



SWORD GUARDS

*A Report on Joe Hloucha's Collection*¹

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Sword Guards as Collectible Items

The Japanese sword hilt is richly furnished with hilt ornaments (*menuki*) and a sword guard, perhaps better described as a hand guard (*tsuba*), used to shield against the enemy's blade and also to keep the sword balanced and stop the bearer's hand from slipping. Some sword guards were excavated from ancient burial mounds (3rd–7th century) and other more recent (8th century) examples are deposited among the oldest and the most precious collection of artistic artifacts in Shōsōin, Nara. The technology with which swords and their furnishings were crafted was mastered during the wars of the 15th and 16th centuries, both in terms of quality and quantity of swords produced. After the unification of Japan during 250 years of relative peace, samurai became accustomed to using their swords and the accompanying fittings as representations of their status, and maybe also their souls as the proverb says, rather than as weapons. By that time, however, some merchants, a less respected social class, were allowed to wear one sword (whereas samurai usually wore two). Townsmen wanted to show off their success and were willing to spend money on splendid and elaborate fittings. As a result, the production of crafts flourished and many beautiful pieces of sword decorations were produced during this time of isolation and peace in Japan. Master craftsmen were able to portray a broad spectrum of themes using the help of mere hints and symbols on a very limited space when making sword guards, much like the famous Japanese poets who managed to convey so much in their short haiku poems of only 17 syllables. The themes range from mythology, nature, the characteristics of the owner, or the owner's name. After the wearing of swords was banned in 1862 for all except the samurai class (in 1877 a total ban was issued for all

¹ The report has been prepared within the research project of the National Museum: „Personalities of the Czech Science and Culture“ supported by the Czech Ministry of Culture. (VVZ 300, MK 00002327202).

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including samurai class) swords and sword decorations became appreciated objects for many collectors.

Joe Hloucha (1881–1957) first became known for writing a love story about a beautiful Japanese woman and a European officer called „Sakura in the Storm,“ which was published in 1905. He travelled to Japan twice (1906 and 1926) and published nine other books about Japan³, which made him a notable authority on latter day Japonism in Czech culture. Primarily, he was the author of books³ on subjects pertaining to Japan, but he was also a collector who was mainly interested in Japanese art and decorative art objects, but his collecting activities went far beyond this. He also collected gothic art, artistic objects from Asia and Africa, Czech folk furniture, etc. He began collecting as early as 1898 when he mentioned in his diary⁴ that he owned 194 objects, 90 of which were of Japanese origin. Hloucha collected objects of Asian and African decorative art throughout his life, and as mentioned above he was also interested in European gothic art and Bohemian ethnology. In 1955 a majority of his collection was transferred to the Náprstek Museum, a smaller part was transferred to the Oriental Collection of the National Gallery and his books were given to the Oriental Institute Library. Articles from Hloucha's collection comprise about 7.5% of all objects deposited in the Náprstek museum. Out of his collection of 6,755 Japanese items, his beloved woodblock prints amount to 3,554 pieces and the below mentioned sword guards are only a small part of the collection – 77 items in the whole set. It is also worth mentioning that he owned several swords and sword decorations, menuki, fuchi, kashira. He had no special interest in samurai culture, nor did not wrote any popularizing articles on this part of his collection. One could say he was more interested in the legends and symbols depicted on these samurai jewels rather than the items themselves, or the purpose for which they were used. Hloucha has apparently found inspiration about what to collect in a book that he bought for himself – Poncetton's Les Gardes de Sabre Japonaises (Poncetton, 1924) literature).

Evaluating the Sword Guards in Hloucha's Collection

According to Hloucha's personal diaries, he took great care in making his purchases and he compared items that he had bought in Japan or in European antique shops with artifacts exhibited in museums all over Europe; he regularly travelled to German, French, Austrian museums and carefully examined what they were displaying in their showcases. He also may have found some inspiration in the book Legend in Japanese Art,⁵ written by Henry L. Joly. He probably bought it because it explained historical episodes, legendary characters, folk myths and religious symbols in English (Joe Hloucha was able speak and understand simple Japanese, wrote using simple Japanese characters, but he was not able to read complicated texts written in characters). The book is richly illustrated with many examples, many of them being of tsubas and their motifs. He was foremost a man of

³ Joe Hloucha's literary works: *Sakura ve vichřici* (1905), *Zátopa* (1906), *Vzpomínky na Japonsko* (1908), *Polibky smrti* (1912), *Moje „Paní Chrysanthema“* (1919), *Pavilon hrůzy* (1920), *Dopisy neznámého* (1923), *Pohádky japonských dětí* (1926), *Mezi bohy a démony* (1929), *Prodavačky úsměvů* (1929), *Zahrada lásky* (1929), *Japonečky* (1931), *Hokusai* (1949, in English 1955).

⁴ Deník Joe Hlouchy, zápis ze 13. 12. 1898, NpM, archiv Hloucha, 7/10

⁵ Two sources were used in particular for interpreting the meaning of symbols: Joly, Henry, L.: *Legend in Japanese Art*, John Lane Company, New York 1908, and Baird, Merrily: *Symbols of Japan*, Rizzoli International Publications, Inc. New York, 2001.

letters, which probably was the reason that he purchased items somehow related to his field of interest, legends and symbols, which he could use for his literary activities. A lot of sword guards have very distinctive motifs engraved, pierced or inlaid into the surface. The first glimpse of Hloucha's tsuba collection says much about his attitude towards these kinds of collectibles. He must have liked the symbols and legends artistically depicted on each tsuba's surface. Most of his sword guards bear only symbols in the form of e.g. a fox, a dragon, or a crane and a tortoise, but at least three of them have a whole legend inscribed on their limited surface space. The first one (Fig.No. 5) depicts one of the heroes mentioned in Guo Jujing's book, Twenty Four Chinese Paragons of Filial Piety, Saijun (Ts'ai Shun in Chinese). He received the leg of an ox after having been caught by a band of rebels. The ox leg is a reward for his picking up a basket full of mulberries and leaving the ripe ones for his mother. The second example (Fig.No. 23) even has two heroes from the Gempei battles, Kajiwaru Genda Kagesue and Sasaki Takacuna, shown in the famous scene where both men plunge into the water of the Uji river in the year 1184, a time of unending fascination for the Japanese. The third sword guard (Fig.No. 30) depicts Kan'yu (Kuan Yu in Chinese) on one side, a second century general whose exploits are featured in the Romance of Three Kingdoms and who was deified as the God of War. The reverse side depicts Kokusenpu Riki (Li K'uei in Chinese), a brigand mentioned in the popular Narration of Water Margin (Suikoden).

Hloucha's collection of sword guards can be divided into several categories. The first category is obviously formed by 11 guards of the highest quality. They are produced of high quality material, their execution is perfect (Fig Nos. 37, 38, 48, 50, 51, 55, 61, 62, 67, 69, 70) and they can be called the masterpieces of Hloucha's collection. Unfortunately, details of their origin are unknown because Hloucha's diaries often do not mention exactly where the pieces were purchased, or what criteria he used in choosing them. He only points out that he bought a „beautiful thing“ and in some cases mentions the price. Identifying exactly which object he is referring to is almost impossible in the majority of cases.

