

kendo-iaí-naginata

The journal of the Eikoku Kendo Renmei

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An archive photo taken in 1982: A visit to the grave of Iisasa Chōisai, (died 1491), founder of the Katori Shintō-ryū, near the Katori-jingu in Chiba-ken. On the left of the memorial stone stand slabs commemorating several early kenshi of the tradition. Left to right: Lucy Pratt, Simon Crittenden, Phil Jupp, Pat Knutsen – and ten thousand hungry mosquitoes.

Editorial

On behalf of the Renmei 'Editorial Production Team' – all three of us – I would like to apologise for the long break and the lack of continuity in the issue sequence of the Journal. My medical problems which continued up and down for an entire year, didn't help, and then there was a lot of complicated and detailed work in delivering and proof reading 'TENGU', plus – and I am very pleased to state – doing the same for the *two* forthcoming volumes of the *SAMURAI TALES* short stories. The former book is now published, as most members know; the latter two will come out very shortly.

The break has also had an adverse effect on the future content of the Journal in respect of a couple of intended 'feature' articles. We started in the last issue with the first part of the

account describing the barbarous treatment of Sōgorō Kiuchi in the mid-seventeenth century but now, unfortunately, have mislaid the whole of the second part! As you probably have guessed, we do not like simply re-hashing articles from the Internet, preferring original sources from Japan or from the bugei *tradition* – and with reasons that I shall not go into here.

One result of the delay has been publishing a proper obituary marking the sad passing of Benjamin H. Hazard-*sensei* at the great age of 91 last May. (A notice follows in these pages). As soon as we learnt the sad news, we sent a letter of condolence to the Hazard family on behalf of this Renmei for the very good reason that we all owe a very great debt of gratitude for the nigh on fifty years of careful guidance and sound advice that Hazard-*sensei* gave to the development of our Kendō. He was, indeed, the very best of friends.

We hope that this issue and those that follow, will still help members towards a broader understanding of the Japanese culture. Apart from Jupp-*sensei*'s translation of 'The Kendo Reader' – now going slowly on for a number of years, (a deliberate editorial choice to encourage readers to absorb the content slowly) – and a few articles from time to time discussing teaching points, it is the cultural side that is emphasised for the simple reason that all the 'real' martial arts - (*NOT* sports) - are firmly rooted in the warrior culture and simply cannot be separated from this base. Here, again, there is a cogent reason for the frequent emphasis placed on differentiating between the 'proper' tradition of Kendō and the allied 'Ways' as opposed to the 'sports' or competition systems; the former are based largely on the old traditions and their long-established values, whereas the latter have been greatly subverted by post-WWII media ignorance and, I'm afraid, by a weakness by the Japanese Kendō authorities, themselves, not to comprehend the clear signs that Kendō and Iai-dō, in particular, had slid into the attractive 'sports trap' simply because of the outside pressures from the rest of the interested nations where sport rules. It is not as simple as that, of course, but at least we can try to keep the flag flying and not capitulate to the cult of reducing everything done in one's spare time to 'entertainment' and 'fun'.

Once again, I repeat as Editor, our apologies for the hiatus. Before finishing, I would like to repeat a plea from a couple of years ago, and that is for members to contribute the odd comment or longer pieces of interest. We did get some 'feed-back' after Paul Whiteman's article on Dōjō meanings and attitudes. This, and the initial response, was very interesting. More, please! We know that you can all write because we always have excellent dissertations submitted for the Shōdan Shinsa; a little effort and, possibly, brevity, is all that is needed. The field is wide open. All we ask for is around a mere 500 words. The odd photo would be acceptable, too . . . If you don't feel you can risk an article, what about asking a question or two? Keep in mind the famous Budō maxim: 'To ask is but a moment's regret; not to ask is a lifetime's shame'.

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Benjamin H. Hazard - *Hanshi* (1920-2011)



Hazard-sensei, (right), with Roald Knutsen, Arai Shigeo, nanadan Kyoshi, (left), and unnamed kodansha, (Okada-sensei, nanadan Kyoshi (?)); Tokyo Budokan, October 1970.

This piece is not so much an obituary but more recalling pleasant memories of a remarkable teacher. Ben Hazard, who passed away on the 16th May last, probably heard about our embryonic Kendō beginnings within three years of our first faltering steps in 1957. The news possibly filtered through to Japan by way of H.E. Yukawa Morio, then the Japanese Ambassador in London, himself Kendō *yon-dan*, to Arai Shigeo, then *nanadan Kyoshi*, and passed to Yunō Masanori, then *hachidan Hanshi*. From there, back to California to Hazard-sensei who was very well-known in academic and Kendō circles in Japan, and had studied Kendō, Iai-dō, Naginata-dō and Kyū-dō under several notable *sensei* whilst in Japan before, during, and after the Korean War.

