

# 剣 Kenyu 友

Volume 10, number 12  
December 1996

## DATEBOOK

1. Jan 18, Sat, Vancouver Taikai.
2. Jan 25, Sat, PNKF Board, 11:30 a.m., Highline.
3. Feb 8, Sat, Steveston Taikai.
4. Feb 22, Sat, PNKF Iaido Seminar and Shinsa, with PNKF Board meeting following.
5. Feb 23, Sun, PNKF Kendo Shinsa, ~~2nd~~<sup>4th</sup> Dan and below.
6. Mar 15, Sat, PNKF Board meeting.
7. Apr 5, Sat, Renton Taikai for 2nd Dan and Below, with PNKF Board meeting following.
8. Apr 19 or Apr 26, Sat, UW Taikai.
9. May 4, Sun, Bellevue Youth Taikai, PNKF Board meeting following.
10. Jun 21, Sat, PNKF Iaido Taikai, PNKF Board meeting following.
11. Jul 20, Sun, PNKF Board meeting.
12. Aug 9, Sat, PNKF Kendo Shinsa, 2nd Kyu and below.
13. Aug 10, Sun, PNKF Iaido Seminar.
14. End of August, Takada Machi visit to Seattle.
15. Sep 20, Sat, PNKF Board meeting.
16. Oct 11, Sat, PNKF Board meeting.
17. Nov 8, Sat, PNKF Taikai.

## THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SWORD.

Special to the KENYU by Rod Nobuto Omoto, Kendo Kyoshi 7th Dan.

A 375 year old Nihon To (Samurai art sword) was returned to Takada Machi, a small town in Fukuoka Prefecture on the island of Kyushu, Japan, by Mr. Joe Cuendet of Seattle, Washington, USA.

The Nihon To was given to Mr. Cuendet more than 30 years ago by his wife Keiko's uncle who had kept it safely hidden in his attic for more than 20 years. During the Occupation of Japan after World War II, swords were confiscated by the Allies as dangerous weapons. Although the policy was later amended, many were leery of entrusting valuable historic Japanese swords for review by the Japanese Sword Appraisal Committee, taking the responsibility upon themselves of preserving these precious remains of Japanese heritage.

Mr. Cuendet had practiced Kendo, however, and Keiko's uncle believed that giving it to a Kendoist was proper. Joe did not know what to do with it. Because it was an art sword, made of Nanban Tetsu (imported steel of olden times) and decorated with beautiful and intricate design, he did not want to use it to practice Kendo or Iaido, nor give it to his son, fearing that his son might go into the backyard and try to cut wood with it. Joe kept it in a safe place, caring reverently for it for more than 30 years, all the while deliberating what he should do with it. He had it polished by Mr. Tatsuhiko Konno, assuring the proper respect due to its priceless history.

Meanwhile, in 1990, Mr. Manabu Yabe of Seattle Kendo Kai began searching for a town in his ancestral Fukuoka Prefecture on the island of Kyushu, Japan to establish an exchange program with the Seattle Dojo. After numerous letter communications by Mr. Yabe with towns in Fukuoka Prefecture, the exchange program was established with Takada Machi. A group of Seattle Kendo Kai members journeyed to Japan in the summer of

1991. With much enthusiasm, the following year a group of Kendo enthusiasts from Takada Machi Kendo, including educators and Mr. Kazuyuki Ryu, Mayor of Takada Machi, and Mr. Masashi Kawano, Chairman of Takada Machi Kendo Federation, visited Seattle.

Joe was excited by the exchange visit and knew unquestionably that Takada Machi was the place for the Nihon To. "The search is completed," Joe exclaimed. "The sword is going Home!"

Joe, nor any of the others, at that time knew just how significant "home" was to be. Upon investigation, it was found that the sword had been made by Bizen No Kami Fujiwara Shigemoto of Bungo, Takada Machi. The Nihon To had been returned to the very town where it had been forged during the early Edo Period, the year of Genna 7, 1621. (Emperor Genna reigned from 1615 to 1623.)

On June 28, 1996, Joe personally presented the sword to the people of Takada Machi. The town made a final home to honor this beautiful Nihon To by displaying it in the Takada Machi town hall.

Coincidence or fate? The statistical odds of the sword being returned from America to its place of origin with no specific intent or preknowledge of any of the parties involved would seem astronomical! Wandering from the time of its creation when the famous Sword Saint Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1641) lived, before the United States was even a nation, through the hands of who knows how many samurai and other fortunate custodians like Mr. Joe Cuendet, the spirit of the sword can rest with honor. Home at last!

#### KODANSHA SHINSA

November 25, 1996, Tokyo, Japan. 6TH DAN: Ryuichi Shimizu (Seattle). Congratulations to all who challenged these exams.

#### KENDO, IAIDO, AND JODO VIDEOS AVAILABLE AGAIN

The four superb and indispensable official English language videotapes of the All Japan Kendo Federation basic Kendo training, Kendo Kata, Iaido, and Jodo are now available again. The tapes cost only ~~\$45.00 each~~, plus tax, and may be obtained through Jeffrey Marsten (206) 246-2239. Proceeds will go to the AUSKF.

*\$39/all four*

#### THE LAST WORD

There is an old Kendo proverb: "The kirikaeshi gives ten virtues to the attacker and eight virtues to the receiver." The ten virtues for the attacker are that kirikaeshi (1) makes the waza swift and sharp, (2) strengthens the power of the stroke, (3) gives us good wind and stamina, (4) makes the working of the arms flexible, (5) makes physical movement light and agile, (6) enables us to operate the shinai freely, (7) settles the waist well and gives a well-balanced posture, (8) makes the eyesight clear, (9) teaches the adequate interval at which to strike the opponent, and (10) gives dexterity in the working of the palms. The eight virtues for the receiver are that kirikaeshi (1) keeps the mind in tranquillity, (2) makes the eyesight clear, (3) makes us learn the style of the opponent's sword-stroke techniques, (4) makes the palms firm and flexible, (5) makes physical movement free and flexible, (6) enables us to become good at receiving strikes, (7) strengthens the arms, and (8) strengthens the body. --Sasamori and Warner, THIS IS KENDO.

KENYU - Monthly Newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Kendo Federation

KENYU ONLINE - <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~kendo/kenyu.html>

Tom Bolling, Editor - 7318 23rd Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98115