The sword guards in the second group represent the opposite extreme; they can be characterized as souvenirs and were probably given free of charge to the buyer when his purchase was big enough. This often happened in both Japanese or European antique shops. They were nice presents even though they have no historical or artistic value (Fig.Nos. 21, 39, 45, 56, 75, 76) and they probably motivated the buyer to come to the shop again.

The third and largest group is comprised of pieces that are of relatively good quality, but otherwise have no outstanding features. They are neither old nor do they represent a particularly outstanding artisanal school.

In addition to these, there are also several guards which were not actually used as real sword guards, but are nicely produced and have interesting motifs on the surfaces, which is why they were valued as collectibles (Fig.Nos. 40, 66). They prove the above mentioned theory that Hloucha bought them primarily because of the motifs they were decorated with.

Hloucha's tsuba collection as well as other parts of his collection indicate that there was another important reason for his choices when buying items for his collection. Some of Hloucha's collectibles suggest that his taste was strongly influenced by trends in chinoiserie and japonism during the second half of the 19th century. Two examples of tsuba particularly (Fig.Nos. 14, 31) support this supposition. They are highly decorative in

a European sense, but they are also very Japanese in their function, in the materials from which they are made and the detail they are made with.

Description of decorative symbols

1. Floral designs: (25 pieces)

Generally speaking, artisans producing and decorating single sword guards certainly had several criteria for choosing which plants to use. First of all there was their symbolic meaning, secondly they were often used for family crests, and last but not least they possessed beautiful shapes. Several flowers are traditionally used for decorative purposes not only for tsubas but throughout Japanese art in general. They are: **Plum** /*ume*/ (Fig.No. 65), a symbol of longevity and perseverance, appearing in about 80 family crests and one of the three friends of winter /*shōchikubai*/. It is also a symbol of cultured gentleman and poets. **Cherry blossoms** /*sakura*/ (Fig.Nos. 29, 31) represent the short life of samurais i.e. ephemerality, it is also a flower which calls to mind the Yoshino area, a classical example of the Japanese perception of beauty. **Chrysanthemums** /*kiku*/ (Fig.No.71) were originally used in China as a herb with healing properties but from the 13th century chrysanthemums served as a symbol of the imperial family in Japan. **Hollyhocks** /*aoi*/ (Fig.Nos. 3, 24, 34, 55) have very nice heart-shaped leaves and are said to have the power to ward off thunderstorms and earthquakes, which is a very important attribute in a country where several hundred earthquakes happen each year. It is associated with several Shintō shrines since the Heian period, e.g. Aoi Festivals are held in Kamo shrines in Kyōto even now. The leaf shapes were often used in family crests, for example, in the crest of the Tokugawa shōguns and their relatives of Matsudaira clan. Leaves of the **maidenhair tree** /*ichō*/ (Fig.No. 73) also have a very special decorative shape, well-suited for family crests. And what more they are used for medicine purposes since ancient times. Among the family crests of nobility, the **pawlonia** /*kiri*/ (Fig. Nos. 7, 14) holds quite an important place as a symbol of the imperial family and also as Toyotomi Hideyoshi's crest.

The above given motifs are only a few from a wide array of motifs that are most frequently used. Among Hloucha's sword guards are also some other, perhaps less frequent, but still interesting motifs. The **ground cherry** /*hōzuki*/ (Fig.No. 58) is probably used because of its nice lantern shape and ground cherry blossoms of are usually used for adorning altars during the Buddhist Bon festivals. **Mushrooms** (Fig.No. 43) represent symbols of fertility, the *shiitake* mushroom being associated with females, the *matsutake* with phallic symbols. However, there is also a special type of mushroom, called the fungus of immortality (*reishi*, *mannendake*) which is said to be effective for treating liver disease, immune system problems, asthma and heart disease. **Arrowroot** /*kuzu*/ (Fig.No. 37) always served as a main source of starch and as a herbal treatment for fevers, infections and headaches. It belongs to the seven grasses of autumn and because of its nicely shaped of leaves, is also a very useful decorative motif.

The most common plant in Japan, **rice** (*ine*) (Fig.Nos. 18, 74) is not a very common motif among art objects, which is strange since rice is a staple of the Japanese diet. Sheaves can be found depicted on the surfaces of sword guards whereas only bales of rice on which Daikokuten, a deity of prosperity, often sits, can be identified on other items.

Besides these, sword guards show some types of leaves which are difficult to identify (Fig.Nos.8, 9, 11, 16, 19, 25), as well as flowers and birds /*kachō*/ (Fig.Nos. 10, 13) common in Japanese art, or only flowers (Fig.No. 35). Chinese grass /*karakusa*/ (Fig.No. 55) which

was stylized and shown winding in graceful tendrils represents the most decorative element, which pleased the European interest in Japonism on one hand but also in „art nouveau“ on the other.

2. Fauna designs (26 pieces)

While the above mentioned flowers and herbs represent family crests and good health, animal motifs represent the qualities of a man carrying a sword with the respective sword guard.

First of all, tigers were usually depicted */tora/* (Fig.Nos. 33, 48, 50) hiding in bamboo groves which symbolized security, as bamboo is resilient even in the face of high winds and heavy rains. The **carp** */koi/* (Fig no. 49) is another symbol of perseverance because it is said to leap through the rapids at the „Dragon Gate“ to thereafter become a dragon. Generally, **fish** */sakana/* (Fig.Nos. 2, 17) are often used as motifs for kozuka and netsuke given as a present to anyone embarking on a journey. The symbolic meaning expresses the wish that the recipient will be „well-preserved“ in health. Dried fish (Fig.No. 15) are also popular designs in Japanese art and have an important role as talismans. The symbols of longevity and immortality that are important for every sword bearer are: the **crane** */tsuru/* (Fig. No. 22), **tortoise** */kame/* (also Fig No. 22) (these two are often depicted together to make their magic stronger), **heron** */sagi/* – not only an emblem of longevity but also a homophone for fraud and false pretenses and the **deer** */shika/* (Fig. No. 47), a messenger of the gods representing longevity and the only animal to locate the sacred fungus of immortality. At least three animals and one bird are used to mark the warrior class, martial success, and the perseverance and bravery of warriors. The **crab** */kani/* (Fig. No. 26) – crabs of Dannoura are said to be transmigrated souls of the Taira clan, **plover** */chidori/* (Fig.No. 57) – a bird often overcoming waves and winds when migrating hence a symbol of conquering obstacles, and the **pigeon** */hato/* (Fig.No. 21), a symbol of peace, victory, martial fidelity, a messenger of Hachiman, a war god, and the symbol of the skyward flight of the soul after death. **Butterflies** */chōchō/* possesses the same symbolic meaning – butterflies are souls of living and the dead, they symbolize joy and longevity. **Dragonflies** */tonbo/* (Fig. No. 67) were used as a symbol of ancient Yamato empire because of their shape and were later chosen to represent martial success and as a seasonal symbol of late summer.