Whatever the convoluted route might have been, and one can never be completely certain in these matters, after the first letter our correspondence continued unabated monthly for the next twenty or more years and then four or five times a year up to around 1998 when age began to widen the gaps. This fine American master, rising from *godan* at that early stage to *nanadan Hanshi* in his late years, proved a rich source of guidance in just about every area of Kendō and Iai – and a whole lot more from his background as a professor of Japanese and American history in San José. I must repeat here that our whole Kendō owes him a huge debt of gratitude.

Amongst many memories that *Sempai* and I have of our friend was one incident when we stayed with Hazard-san and his wife at their apartment in Shimō-Tōkaidō, Tokyo, in April

1970. Mrs Hazard and *Sempai* had taken themselves off to bed whilst Hazard-*san* and I sat over a number of drinks, including a bottle of Scotch, discussing the Korean War and other military matters, finally retiring just before 0500. At 0600 I was awakened by Mrs Hazard and firmly reminded that both Ben and I were expected at Okada Morihiro *Hanshi's* dōjō twenty minutes walk away at half-past-the-hour! The Iai and Kendō practise that followed – (we made it on time – just!) – was memorable to this day! I never forgot the teaching and daresay that Hazard-*san* didn't either. (We were also told off when we got back to the apartment!)

This master was always a stickler for 'correctness' in Budō and attention to all aspects of *reigi*. Perhaps from time to time we may relate one or two other stories in these pages. Suffice it to say that the combination of Hazard-*sensei*, Arai-*sensei*, (whose English was excellent and who, in his quiet way, 'burst' with the desire to teach), and Donn Draeger-*sensei*, backed by a significant number of the greatest masters active in the 70s and 80s, gave Kendō here just the sort of encouragement it needed.

We can but hope that Benjamin Hazard's memory and influence will remain with us for many years to come.

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Inoue Tomoshige, Rokudan Renshi

It is with the deepest regret that we have received a report from Kōbe of the sudden and unexpected passing in mid-September of our very good friend over many years.

Inoue-*sensei*, whose command of English was excellent, had been a great help to us in many ways over the best part of the last twenty or more years. He was the chief point of reference in arranging on our behalf the technical side of a number of visits by our members and direct contact with various *sensei* within the Hyōgo Kendō Renmei. It was he, who as leader of the Kōbe International Kendō Club, arranged the excellent two-month long training in Kōbe for Thomas Bowen, *sandan*, from the Butokukan.

Several members will remember with gratitude and pleasure their practises with Inoue-*sensei* and members of his dōjō and Ōzaki-*sensei's* Isshinkan Kendō Dōjō. Both Pat and Roald Knutsen had many long and frequently humorous telephone conversations with him and were deeply grateful for his support and many kindnesses.



Inoue Tomoshige-sensei (right), d. Sep 2011

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Another Sword blade Shearing-off by Chris Fox

A few months ago I reported on an incident in our Dōjō regarding the breaking of an Iai-tō during practice. This sword broke through the nakago at the *mekugi-ana*; fortunately the student of some long years standing, was not making a cut at the time and quickly realised that something was wrong! I think I said something like: "This is a most unusual happening and unlikely to be seen again"! Well, guess what: it has happened a second time.

I will say at this point that the second time did not involve the same student but the person involved had just been admonished for cutting down – *kiri-oroshi* – rather weakly, so determined to make a better full-bloodied cut, did so only for his Iai-tō to disassemble itself in his hands! It had broken clean through underneath the *habaki* leaving his holding just the *tsuka*; the blade and *tsuba* lay on the floor at his feet. The look on his face was of astonishment, disbelief, and embarrassment!

The point of this short article, though, has a more serious reason; all those students practicing with Iai-tō must be aware of these problems, although in Iai we only practice 'empty' cutting, the sword blade is still subjected to certain stresses. These stresses are caused by the abrupt stopping of the blade as the cut is focussed on and into the target; this has, to a much lesser degree, the same effect as if the sword had made a real cut into a body, the shock being transferred through the blade and into the *nakago* (tang) area where it is dissipated through the hilt. If this does occur it will get worse and worse causing even more stress on the *nakago*.

I would suggest that all Iai-tō are carefully examined on a very regular basis, even going so far as to holding the blade in a cloth maybe half-way along and tapping the *nakago* on both sides, carefully looking for any cracks you may be able to see. (Should the tang fall off there and then, that would be good). Also, in the dōjō make certain that you are positioned in between any pair standing on the other side; seniors, in particular, don't like being showered with bits of Iai-tō!

