

Hello! This is Takako Shimatani. I received a lot of feedbacks as below: 'Your articles about handguards are excellent. They are very interesting.' 'Your explanation about handguards is easy for me to understand.' So, I am likely to talk about 'Mino handguard' in this article.

The story about Yamatodamashii



After nin War(1467-1477), the Uchigatana sword became popular. Because of this trend, demands for a mounting of sword were high. Mino where the handguard was born was an important point for traffic and near to Kyoto where chasing techniques had been developed in Heian Era. So, sword smiths, armourers, scraped-iron smiths and so on used their skills to produce metal parts of swords and armours. These professionals used red copper (inclusion of copper, gold, tin and lead) and Yamagane (unrefined copper with blue colour) which were softer and easier to fabricate and produced equipments attached to swords. Mino handguards were divided to two types: Ko-Mino (what were created before Azuchi Momoyama period) and Mino (what were created after Azuchi Momoyama period)



Mino (Gifu prefecture) was flourished as a place of making swords. So, it became very popular as a place to create attachments of swords as well. (Minoden: Feb.2016 Vol10)

### Characteristics

#### Materials

Red Copper  
Yamagane



#### Surface Uokoji



Decorating a metal surface with small dots resembling fish eggs

#### Edge

#### Carving and ornamental border were settled

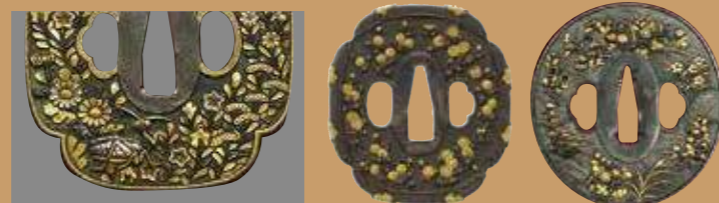


#### Carving Fukabori

A skill that handguard's surface was scraped flatly toward the direction (Sukitori) from edge to mounting device of sword and the position of its mounting devices was higher than the surface of handguard. This skill shows patterns seemed to be floated like a design with three-dimensional effects. Enamelling with gold and silver colour is implemented on patterns and designs.



#### Design Autumn flowers with insects, animals and chrysanthemums



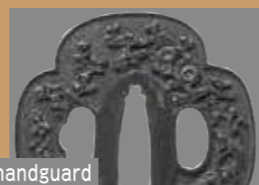
#### Inscribing No

Some handguards inscribing creator's name, '-zyo,' made after Edo period are still remained

#### How to distinguish between Ko-Mino and Mino

##### Ko-Mino is

- Carving was extremely deep
- Surface was blacker than Mino
- Carving is not round and the lines of carving were sharp.



Ko-Mino handguard

The carving techniques which were able to be made only in Mino. The unimaginable long works which were made by wholly hands in spite of no equipments, machines, etc like the modern society. The fine carving and real minute craftsmanship stunned me. No same things. Each attachment to swords had a different face and shape. I liked simple iron handguards produced by swordsmiths and armourers. But Mino-handguard, what creators carved and shaped little by little cautiously, also fascinated me.

How about Mino-handguard? Why don't you take them with your hands and feel the Japanese sensitive skills?



◀ 'Ko-Mino and Mino' stored in our firm



If you are interested in them, please feel free to give us your contact.  
mail to: [sengoku-54jp@hi.enjoy.ne.jp](mailto:sengoku-54jp@hi.enjoy.ne.jp) telephone: +81 (0) 848 29 39 36 Nakabori in charge

How about this Yamatodamashii? We need your opinions and feedbacks more. We are waiting for them!

Please write as 'Sub: reply to the newsletter' and send it to us



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Daimyo Company Co., Ltd.



We deliver

# 大和魂

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### The Philosophy of Daimyou ltd.

The Philosophy of Daimyo Company Limited.

Under our slogan of 'We deliver the YAMATODAMASHII', the Daimyo ltd offers information about the Japanese history and antique goods and aims at guiding our customers to the old Japanese world by fulfilling our customers demands to antique gears.



