the lower *dan* have also much work to do to ready themselves for advancement. Two students were given the Ikkyū rank, mainly to mark their hard work and encourage further efforts towards shodan. Whilst we do not usually use the kyū ranking system, this is an exception. The results are as follows:

To Ikkyū:	To Shōdan:
Rowan Howell (Butokukan)	Tim Bailey (Butokukan)
Tommy Lau (Butokukan)	

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Naoe Kanetsugu – a loyal vassal¹ (Part I)

One of the most famous clans of the *Sengoku* period² were the Uesugi whose powerbase was the province of Echigo, now present day Niigata Prefecture, which lay along the north-east coast of the Sea of Japan. The most powerful of the Uesugi lords was the redoubtable Uesugi Kenshin, whose ambitions for expansion in the middle of the sixteenth century were chiefly thwarted by the equally formidable Takeda Shingen, hemmed in as he was by other strong warlords based in the Kantō, the provinces encircling Edō, now Tokyo. Kenshin and Shingen's armies faced each other between four and six times at a piece of land named Kawanakajima in the ten years from 1553, confrontations that produced no clear result but many colourful incidents.

The warrior history of medieval Japan can be disconcerting to the average reader; in fact, it needs years of study to establish some sort of clear picture of the clans and characters who people it, particularly when there was so much use of political marriage, the Japanese propensity to use titles instead of proper names, and the widespread warrior custom of changing names at various times during a man's life. This was particularly true of the *sengoku* period when everything seems to be in a state of flux.

When Takeda Shingen died in 1572 and his successor, Katsuyori, was defeated at the great battle of Nagashino (1575), Uesugi Terutora, usually known by his Buddhist name of Kenshin, decided to make his move westwards along the coast in order to seize power in the capital, Kyōto, but he was taken ill and died on the 13th March, 1578 in Kasugayama Castle³ in snowbound Echigo. His collapse was sudden and he expired in just four days without regaining consciousness. Kenshin had intended to oppose by force the rapidly rising power of Oda Nobunaga who was already subjugating many of the central provincial lords in Owari around what is now Nagoya.

When he died, Kenshin hadn't named his successor. He had an adopted son named Kagekatsu, who was the son of Hōjō Ujiyasu, lord of Sagami, another, named Kagekatsu, who was the son of Kenshin's older sister. Naturally, the two adopted sons at once were in open conflict with each other. The Takeda clan saw their opportunity and invaded from mountainous Shinano province, and The Hōjō lord, not to be outdone, crossed the southern border into Echigo. This four-sided upheaval is known as the Otate War⁴ and continued across the province until Kagekatsu was victorious and his adoptive brother, Kagekatsu committed *seppuku*. Throughout this war one of Uesugi Kagekatsu's most intelligent advisers was a young *bushi* named Higuchi Kanetsugu.



Portrait of Naoe Kanetsugu

This able young man was the son of Higuchi Kanetoyo, an important vassal of the Uesugi clan and related to them by blood. He was born in 1560. When his elder sister's husband, Nagao Masakage, died in 1564, Kenshin adopted Kagekatsu, then aged about ten and the child, Kanetsugu, at the age of four, became his page.. The two lads grew up together in the fortress of Kasugayama. Kanetsugu was a bright youth and applied himself to closely observe lord Kenshin who was often termed the 'God of War'. Greatly influenced as he was by the redoubtable Kenshin's ethics, his grasp of politics, and his military prowess, it is not surprising to find Kanetsugu in 1580 appointed as an aide to Kagekatsu..

In 1581 there was more fighting over the division of spoils after Otake-no-ran, and one result was the death of the *Ō-karō*, Nagao Nobutsuna. The young Uesugi lord, Kagekatsu, desired Kanetsugu to marry Nobutsuna's widow and take the surname, Naoe. This advanced him to become the new *Ō-karō*, or Chief Retainer. There can be no doubt that Kanetsugu displayed extraordinary talents.

At this stage of our account members probably understand how complicated the warrior history can be – and here it has been simplified as far as possible.

With the province of Echigo settling down there was still a very serious threat when soon after Nobunaga had inflicted a crushing defeat on Takeda Katsuyori (1546-1582) at the battle of Temmoku-san and the successor to Shingen, Katsuyori and his son committed *seppuku*, Oda Nobunaga was murdered in the Honnō-ji temple in Kyōto, June 1582. Determined to continue the work of unification begun by his lord, Hashiba Hideyoshi rapidly crushed rebellion in central Honshū and the western provinces then found himself faced, in 1585, by two fellow former generals of Nobunaga, Shibata Katsuie and Sasa Narimasa. They threatened to launch a serious attack on Hideyoshi from their own territories in the provinces of Etchu and Echizen⁵ immediately to the west of the Uesugi lands.