To sum up, no one seems to have a plausible explanation for this: could the swords have come from the same batch with the faults built in? Have the swords been dropped or banged sometime in the past thus causing a weakness? Does the alloy over the year become 'work-stressed' and develop cracks? We don't know the answers at this stage, but forewarned is forearmed, so take care . . .

Postscript: (by RMK)

Lightning doesn't usually strike in the same place twice, even less so three times!

At the beginning of October we were astonished at the Butokukan when yet another Iai-tō failed, this time with a stress fracture at the area on the blade 'side' of the *habaki*. The blade sheared off cleanly but with a small piece of the blade alloy cracked away where the edge 'folded' or 'bent' down at the bottom of the *habaki*.

Specialised advice is at present being requested from Maruyama Satoshi-*Kyoshi* in Kobe and in consultation with Mr. Neil Kemp (Musō Jikiden Eishin-ryū) here, to seek the reason and likelihood of a repetition. One feedback already received, though, is that one supplier experienced similar failures in some alloy Iai-tō a few years ago. It was concluded that these breakages may have been due to slight differences in the alloy constituents in the cheaper price range manufactured. However, some suppliers seem to have a 'clean sheet' in this regard.

The next question concerns finding replacement swords at a reasonable price in the face of the unfavourable Exchange Rates. One way or another, we may have to face the reality, across the board, that costs are bound to go up. It is one of the duties of the Eikoku Kendō Renmei – of all Renmei, come to that – to try to find the best sources for equipment both from the point of view of quality but also price.

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The Kendō Reader by Noma Hisashi

Chapter Twenty-two: Keiko (Practice)

The two characters that form the word *Keiko* mean 'to think' and 'the past'. Put together they form the word which means 'to work out and study the teachings of the past'. Hence, the action of 'thinking' is very much a part of the meaning of this word. Besides, the word *keiko*, as distinct from *shiai*, we also use the word *renshu* to mean training as such, but in Kendō the word *keiko* with the meaning 'to think', or to 'deliberate and develop', being the most important requirement is also adopted and is more profound in meaning. At this point it must be emphasised that, especially for the beginner, too much thinking is to be avoided as this tends to result in constricted technique, confusion, and hampered progress. For at least the first year or two, in order to become accustomed to Kendō itself, it is best simply to follow unquestioningly the way one is taught and just try to practice as often as possible. By increasing the number of times one practices *waza* will develop naturally, and without being aware of it oneself progress will be achieved. Again, as *waza* develops, doubts and dissatisfactions will arise, and these problems will require much thought and consideration in order to be answered which in turn will give birth to further progress.

Even so, there are some who despite years of training give not even the slightest thought to any problem but continue to train in a purely mechanical way; of such people not much progress can be expected. *Keiko* is a matter of physical and mental endeavour, In sum, it is a question of 'applying one's mind and multiplying the number of times'. By applying one's mind alone or by simply multiplying the number of times one cannot hope to make good progress. The two must go hand in hand.

For example, take the simple act of making a bow, *ō-jigi*. How many times do I bow in a single day, or in ten or fifteen years? How many times have I bowed up to this day? The number must be enormous, yet I have still not reached the stage where I can make a

perfect bow on every occasion. When I ask myself the reason for this, I realise it is because although I have bowed frequently, I have not given the action the slightest thought or attention. Alternatively, how ever much attention I give in making bows, if I fail to practice it, again I will fail to make a reasonable bow.

In Kendō there is the teaching: '*Ri-gyō-ichi*' (theory and practice together as one). The attempt to bring theory and practice together as one is the aim of *keiko*. To accomplish this the theory has to be understood, and to do that the one and only way is to apply one's mind. Also, practice must follow the dictates of the theory and for that the best one can do is to multiply the number of times one trains.

Some *shugyōsha*¹ hold the notion that *keiko* and *shiai* are thoroughly distinct from each other; we sometimes hear these people say, for example: 'I always lose in *shiai*, but I am strong in *keiko*', or 'I'm weak in *keiko*, but strong in *shiai*'. I have to say that such people are grossly mistaken in their attitude.

Keiko is for the benefit of *shiai* and nothing else. The objectives of *keiko* include the development of *waza*, the cultivation of spirit, the removal of bad habits, and so on, but the ultimate objective is to be victorious in *shiai*.