There are several animals not so distinctly connected to martial arts or warfare e.g. the **monkey** */sarū/* (Fig.Nos. 41, 75) – the only connection seen is in Sarutahiko no Mikoto, a messenger who met the grandson of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami in the oldest legend. The **rabbit** */usagi/* (Fig.No. 69), said to pound rice cakes on the moon, is one of the twelve animals of zodiac, the **rat or mouse** */nezumi/* (Fig.Nos. 44, 56) are associated with prosperity maybe because they live in places where there is a lot of rice, and the **fox** */kitsune/* (Fig.No. 57) which serves as a messenger of Inari, a deity of plentiful rice crops and also a helper of the legendary swordsmith Munetaka. The three legged **crow** or **raven** */karasu/* (Fig.No. 36) inhabits the Sun according to Chinese legend, but in Japan it was a messenger of the legendary first emperor, Jimmu. They may have been used as a symbol on tsukas because crows are also associated with Tengu, who taught the art of sword fighting to the legendary hero Yoshitsune. Otherwise, crows are associated with death, winter, loneliness and bad fortune.

There are several animals whose symbolic meaning is not clear. They are: the **dormouse** */yamane/* (Fig. No. 72) **ant** */ari/* (Fig.No. 64) and **buffalo** */ushi/* (Fig.No. 42).

2. Mythological and literary entities (4 pieces)

The **dragon** /*ryū*/ (Fig.Nos.12, 38, 62) is one of the four sacred creatures and the mythical animal most often depicted on objects of art. In China it was a symbol of the nation and an insignia used by Chinese emperors. It is connected with the realm of water, rain and storms. Dragons dwell in seas or lakes and their messenger is the white snake.

Popular literary heroes, **ghosts** /*yūrei*/ (Fig.No. 53) are said to be the souls of people denied peace in the afterlife, often because of injustices experienced during their earthly lives, for example in the case of dishonorable warriors.

3. People, people in landscape, deserted landscape (12)

People depicted on the surface of tsubas are either well known legendary heroes such as **Daruma** (Fig.No. 77), a buddhist patriarch, **Shōki** (Fig. No. 40), a famous demon queller of Chinese origin, whose task was to ward off demons causing ill fortune, the above mentioned **Kan'yu** and **Kokusempu Riki** (Fig.No. 30), **Kajiwara Genda Kagesue** and **Shiro Takatsuna** (Fig.No. 23) and **Saijun** (Fig.No. 5). They may also include some of several **rakans** (Fig.No. 66) /Sanskrit arhat – Buddhist disciples – a symbol of those who have conquered all passions and have been liberated from the burden of rebirth.

Anonymous people are usually represented as **samurai** (Fig.No. 28), **pilgrims** or **poets** in a landscape (Fig.Nos. 4, 39, 45, 61). Deserted **landscapes** (Fig.No. 76) are a symbol of tranquility and peace and are also often used.

4. Others (10)

This group contains various motifs beginning with the star constellations of the **Great Bear** (or Big Dipper, Fig.No. 60). Stars have long been regarded as auspicious and capable of protecting the user or wearer, as is the case with **clouds** (Fig.Nos. 20, 25). There are also several symbols referring to the shintō cult such as a **ribbon** (Fig.No. 63), whose original shape is the sacred *shimenawa rope*, even if this ribbon is a somewhat European type of knot. The objects entwined in the ribbon have the powers of charms, and refer to buddhist symbols – a **skull** (Fig.No. 46) accompanied with a Nichiren prayer: *namu myōhō rengekyō*, and **seashells** (Fig.No. 32), usually symbols of the island of Enoshima, famous for Benzaiten, the Goddess of love. The collection is rounded out by a number of commonly used objects such as **bits**, (Fig.No. 70), **tangs** (Fig No. 6), a **saddle**, a **whip and bit** (Fig.No. 3) a **knife**, a **scroll** and **scissors** (Fig.No. 1) as well as others which show that even regular items which were used on a day to day basis can be artistic and decorative.

5. No decoration (1)

Among the 77 items, only one is made of horn and is without any decoration (Fig.No. 68).

Conclusion

In spite of the fact that samurai equipment in general, including sword guards, did not represent the main focus of Hloucha's collecting activities, he managed to collect a representative sample of guards decorated with the usual motifs which covered a broad period of time.

Catalogue⁶

All sword guards are photographed from both sides.

Materials used for tsuba production: iron, a specific type of iron called yamagane, bronze, special alloys: shakudō (copper, gold 6%, silver 1%), shibuichi (copper 75%, silver 25%), sentoku (a specific type of brass). Other alloys of bronze and lead, pure gold, silver or copper were also used for decorations.

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⁶ All photos in catalogue by Jiří Vaněk.



Fig.No.1a, 1b

Sword guard, iron, circular shape, smooth surface, slightly pierced, decorated with a relief of a knife and scroll, scissors on the reverse side, one hole for a *kozuka* knife, unsigned, diameter 75 mm, end of 18th or beginning of 19th century. Inv. No. 32 115.



Fig.No. 2a, 2b

Sword guard, bronze, circular shape with a relief of a fish, relief of a ray on the reverse side, both *hitsu* holes are sealed, height 77 mm, width 70 mm, beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No.32 116.



Fig.No. 3a, 3b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō shape, one *hitsu* hole, raised relief with inlays of gold, silver and shibuichi: a saddle, a bit, a whip and a ladle, unsigned, height 85mm, width 77 mm, end of the 18th century. Inv. No. 32 117.

Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 4a, 4b

Sword guard, oval, two *hitsu* holes for a *kozuka* and *kōgai*, flat relief of a man, a pine tree and a waterfall, unsigned, height 84 mm, width 77 mm, mid-18th century. Inv. No. 32 118.



Fig.No. 5a, 5b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō shape, raised relief of a Saijun legend inlaid with precious metals, unsigned, height 77 mm, width 71 mm, beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 119.

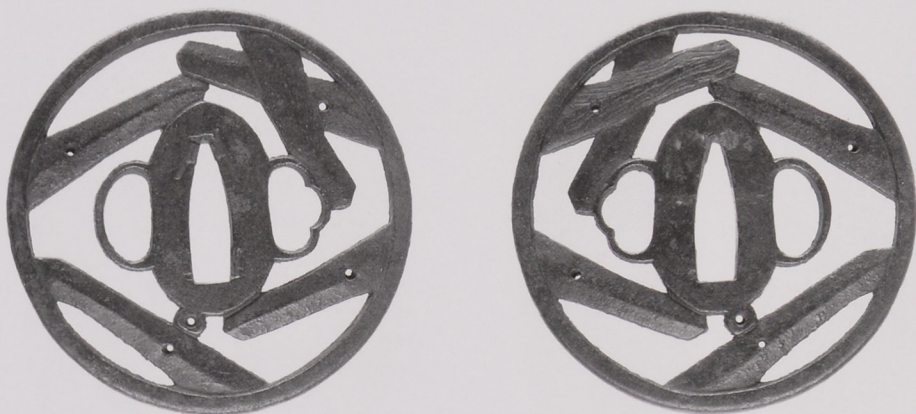


Fig.No. 6a, 6b

Sword guard, iron, circular shape, openwork, type of *ito sukashi*, several sword shanks, unsigned, diameter 80 mm, 17th century. Inv. No. 32 120. Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.