## I was broadcasted on TV nationwide!

ON AIR



Takashi Hanamoto

Natsumi Uga, Announcer

This is Takashi Hanamoto. Now, it is the season for cherry blossoms. I hope you not to drink too much when you make cherry-blossom viewing. While some editorial reasons by a TV station stopped my report in early timing, I was broadcasted in the TV program on the 31st January. That was the part of

'Tsugu Megami' in 'The Morning Show' whose main personality was Shinichi Hatori on TV Asahi.

This short story shows a female manager who runs an old-established shop and company and spotlights her works and treasures.

In the process of covering 'Mametoku', a shop who makes and sell soy-bean snacks and sweets, which have been running for 149 years at Fukuyama-shi, Hiroshima, TV crew found armour and a helmet surprisingly. They asked me an offer to evaluate them and I made an appearance on a TV screen. This armour had a body which consisted of lacquered hide connected with hide and shoulder, arm and leg protectors in good condition. The helmet had 62 lines on a rusty surface of helmet and a huge face mask on a rusty surface of the mask. They were marvellous armour and a helmet. The armour's body was decorated oppositely the front and the back and the leg pads were upside down. But they were remained in good condition. As it was my first experience to make exposure on national TV, I was so nervous and my face became stiff.....

If you have a free time, I strongly expect you to watch my appearance because I was on the TV screen for a couple of minutes.



You can have a look at the scene from filming the TV program.

Snacks and sweets produced by Mametoku where I assessed its armour and helmet are very tasty. If you have a chance, please give it a try as well!

### Mametoku

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Let's have a talk about

# Yamato Damashii

Your place of discussion

The theme in this article is 'the assassination of Ryoma Sakamoto.'

## I had a discussion with Mr. Robert Ken.

Ryoma intended the peaceful change of government by the restoration of imperial rule. Shintaro Nakaoka who planned to overthrow the Edo Shogunate by force persuaded Ryoma. But Ryoma disagreed with Nakaoka's opinion and the Feudal retainers of Tosa Domain slashed at Ryoma with sword. Nakaoka who did not imagine such a situation had been also cut into pieces by the frenzied Feudal retainers of Tosa Domain

'What? The Feudal retainers of Tosa Domain!? Was Nakaoka involved in the assassination.....?'

I suppose the accident was the assassination that Britain which was Ryoma's patron abandoned Ryoma and searched for a timing to kill him

'In these circumstances, Britain???'

In the first place, why was Ryoma, who had left his master's domain and became a masterless Samurai, able to meet important persons of other Domains and Edo Shogunate, in spite of the strict class system in Edo Era? Because Ryoma was a local staff of arms dealer. Don't you think so?

'Ryoma was an arms dealer....To be sure, I have an image that he had a pistol.'

But, while Ryoma was engaging in that job, he was capable of grasping what the European Powers designed secretly and thought Japan would have been colonized by them. I suppose Ryoma might feel sense of danger. Naturally, Britain treated Ryoma who had changed side and had no worth supporting for Britain as an obstacle.

'He understood that Britain would really target colonising Japan, not selling arms! Did Britain wait for their opportunity to kill Ryoma?'

Many parties who had different intentions shared common interests directly or indirectly and assassinated Ryoma-I guess. What Ryoma did not expect was that Ryoma never imagined Ryoma was killed by the members of his group.

'If it had been true, I feel Ryoma, who was killed by the believed members of his group, regretful...'

Ryoma thought of Japan in the future and became an arms dealer. But Ryoma got the bid of European Powers to colonise Japan and made efforts to avoid civil wars in Japan. I thought as above, too. But, a civil war had been occurred finally after Ryoma's death.....In the political confusion, I think the heroes who rendered distinguished services in Meiji Restoration and made big development after Meiji Restoration were excellent. But, I cannot ignore the contribution by Ryoma who foresaw the future prior to these heroes and made actions! Ryoma, a Samurai who left Tosa and thought of Japan, was killed by the feudal retainers of the Tosa domain..... His sad last moment

Disappointed!!

## I had a discussion with Mr. Futen no Mabo.

When I read various kinds of books about Ryoma, they have the four points in common.

- 1) Two Samurai warriors with having a business card of Kizugawa feudal retainers were permitted to go to the 2nd floor. They were assassins.
- 2) From the entrance of 1st floor, one assassin entered the room and killed a male servant first of all.
- 3) Ryoma had no time to draw his sword and was slashed.
- 4) Nakaoka who was there with Ryoma was cut to pieces, but he had been still alive for a couple of days.