The highest aim of Kendō is the discovery of the all-encompassing Truth, but this is not possible when separated from the study of how to be victorious in *shiai*. The practice and study needed in order to be victorious in *shiai* is the justification for *keiko*. *Keiko* and *shiai* are inseparable. Therefore, comments about one being strong in *keiko* and weak, or else, strong in *shiai* and weak in *keiko* are proof of shallow understanding.

In *shiai*, to win is essential², though in *keiko* the outcome is not necessarily always the primary concern. *Shiai* may be compared to the final copy of a piece of writing, *keiko* being the rough draft upon which mistakes and excesses may be excused, bad habits corrected, and technique developed. At times, depending on the situation, it may be useful to undertake *keiko* free from concern about winning or losing. In this way, the true efficacy of *keiko* may be realised separate from the frantic methods employed solely for the sake of immediate victory. I wish only to emphasise strongly the practice of *keiko* for the benefit of *shiai*.

The following is a list of what to strive for in *keiko*:

1. Train as much and as often as possible.
2. Train positively and correctly.
3. Do not fail to think things out and devise.
4. As far as possible train against those more skilful.
5. Do not spare oneself physically.
6. Do not spare oneself spiritually.
7. Train against those difficult to handle.

Results of the Renmei Autumn Shodan-shinsa

John Bridger	Tunbridge Wells	to <i>Shodan</i>
Stephen Horten	“ “	“ “
Matthew Williams	“ “	“ “

Congratulations! Well done!

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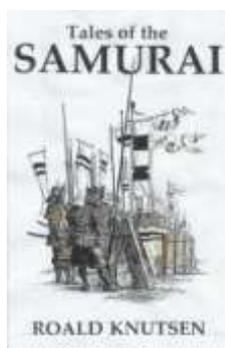
Publications

As most members already know the long-awaited study of the *'TENGU'* has at last been published and copies are still available through the Renmei at £37.50 (plus p&p where necessary). This price represents a considerable discount to the price fixed by Brill's of Leiden.

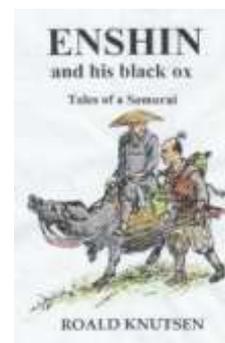
Pat Knutsen reminds members, too, that we have a few copies left of *'KOKORO – The Soul of Japan'*, (h/b), the excellent Japanese study in English focussing on the cultural background. We can now offer these at £9.95, a big reduction!

We have just two copies only of the excellent English language history of the classical period up to around 1350 by Sugawara Makoto, *'THE ANCIENT SAMURAI'* (h/b), offered now at £19.95.

Lastly, after long delays and postponements, advance copies of Roald Knutsen's *two* collections (fiction) of *'SAMURAI TALES'*, Vols. 1 and 2, (illustrated), are expected early in December. They will be available at a discount price of £12.99 each to members (expected R/P is £15.99). Please add £1.50 for p&p. However, if you order both volumes at once we can offer a discount price of £24.98 + £3.00 p&p while stocks last. Each story is line illustrated by the author next to the title and for members, each copy will be signed, too.



These are the first two collections, each of fifteen short stories, written purely for the entertainment of anyone with a passing interest in Old Japan and will make an ideal Christmas or New Year present ... Of varying length and covering a wide range of subjects, each story gives a fascinating sense of immediacy to a warrior's life, albeit through the eyes and imagination of a non-Japanese swordsman. There are exciting fight and battle scenes, pathos, calm, humour and a very high degree of realism - you won't be able to put either book down once started... and further volumes in the series will follow if you give your support.



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Arrowheads from an early-14th century battle site