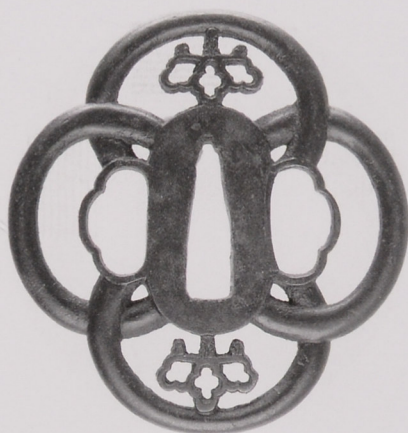
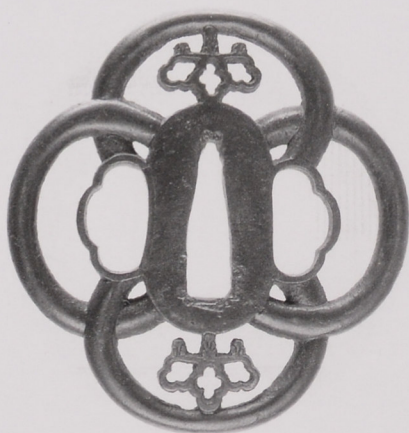


Fig.No.7a, 7b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō shape, four unfinished rings combined with two paulownia crests, unsigned, height 74 mm, width 70 mm, beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 121

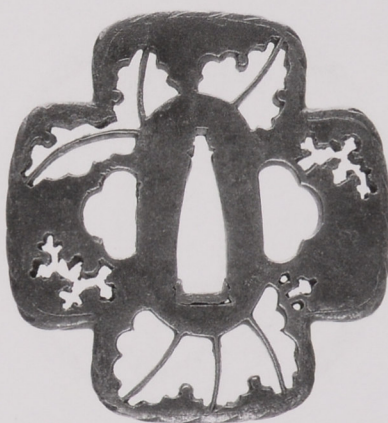
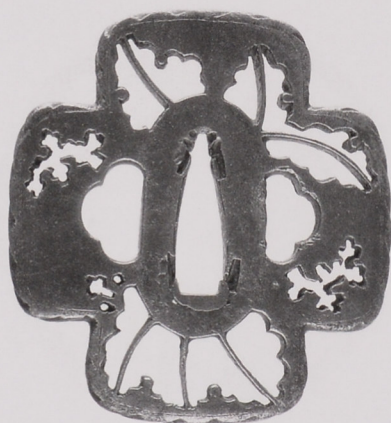


Fig.No. 8a, 8b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō shape, openwork, type of Higo product, negative design of leaves, unsigned, height 70 mm, width 64 mm, mid-19th century. Inv. No. 32 122.



Fig.No. 9a, 9b

Sword guard, iron, circular shape, cloud motif, unsigned, diameter 67 mm, beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 123.



Fig.No. 10a, 10b

Sword guard, iron, circular shape, openwork, Akasaka school, two flowers and stylized birds in positive design, diameter 64 mm, end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 124.

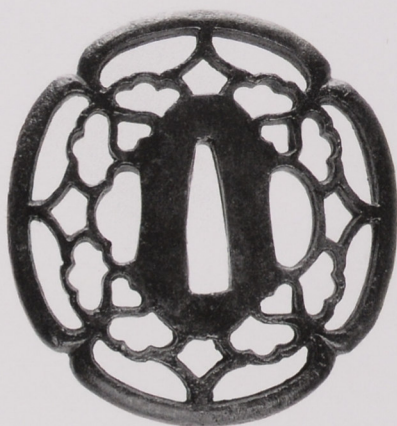
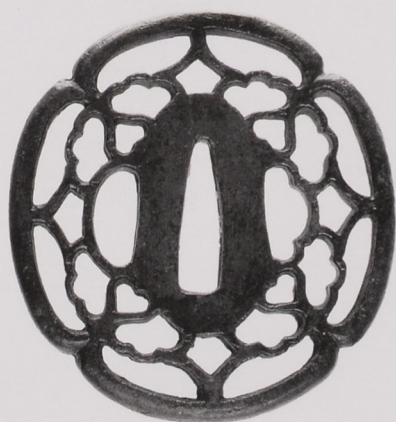


Fig.No. 11a, 11b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō shape, two *hitsu* holes, openwork, design of stylized leaves, unsigned, height 68 mm, width 64 mm, end of the 18th century. Inv. No. 32 125.



Fig.No. 12a, 12b

Sword guard, iron, oval shape, two *hitsu* holes, slightly pierced, flat relief of a dragon above waves, unsigned, height 87 mm, width 85 mm, beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 126.



Fig.No. 13a, 13b

Sword guard, iron, flat relief of a golden bird flying down to a mountain creek with a small branch above the water, unsigned, height 63 mm, width 50 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 127.



Fig.No. 14a, 14b

Sword guard, almost circular, openwork, two pawlonia leaves and flowers with Chinese grass (*karakusa*), unsigned, height 80 mm, width 74 mm, end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 128.

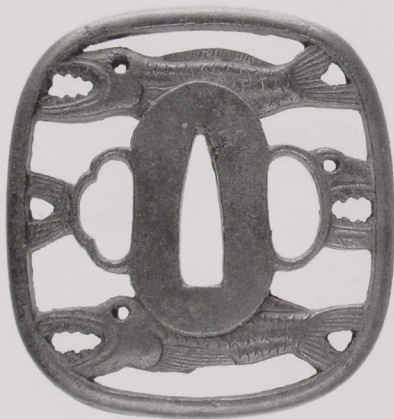
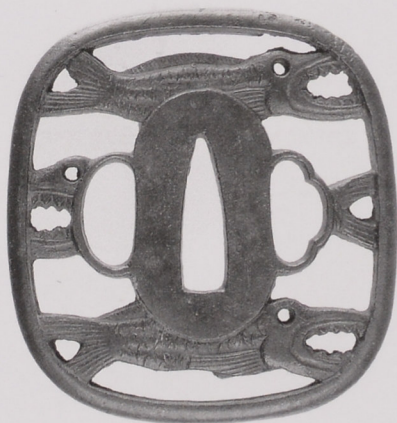


Fig.No.15a, 15b

Sword guard, iron, rounded square shape, pierced, Akao school, three three-dimensional dried fish, height 68 mm, width 63 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 129. Published in: *Boháčková*, p.36.