When I treated these things as what were connected, I can imagine as below:

'These four things are always mentioned, aren't they?'

At first, two Samurai warriors with having a business card of Kizugawa feudal retainers were permitted to go to the 2nd floor and started to talk with Ryoma and his group members. Other associating members knocked the door and began to attack the male servant who responded to them! The assassin killed the male servant who was likely to tell Ryoma about the danger from his behind in a single stroke.

'If it had been true, I feel Ryoma, who was killed by the believed members of his group, regretful...'

Ryoma noticed some big noise on the 1st floor and was going to stand up with saying 'do not be noisy!'. Ryoma distracted his attention to other assassin in front of Ryoma. At that moment, the killer in front of Ryoma drew his short sword and in the same stroke, cut down Ryoma. I think the assassinator maybe aimed at Ryoma's neck. But, since Ryoma made his head down, Ryoma got an injury in his forehead and was about to take his sword. Then, Ryoma received a stroke of sword on his back when Ryoma looked back. It is my assumption.

'So, he had a big wound! But why did the killer use a short sword?'

The reason why I thought the killer used a short sword was that the assassinator generally held a long sword on his right side and it was very difficult for him to draw a long sword. And I can also imagine the reason from the fact that Nakaoka had been still alive for a couple of days even though he got a serious wound.

'A short sword was unable to make a serious injury. Because of it, Ryoma did not die immediately.'

The other reason was some difficulties to swing a long sword in a room under a low ceiling. And the purpose of assassinate group was to stop moving Ryoma for a few months, even though they were unable to kill him. For them, it was enough. After the assassinators had left the site, Ryoma and Nakaoka were said to exchange a couple of words, which means they did not put an end Ryoma's life. Ryoma's failure to make action for a couple of months would enable to start a civil war.-I thought....

'Was it a direction from Satsuma and Choshu domains to overthrow the Shogunate using armed forces?'

I learnt the swordsmanship called Sinto Munen Ryu. My hypothesis as above comes from the study of swordsmanship, which taught me the choice of sword depends on places and purposes when using swords, after learning this swordsmanship.

'Mr./Mrs.. Futen no Mabo studied the swordsmanship. So, only you can make the special analysis.'



The reasons why the assassinators used a short sword were that their purpose to attack Ryoma was to wound Ryoma only as well as they charged Ryoma indoors!!! That is an excellent guess!! While the injury of Ryoma's forehead was said to be the fatal wound definitely, Ryoma was not finished off. Nakaoka had been alive for a couple of days. Because Mr./Mrs.. Futen no Mabo made an analysis from the viewpoint of swordsmanship, it gave me presence and very interesting. Your opinion tells me that this accident had been completed within only a few minutes. Though Mr./Mrs.. Futen no Mabo also send me his long description about 'Three Stage Thrust by Koji Okita, a leader of Shinsengumi', I would leave it out for want of space. I am very sorry. If I have another chance, I will show your assumption in our newsletters.

## From Mr. Minotan

This assassination was a plot by Satsuma. In order to overthrow the Shogunate and contribute to the Meiji Restoration, Ryoma's style of thinking was an obstruction.

Same as Mr./Mrs.. Robert Ken and Mr./Mrs. Futen no Mabo, the party to overthrow the Shogunate and contribute to the Meiji Restoration was unable to understand what Ryoma did and were likely to. For them, Ryoma was disturbance-I suppose. I am looking forward to showing how the story of 'Segodon', a long-running historical drama series on NHK TV, will be going on this year.

Hanaedon



To all of readers, I really appreciate a lot of your opinions and feedback. Thank you very much. Nothing is happier than to be able to create this article, 'We deliver 'YAMATODAMASHII!', with a lot of readers.

I received some comments from the readers in overseas counties and other domestic readers. However, I failed to show all of them for want of space. I apologise to you from my heart.

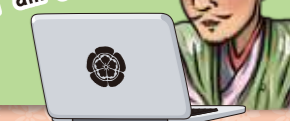
The theme in the next article is

## 'Why Honnō-ji incident was happened?'

It is Ok even though you send a short sentence. I need to get your voices. I am waiting for them  
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I got a mail from Mitsuhide. I am going now.



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