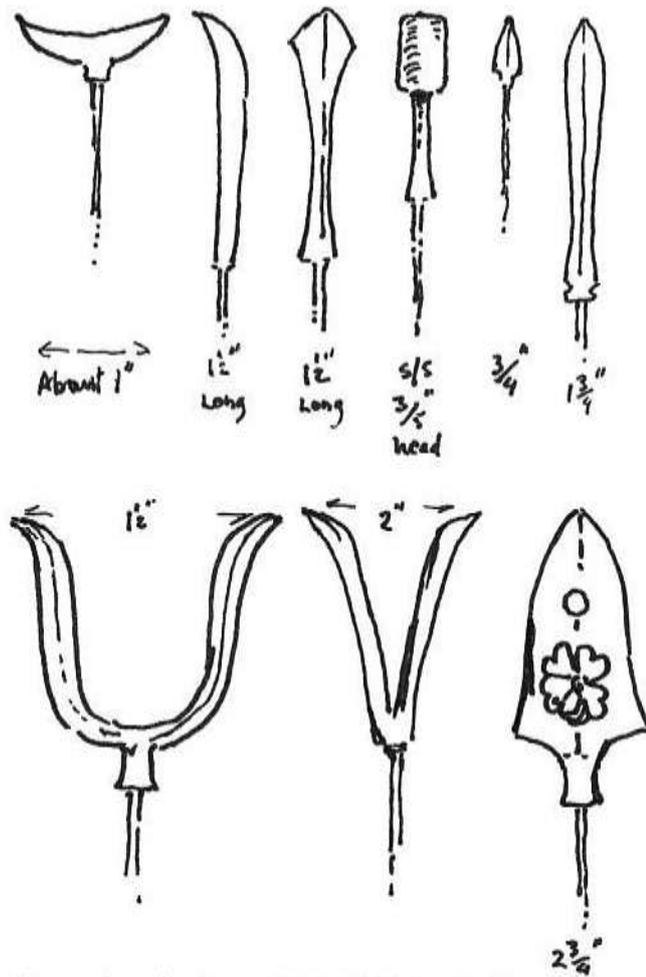
By Roald Knutsen

Amongst many deeply interesting places with historical associations, one of the most intriguing must be the mountaintop village of Yoshinoyama perched high on a steep ridge at the southern end of the Yamato plain in Nara-ken. This village is little more than a mile long, a narrow strip of shops, *ryōkan*, temples and shrines, redolent with close connections to Japanese history from at least the seventh century for the following thousand years. In the next issue of the Journal we intend to carry an article about Yoshinoyama that will, we are certain, be enjoyed by all.

In the course of the disturbed fourteenth century, the period marked by what historians like to term the *Nanbokuchō-jidai* – the Struggle between the Northern and Southern Courts – at least three battles took place along this ridge or very close by. To visit Yoshino in

the springtime has, for several hundred years, given the greatest pleasure in viewing the vast number of cherry trees that cover the steep slopes, all in flower at the same time. The forecasted date of the appearance of the delicate blossom is even announced on television and many thousands of visitors ascend (not descend!) simply to witness the spectacle. That is now, but in earlier times troops of discontented or patriotic warriors climbed the heights to find sanctuary and support from the clouds of militant yamabushi who wandered freely in these mountainous wastes.

between 1335 and 1348 the great Kimpusen-ji temple, where stands the mighty wooden Zaō-dō Prayer Hall, the second largest wooden structure in Japan, was attacked three times. The overflow from the first of these struggles was in 1335 when there was fighting at the Nyōrin-ji, later the burial place of the exiled ex-Emperor, Gō-Toba. I have visited this quite small temple site twice, as has Ric Bithell and, a few years ago, Thomas Bowen, *sandan*, when he visited Yoshinoyama from Kobe. One wanders around many such sites,



Arrowheads from 1335. Nyōrin-ji - Yoshinoyama
25/04/08



The Nyōrin-ji, Yoshino-yama. The Prayer Hall behind which is the grave of the emperor Go-Daigo. (14th Century)

largely cut off from all information which is, in any case, almost exclusively in Japanese, and leave with memories of harmonious beauty but little else.

However, in the tiny Shrine Treasury – a grand description of a hut often crammed with displays of calligraphy by famous or long-forgotten monks and so on – I came on one small glazed table display case in which were laid out a small collection of arrowheads recovered from the site when the 1335 attack came. Here is a leaf out of my sketchbook of nine of these blades, together with estimated measurements, drawn on that day, the 25th April, 2008.

I have seen many Japanese arrowheads over the last half-century, but in these partly rusted relics from a small engagement on this very spot fought just over six hundred years ago, real history was within just three inches of my fingertips.³

(I missed the cherry blossom crowds by just two days. The crowds vanished, the *sakura-no-hana* still to be viewed in full glory for the rest of my stay!)

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Notes

¹ *Shugyōsha*: One who voluntarily undertakes hard training in the *bugei* carried out for a prolonged period of time, From this: *musha-shugyōsha* – one who undertakes travel to polish understanding of the martial arts, preferably daily.

² This statement by *Nōma-sensei* needs explaining in more detail.

³ The variety of these blade shapes is surprising when the ‘norm’ would be the leaf-shaped small head second from the right, top row. Such blades usually predominated in the twenty-four arrows carried in the woven ‘platform’ *ebira* quivers by armoured warriors. Of this number, three arrows with rather longer shafts, had forked blades (like the centre blade, bottom row) These three were ‘whistling’ signal arrows. The rest of this collection is hugely interesting and, to my mind, unusual and rare.