Fig.No. 16a, 16b

Sword guard, iron, square, flat, in the shape of two crossed leaves, signed Akao Yoshitsugu from the Echizen province, height 61 mm, width 60 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 130. Published in: *Boháčková* p.36.



Fig.No. 17a, 17b

Sword guard, *shakudō*, Nara school, three saltwater fish in high relief done in silver, *shakudō* and gold, signed by Yoshichika (Yasuchika, VII, Tsuchiya family of Mito in the Hitachi province), 18th century. Inv. No. 32 131. Published in: Boháčková, p. 39, in: Kraemerová, 2001.

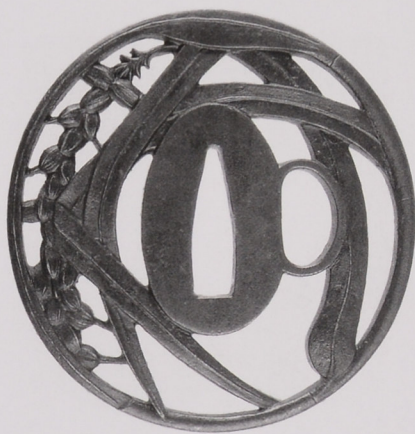


Fig.No. 18a, 18b

Sword guard, iron, Nagato school, openwork, a bound sheath of rice with leaves - all three-dimensional, signed by Masasada of the Nagato province, height 72 mm, width 70 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 132. Published in: Boháčková, p.32.



Fig.No. 19a, 19b

Iron sword, almost circular, *ito sukashi* type, engraved and pierced – blossoms and leaves, signed by Kazuyuki from Efu, height 71 mm, width 67 mm, end of the 18th century. Inv. No. 32 133. Published in: Boháčková, p.35, in: Kraemerová, 2001.



Fig.No. 20a, 20b

Sword guard, iron, circular, pierced, engraved wave ornaments inlaid with gold, unsigned, height 80 mm, width 78 mm, first half of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 134.



Fig.No. 21a, 21b

Sword guard, iron, in the shape of a stylized pigeon, a copy of tsuba made by Myōchin Ki no Tsunemasa, height 62 mm, width 50 mm, 19th century. Inv. No.32 135. Published in: *Boháčková*, p.15, in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No.22a, 22b

Sword guard, almost circular, openwork, Akao school, positive design of a crane and a thousand year old tortoise, height 75 mm, width 73 mm, end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 136. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 36.



Fig.No. 23a, 23b

Sword guard, almost circular, Hikonebori type, raised relief richly inlaid with non-ferrous metals on a *nanako* surface, depiction of Kajiwaru Kagesue and Sasaki Takatsuna plunging into the Uji river, signed by Sōten from Hikone, height 72 mm, width 68 mm, around 1700. Inv. No. 32 137. Published in: Boháčková, p. 25.



Fig.No. 24a, 24b

Sword guard, almost circular, pierced, thick rim fashioned in the shape of a stylized leaf of wild ginger (*aoi*). Signed by Kinai from the Echizen province, height 75 mm, width 73 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 138. Published in: Boháčková, p. 31, in: Kraemerová, 2001.



Fig.No. 25a, 25b

Sword guard, copper core, oval with a *shakudō* rim, gold-plated seppadai and hitsu, enamel plant motifs in various colours on the face and clouds on the reverse, Hirata style, height 58 mm, width 47 mm, second half of the 18th century. Inv. No. 32 139. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 48, in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 26a, 26b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, pierced, thick, flat rim with a small crab with the tips of three claws, unsigned, height 63 mm, width 60 mm, mid-18th century. A high quality tsuba made of good quality iron. Inv. No. 32 140. Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 27a, 27b

Sword guard, akagane, almost circular, herons done in raised and polished *shakudō* and gold relief, height 75 mm, width 74 mm, end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 141.



Fig.No. 28a, 28b

Sword guard, almost circular, richly decorated type of Hikonebori tsuba, three dimensional battle scene inlaid with metals of various colours, signed by Sōheishi Nyūdō from Hikone in the Ōmi province, height 78 mm, width 75 mm, 18th century. Inv. No.32 142. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 25.



Fig.No. 29a, 29b

Sword guard, shakudō with blue patina, moko type, inlaid with gold and silver, low relief of the moon, sakura blossoms and snowflakes – three favourites of poets. Signed by Fujii Yoshikazu and kakihan, height 67 mm, width 60 mm, turn of the 19th century, typical tsuba from the last years (Gengō era) of the Tokugawa shōgunate. Inv. No. 32 143. Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 30a, 30b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, depiction of Kan'yu under a pine tree, Kokusenpu Riki on the reverse side done in high relief of shibuichi, shakudō and gold., Signed by Nagamine and kakihan, height 74 mm, width 67 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 144. Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 31a, 31b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, pierced, sakura blossoms, signed by Tsunetada from Efu and kakihan, Bushū style, height 76 mm, width 73 mm, mid-18th century. / Average production. / Inv. No. 32 145. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 34.



Fig.No. 32a, 32b

Sword guard, high quality black iron, Inaba style, almost circular, openwork, three dimensional sea shells and grasses, signed by Suruga from the Inaba province, height 78 mm, width 76 mm, around 1800. Inv. No. 32 146. Published in: *Boháčková*, p.33, in: *Jisl*, p.40, in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 33a, 33b

Sword guard, iron, oval shape, a flat relief of tiger biting bamboo, bamboo also on the reverse side, unsigned, height 71 mm, width 65 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 147.



Fig.No. 34a, 34b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, openwork, Kinai style, two three-dimensional leaves of aoi (ginger), slightly gold plated, unsigned, height 75 mm, width 71 mm, 18th century. /Partly damaged./ Inv. No. 32 148.
Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 35a, 35b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, openwork, two three-dimensional irises symmetrically situated on both sides, unsigned, height 83 mm, width 82 mm, mid-17th century. Inv. No. 32 149



Fig.No. 36a, 36b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, openwork, full relief of two crows sitting on a branch, sheaves of rice, slightly gilded, signed by Kijiyoshi from Hagi, the Nagato province, mid-18th century. Inv. No. 32 150.

Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 32, in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.

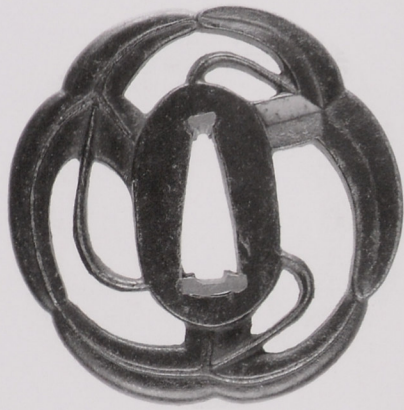
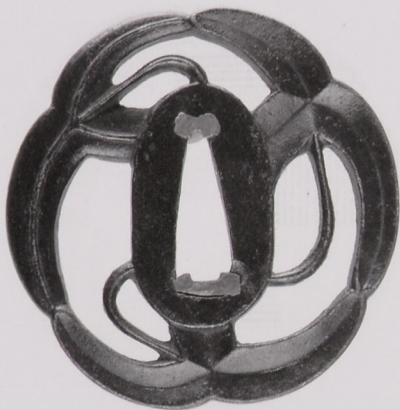


Fig.No. 37a, 37b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, pierced, three leaves of arrowroot, unsigned, height 67 mm, width 62 mm, 18th century, high quality iron with beautiful detail. Inv. No. 32 151.