Hideyoshi was an astute general who was also cunning when applying political acumen. He despatched an emissary to Kagekatsu suggesting a friendly alliance for co-operation in the case of war. The real reason for this overture was to gain the homage and fealty of the Uesugi. As a sweetener, Hideyoshi offered to grant back all the territories once held by Kenshin. The dilemma was very difficult. On the one hand, Kagekatsu knew that he couldn't join with Hideyoshi's opponents. On the other hand, if he refused the overture, it would provide Hideyoshi with an excuse to attack. To bow his head before Hideyoshi would be to abase the proud Uesugi, still suffering from disaffection from some powerful vassals and a lasting sense of loss after Kenshin's death. It was Naoe Kanetsugu who solved the question. The gist of his advice was that after Nobunaga's assassination Hideyoshi had avenged his master and continued his strategy without evident self-interest. At the same time, the Uesugi clan still unswervingly followed Lord Kenshin's principles of justice. Kanetsugu considered that to co-operate with Hideyoshi would be correct but this must be done without suggesting at submission. Lord Kagekatsu must show that the alliance should be between equals. Not only that, he advised his lord to take the initiative and make the first move. If their military attack was successful then they would recover Kenshin's lost territories.

Accordingly, agreement was made and at once Kagekatsu gathered eight-thousand men and led them to attack Sakai castle in Etchu, capturing it with ease. He continued with an assault on Sasa Narimasa's fortress at Namekawa, burning the castle. Hideyoshi also acted swiftly to bring his opponents to submit. This was in August of that year.

The cunning Hideyoshi made an unprecedented visit to Uesugi Kagekatsu, arriving at Ochimizu castle with only a small escort of thirty-eight soldiers and two ranking retainers. When they received a messenger with the news of Hideyoshi's arrival, both Kagekatsu and his chief councillor knew that it would be a simple matter to attack and destroy their visitor. After weighing the situation, Kagetsugu advised his master that they should not bring harm to the delegation and set out at once with a small escort for Ochimizu-jō. The unexpected visit by Hideyoshi accompanied by a tiny escort was an unprecedented event in those turbulent and dangerous days when many powerful lords looked for any chance to gain the ascendancy over their neighbours and rivals. Uesugi Kagekatsu and his *ō-karō*, Naoe Kanetsugu, knew that they held the fate of the whole country in their grasp when Hashiba Hideyoshi, the all-powerful Kampaku, or Regent, arrived at Ochimizu-jō, they had to reach an honourable decision. Kanetsugu is reported to have advised in this way.

'Hashiba Hideyoshi already has the sovereignty of this country in his hands. When you consider that he has overcome the many hazards and hardship of travelling all the way to our province, the answer must be obvious.

'Firstly, he intends to keep his promise of offering friendship to Lord Kagekatsu. Secondly, he comes because he believes that the Uesugi-ke, headed by Lord Kagekatsu, will not stoop to treachery. If we attack him we would desecrate the sacred 'bow and arrow'⁶ that we received from Kenshin-dono.

'We have already demonstrated our sincerity in supporting Lord Hideyoshi against his enemies; now we must attend this meeting. Should we fail to reach agreement then we must return Lord Hideyoshi to safety, after which we can face him in fair fight. Lord Kagekatsu is aware that is the proper conduct for the Uesugi-ke and I am convinced that this will be his correct decision.'

Six years had passed since the Odate War and as successor to Lord Kenshin, Kagekatsu realised the path he must take. Kanetsugu's unwavering stance and sage advice greatly supported Kagetsugu when the leaders met with only Kanetsugu on the Uesugi side and a young general, Ishida Mitsunari, accompanying his master. The four hour meeting, known later as the '*Ochimizu-no-kai*', led to the agreement that Kagekatsu would henceforth support Hideyoshi and in return receive a 'long and fruitful friendship'. Kanetsugu and his master realised that there was a huge gulf both in power and rank between the Uesugi-ke and the Kampaku and yet the loss of the clan's independence was hardly felt in the recognition of both leaders' code of integrity and justice. One other result of this meeting was the bond of friendship that grew up between Kagekatsu and Mitsunari. This general, who was the same age as Kagekatsu, forecast that from this time onwards the whole nature of war in the provinces would change. The old system of high-ranking warriors fighting from horseback and the mass use of spears by a low class infantry to decide

battles had passed. Now the result rested in the power of gunnery and the proper organisation of the treasury and logistic campaign planning. He added: 'However, Lord Hideyoshi didn't want war. He fights as a means to end the destructive wars of the past.'

Mitsunari's outline of the future use of power was entirely in accord with the views of Naoe Kanetsugu and in turn influenced the decisions of Lord Kagekatsu. Eventually the latter's lands were extended from Echigo to Aizu and the value rose to 1.2 million *koku* of rice.⁷ The new area under the Uesugi control included the Yonezawa domain in southern Mutsu province, bringing 60,000 *koku*. One of our most influential *sensei* in our Kendō development, Arai Shigeo, *hachidan kyoshi*, was the son of a high-ranking artillery commander belonging to the Yonezawa-han.

