

KENDO forum

by Musashi of the
Shinto Ryu

Kenjutsu in the Muromachi Period (1332 to 1573). It is difficult to obtain reliable information concerning the earliest beginnings of swordsmanship during the Heian and Kamakura periods (794 to 1331) due partly to the lack of records and to the fictional histories contained in others. But in the time of the Ashikaga Shogunate the position improves. The following are the recorded styles of Kenjutsu that find their origins at this time.

1. *Nen-ryu*. Founded by Kamisaka Hanzaemon Yasuhisa, or, as

some authorities hold, by Somashiro Yoshimoto. This was right at the beginning of the Muromachi period; the style continued to be taught in the Higuchi family right down to the mid-18th century.

2. *Chujo-ryu*. The *Chujo-ryu* is regarded as the originator of several very important later styles. It was regularised at the time of the third Ashikaga Shogun about 1350 by Chujo Hyogo-no-suke Nagahide. This gentleman may have

An unusual *shiai* between *naginata* and *nito*. With the spear is O'e Yukiye, 7th *dan*; the Two-sword fencer is Kasahara Toshiaki, 7th *dan*.



received instruction in Kenjutsu under the *Nen-ryu*.

3. *Oda-ryu*. Founded by Oda Sanuki-no-kami Takatomo who was lord of Oda in Wakasa province (Western Japan). He died in 1416. He was related to the Chujo family.

4. *Kurama-ryu*. Founded by Ono Shogen.

5. *Gen-ryu*. Founded by Kiso Shokuro, a retainer of the Satomi Clan.

6. *Jigen-ryu*. Founded by Setoguchi Bizen-no-kami, a retainer of the Shimazu Clan in Kyushu.

Of these last three schools nothing is known although it is said that their offshoots existed in various provinces into the Tokugawa period.

7. *Tenshin Shoden Shinto-ryu*. Thought by most authorities to be the greatest of the schools of Kenjutsu. It was founded in the mid-15th century by Iishino Chosai Iyenaō. He was regarded as a great master with the *yari* and *naginata* besides the sword. Chosai died on 15th April, 1488.

8. *Kashima Shin-ryu*. Founded by one of the outstanding students of the *Tenshin Shoden Shinto-ryu*. Matsumoto Bizen-no-kami Naokatsu sometime at the turn of the 15th century or the early 16th century. He died of wounds received in the Battle of Takamagahara in 1525.

9. *Kyo-ryu*. The origins of this school are obscure although it was founded in the Kyoto region about the same time as the *Kashima Shin-ryu*. The founder of the style was either Arai Harube Shoho or Yamamoto Jinsuke.

10. *Shinto-ryu* (afterwards known as *Bokuden-ryu*). Founded by the famous Tsukahara Bokuden who died at over eighty in March, 1571.

11. *Kage-ryu*. Founded by a western samurai called Hyuga-no-

kami Sazaemon-no-jo Hisatada (born 1452). The style was announced in 1488.

12. *Taisha-ryu*. Founded by Marume Kurando Dayu, a Higo samurai. He was a pupil of Tsukahara Bokuden in the *Shinto-ryu*.

Next month we shall examine some of these schools in greater detail.

California and Hawaii. The annual Northern/Southern California Kendo Tournament was held in Los Angeles on the 21st June. This year the Northern contingent lost by only one point. The highlight of the tournament was the final match between Mr. Fujii Shokichi, 6th *dan* (North California) and Mr. Shimoda Masaharu, 7th *dan* of the South. Shimoda *San* took the match by two points to one.

Mr. Benajmin H. Hazard, 4th *dan*, took the opportunity of visiting a Kendo dojo in Hawaii during his recent visit to the islands in June. This was to the dojo of Mikami Sensei, a Kendo *kyoshi*. Mikami Sensei is a most unusual *kendoka* in that he is forced to fight from *migi-jodan* due to the loss of his left arm. He is extremely strong and fencing so remarkable a master must be a very exciting and interesting experience.

Shinto-Ryu Kendo Dojo. The Shinto-Ryu dojo takes great pleasure in welcoming Professor Yasuji Nakajima, 3rd *dan*, who arrived from Japan on the 5th August. Professor Nakajima lectures at the Tokyo Mercantile Marine University and will be in London for some seven months. We trust he will be a frequent visitor to the dojo and look forward to many pleasant encounters with him.