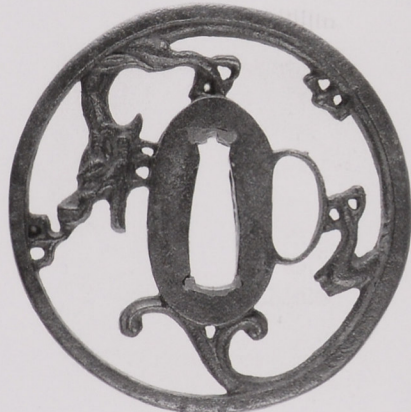


Fig.No. 38a, 38b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, openwork of a coiled dragon whose body partly forms the rim, unsigned, height 74mm, width 72 mm, beginning of the 17th century. Inv. No. 32 152.



Fig.No. 39a, 39b

Sword guard, iron, circular, decorated with a relief of a man, height 68 mm, width 64 mm. Dating impossible, most likely from the Edo period, but the casting is of poor quality. Inv. No. 32 153



Fig.No. 40a, 40b

Sword guard, sentoku, inlaid with *shakudō*, depiction of a devil hiding beneath a hat, unsigned, height 75 mm, width 61mm, 19th century. This sword guard was not used as an actual sword guard but only as a decoration. Inv. No. 32 154.



Fig.No. 41a, 41b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, openwork, depiction of five monkeys with bronze faces, unsigned, height 73 mm, width 70 mm, beginning of the 18th century. The motif indicates that this guard was not used for swords used in battle. Inv. No. 32 155



Fig.No. 42a, 42b

Sword guard, iron, in the shape of a lying buffalo with golden eyes, signed by Inoue Kiyotaka from Hagi, the Nagato province, last third of the 18th century. Inv. No. 32 156. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 32, in: *Jisl*, p. 47, in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.

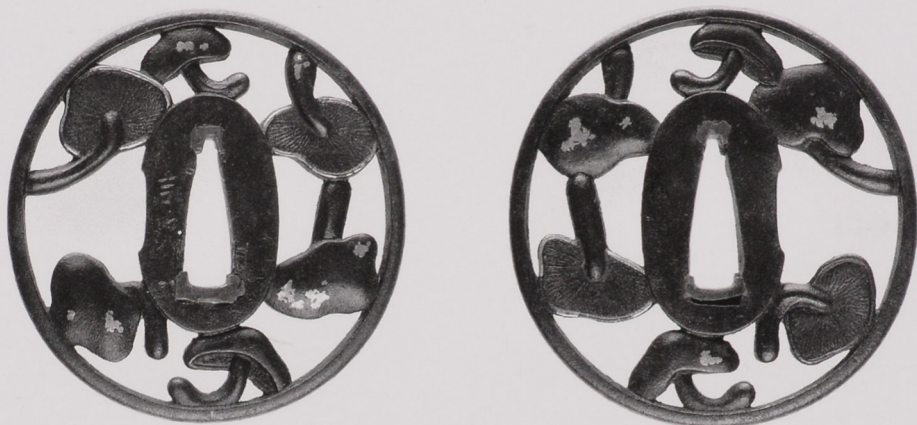


Fig.No. 43a, 43b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, openwork, full relief of mushrooms inlaid with gold, signed by Yoshitsugu, Edo, height 71 mm, width 69 mm, second half of the 18th century. Inv. No. 32 157. Published in: *Jisl*, p.49, in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 44a, 44b

Sword guard, *shibuichi*, mokkō type, relief done in various types of gold and silver depicting two rats playing with a scroll, surface decorated with engraved linear wavy lines, unsigned, height 58 mm, width 48 mm, 19th century. Inv. No. 32 158. Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 45a, 45b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō type, raised relief of three poets, unsigned, height 85 mm, width 78 mm, mid-19th century. Sword guard of low quality. Inv. No. 32 160.



Fig.No. 46a, 46b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō type, in flat relief with the inscription: *Namu myōhō renge kyō* (Nichiren buddhist prayer) and a skull made of silver, unsigned, height 90 mm, width 80 mm, end of the 18th century. The inscription is written in the style of Nichiren handwriting. Inv. No. 32 161. Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 47a, 47b

Sword guard, *sentoku*, oval, *shakudō* rim, engraving and non-ferrous inlays depicting a mountain landscape with a stag lying among fallen leaves and flowers, unsigned, height 70 mm, width 63 mm, first half of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 162.



Fig.No. 48a, 48b

Sword guard, iron, oval, Nagato type, openwork, depiction of winding bamboo with a sitting tiger in full relief, signed by Kawaji, height 73 mm, width 68 mm, around 1800. High quality iron and also high quality detail. Inv. No.32 163. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 32, in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No.49a, 49b

Sword guard, iron, oval, gilded raised relief of two carps in waves, signed by Yoshinobu, the Ōmi province, height 71 mm, width 66 mm, 17th century. Inv. No. 32 164.



Fig.No.50a, 50b

Sword guard, iron, circular, raised relief of a tiger under bamboo with golden inlays, signed by Tsuda Masakazu, height 80 mm, width 76 mm, 18th century. High quality detail. Inv. No.32 165. Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 51a, 51b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō type, Shōami school, inlays of yellow metal depicting butterflies and grass, unsigned, height 84 mm, width 83 mm, around 1700. Inv. No. 32 166. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 27.



Fig.No. 52a, 52b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō type, brass inlays with an engraving of a dragon in clouds above waves, unsigned, height 65 mm, width 60 mm, second half of the 18th century. Inv. No. 32 167.



Fig.No. 53a, 53b

Sword guard, iron, mikkō type, relief of two ghosts inlaid with copper and gold on a granulated surface, height 73 mm, width 70 mm, first half of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 168. Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.

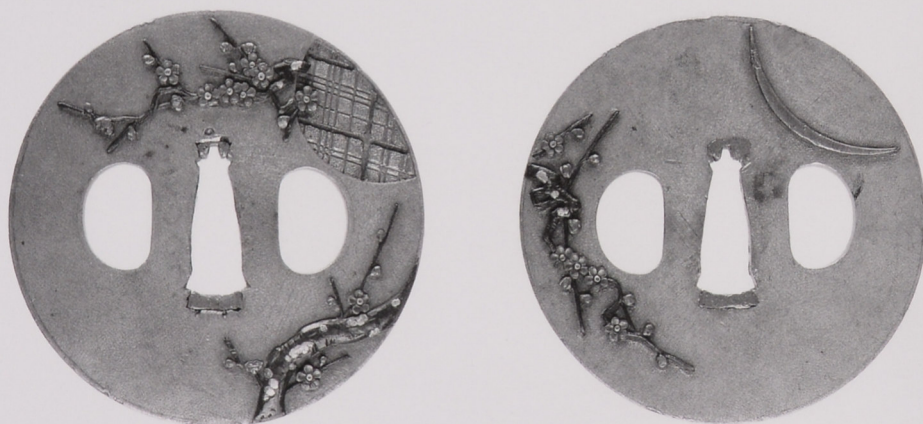


Fig.No. 54a, 54b

Sword guard, *sentoku*, circular, brass and *shibuichi* relief of a window, plum blossoms, unsigned, height diameter 74 mm, 18th century. Inv.No.32 169.