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A Kendō Figure



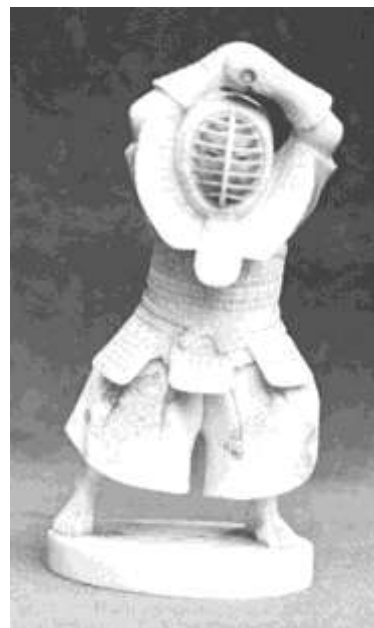
*Small ivory okimono figure of a Kendōka with his shinai in jōdan-no-kamae.
Height: about 4½ inches.*

Here, we feature a quite small but beautifully poised figure of a Kendōka in full armour, his *shinai* flourished above his head in *jōdan-no-kamae*. Like some of the other pieces we have illustrated in the journal over the past few months, this ivory *okimono* was owned privately and, if memory serves correctly, was in the collection of the late H. Russell Robinson of the Royal Armouries, H.M. Tower of London.

From the style of the rather short *hakama*, which is patterned, not plain, we think the ivory dates from the early part of the last century. Up to the late-1930s, it was not uncommon for junior Kendōka to wear normal outdoor apparel for practice and with children these *hakama* might be patterned or striped. The Butokukan Dōjō has a very nice dark-brown *hakama* with narrow white pinstripes that was used in Kōbe before 1929 and is still serviceable. Another point of interest in dating the figure is that an outer *obi* is tied at the front of the *tare*.

There is a beautiful balance about the whole posture, a implied readiness to make a strong attacking cut, that makes this a little gem.

It may be asked why these dolls and models didn't come into our collections when they were found? The answer is quite simple; a lack of ready cash in those austere years! These artworks may then have been much more available but were almost as expensive, proportionately, as they are now.



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Practices at Tunbridge Dōjō



Back in the early summer last year we held the first of what is hoped will be an regular series of meetings at Simon Crittenden's dōjō in Tunbridge Wells.

This was followed by the small **Autumn Shodan-shinsa** on November 15th and an excellent and well-attended practice. As these are the first two of these meetings all ranks are urged to try to attend in future because of the chance that such *renshū* give not only to meet other old friends but also to broaden one's perspectives on Kendō even in a small way. It is only by such contact that understanding gradually comes, particularly as these contacts are brief and spaced apart, thereby sharpening memory. So, those students out in the further reaches of this country, please do try to make the effort. Tunbridge Wells is less than one hour from Central London by train and easily reached by car, and while this series is centred on Simon Crittenden's dōjō for the convenience of our groups and is held on a Sunday morning, we can easily arrange a whole programme of practices at Lewes, Brighton, even Vauxhall (not for the faint-hearted) over a whole weekend – including (uncomfortable) bed space but with the sure promise of good restaurants, convivial social evenings with the additional incentive of supping Harvey's excellent Real Ale – very possibly the best brew in the whole of this country! (One of our *yondan*, long years ago, used to preface his changing for practice with a bow in the direction of Harvey's Brewery, just across the river Ouse from our dōjō, avowing that it was 'a mark of respect towards Headquarters'). You can be assured that for the *sole* outlay in shared petrol costs, such a weekend will be of huge benefit *and* added enthusiasm once back safely at 'home'.

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Notes

¹ Based, with permission, on an article by Saienji Fumiyo published in *The East*, Vol 43, No.3 2007.

² 'The Age of the Country at War', as the *Sengoku-jidai* is popularly known, lasted from about 1480 to 1573. It was an century of strife and marked by many wars between the contending lords and often their once-trusted vassals. The battles began to die down when Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) began the violent process of unification. After his assassination the work was continued by Hashiba Hideyoshi (1537-1598), and finally completed by Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616).

³ Kasugayama-jō was in present day Joetsu-shi, Niigata-ken.

⁴ Otate-no-ran.

⁵ Present-day Toyama and Ishikawa prefectures.

⁶ By this is meant the military honour that was Uesugi Kenshin's legacy.

⁷ *Koku*: approximately 4.96 bushels of rice. After 1600 warriors' of all ranks had their stipend measured in *koku*. The system was in use long before this date but became applied nationally to all the great lords (daimyō) after the battle of Sekigahara.