Fig.No. 55a, 55b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō type with four holes in the shape of ginger (*aoi*), pawlonia (*kiri*) and Chinese grass (*karakusa*) done in flat inlays of non-ferrous metals, style of the Fushimi masters from Kaga, height 86 mm, width 78 mm, 17th century. Both *hitsu* holes inlaid with plumb (plumbs were thought to guard the samurai in battle). Inv. No. 32 170. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 28, in: *Jisl*, p.37, in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 56a, 56b

Sword guard, iron, oval, relief of a mouse with a turnip, unsigned, height 53 mm, width 48 mm, cast product of the Edo period, more precise dating not possible. Inv. No. 32 171.



Fig.No. 57a, 57b

Sword guard, *shibuichi*, shallow mokkō type, raised relief of non-ferrous metals, motif of a fox, sheaves, bamboo and chidori birds, unsigned, height 62 mm, width 54 mm, 19th century. Inv. No. 32 172.



Fig.No. 58a, 58b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, openwork, ground-cherry in full relief, unsigned, height 80 mm, width 78 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 173.



Fig.No. 59a, 59b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, openwork, irises in full relief, unsigned, height 75 mm, width 71 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 174



Fig.No. 60a, 60b

Sword guard, iron, in the shape of a commander's fan, inlays of gold, *shakudō* and *shibuichi*, star motif (the constellation of the Great Bear), uchiwa fan and hat, Umetada style, height 70 mm, width 62 mm, mid-18th century. Inv. No. 32 175. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 21, in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 61a. 61b

Sword guard, iron, almost circular, openwork, silhouette of a man in a hat and flying bird in positive relief, unsigned, height 68 mm, width 67 mm, 17th century. Inv. No. 32 176.



Fig.No. 62a, 62b

Sword guard, iron, oval, relief of a dragon in waves with golden and silver bubbles, Ōmori school, signed by Terumasa, height 76 mm, width 70 mm, around 1800. High quality craftsmanship. Inv. No. 32 177. Published in: Boháčková, p. 47, in: Kraemerová, 2001.



Fig.No. 63a, 63b

Sword guard, brass, oval, a motif of a ribbon decorated with engraving, unsigned, typical tsuba for townsmen (*chōnin*), height 60 mm, width 45 mm, end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century. Inv. No. 32 178.

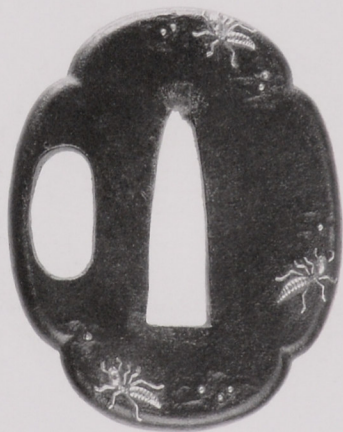


Fig.No. 64a, 64b

Sword guard, iron, oval, mikkō shape, chased ants, unsigned, height 54 mm, width 43 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 32 179.

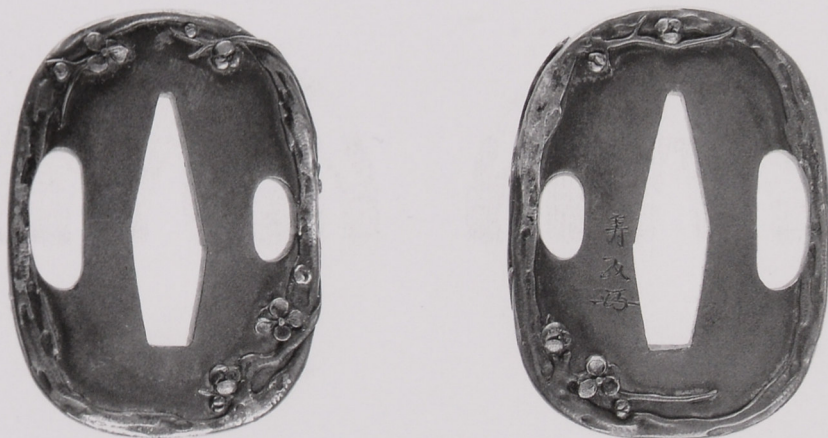


Fig.No. 65a, 65b

Sword guard, *shibuichi*, oval, used for *tantō* (a type of short sword), rim decorated in relief with plum blossoms inlaid with silver and gold, height 52 mm, width 39 mm, signed by Nagamasa and kakihan, 19th century. Inv. No. 32 180. Published in: *Kraemerová*, 2001.



Fig.No. 66a, 66b

Sword guard, brass, circular, colour relief of a wandering pilgrim who has released a dragon from of a censer, unsigned, height 101 mm, width 98 mm, Meiji period (1868-1912). This item was decorative and not intended for actual use, nevertheless the craftsmanship is of a high quality. Inv. No. 32 231.

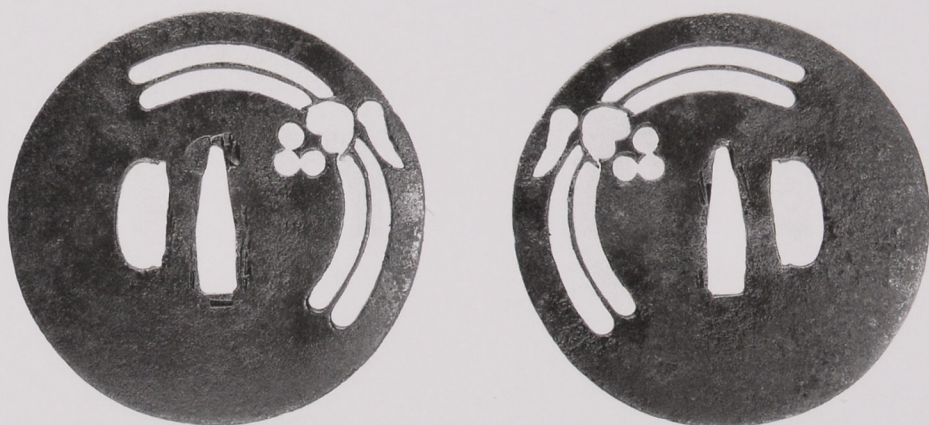


Fig.No. 67a, 67b

Sword guard, iron circular, pierced, stylized dragonfly in negative silhouette, unsigned, diameter 76 mm, 15th century style. Inv. No. 32 852. Published in: Boháčková, p.14.

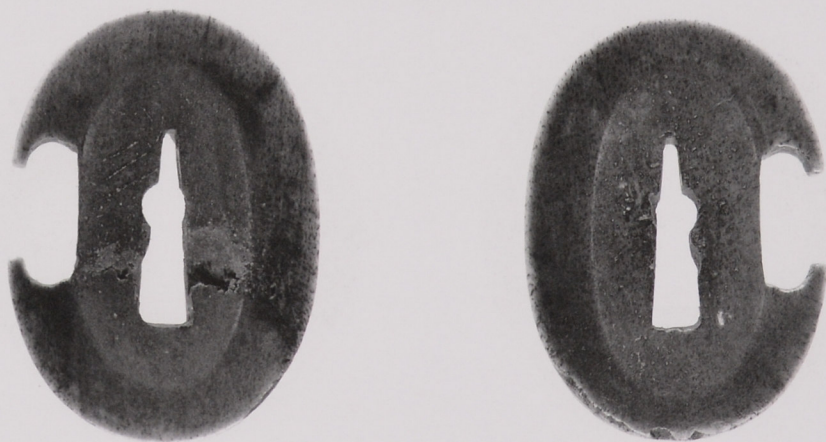


Fig.No. 68a, 68b

Sword guard, hamidashi tsuba, bone, oval, flat and without any decoration, unsigned, height 50 mm, width 35 mm, Edo period (1600-1868). Inv. No. 39 001.

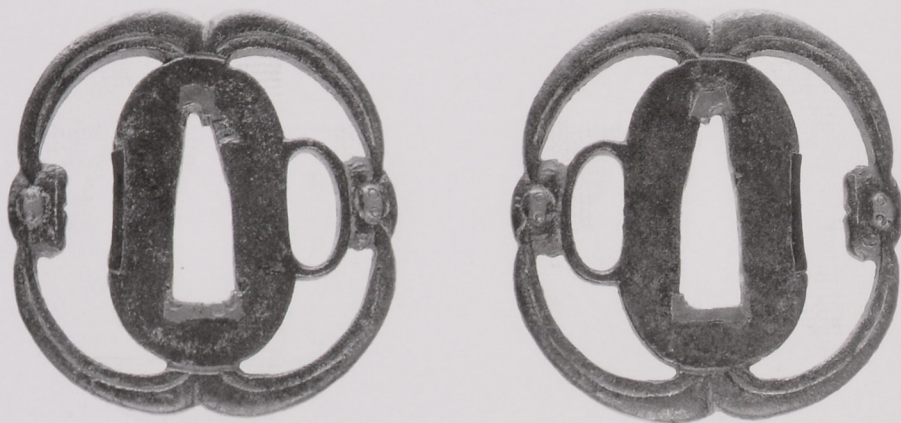


Fig.No. 69a, 69b

Sword guard, iron, two rabbits, openwork, unsigned, height 50 mm, width 46 mm, second half of the 17th century. Inv. No. 39 002.

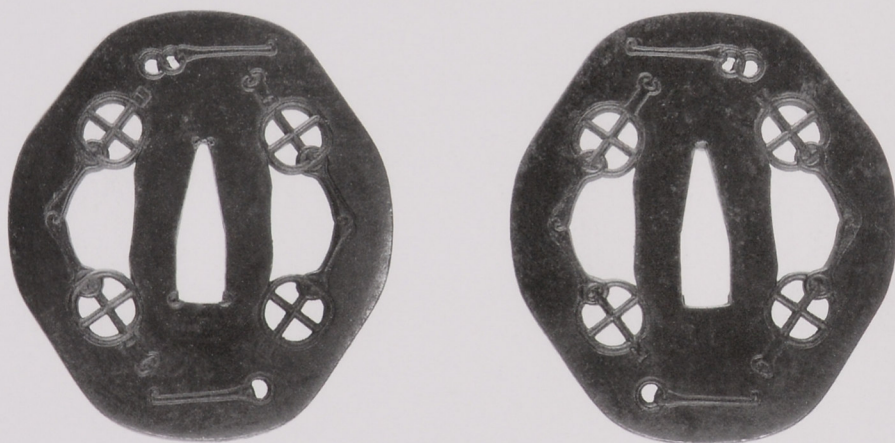


Fig.No. 70a, 70b

Sword guard, iron, rounded octagonal shape, some parts engraved or pierced, unsigned, height 75 mm, width 67 mm, first half of the 19th century. Finely detailed, interesting motif. Inv. No. 39 003.



Fig.No. 71a, 71b

Sword guard, iron, circular, engraving of a chrysanthemum, unsigned, height 70 mm, width 63 mm, most probably the end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century. More precise dating impossible – the tsuba was washed in some type of acid. Inv. No. 39 004.



Fig.No. 72a, 72b

Sword guard, iron mokkō shape, moonlit landscape showing a dormouse above a creek, unsigned, Kaneie school, height 83 mm, width 73 mm, 19th century. Inv. No. 39 006. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 20.



Fig.No. 73a, 73b

Sword guard, iron, mokkō shape, flat relief with gilded detail, ginkgo biloba motif, unsigned, both hitsu holes sealed with plumb, height 84 mm, width 78 mm, the second half of the 18th century. Inv. No. 39 007.

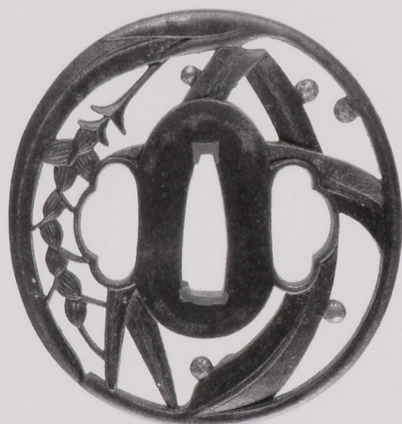


Fig.No. 74a, 74b

Sword guard, iron, circular shape, openwork, floral motif, unsigned, height 72 mm, width 67 mm, 18th century. Inv. No. 39 005.



Fig.No. 75a, 75b

Sword guard, iron, circular, openwork, depiction of the Chinese character „fuk” and a sitting monkey with a copper face in positive silhouette, unsigned, diameter of 83 mm, dating difficult due to its casting, most probably the Edo period. Inv. No. 39 010.



Fig.No. 76a, 76b

Sword guard, iron, rounded square shape, openwork, relief of landscape with pavilion, pilgrims and a bridge above a creek, unsigned, imitation of the Akasaka style, height 92 mm, width 86 mm, also a cast product and therefore very difficult to date exactly, most probably the Edo period. Inv. No. 39 011. Published in: *Boháčková*, p. 36.



Fig.No. 77a, 77b

Sword guard, iron, hexagonal shape, irregular projected rim, pierced, slightly gilded relief of Daruma under a pine-tree, unsigned, height 102 mm, width 97 mm, mid-19th century. Inv. No. 39 012.