

## REGARDING THE SIZE OF KATANA AND TSUBA

[A memoranda of Kohno Hyakuren, Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu 20th headmaster in 1935. Translated by Colin Hyakutake, Saga, Japan.]

I have noticed that there are many people who are using a sword that is too long with a tsuba that is too small. To possess an unsuitable weapon is unnatural in any kind of business. It is not at all advisable. The length and weight should be proportionate to the owner. Normally the tsuba is supplied by the swordsmith when it is made, so it is unnecessary to change to a smaller one.

The length of the blade can be decided by the person who orders it. However a standard length was attested and introduced some time ago.

[Referring to the Tokugawa Shogunate's standardization of blades known as Jusun, written in kanji as Teisun meaning 'decided length'.]

There are two elements:

1. Body height minus three feet or,
2. Holding the sword with one hand the kissaki just touches the ground.

Addition: The length of the sword, its curve, weight, length and shape of the boshi etc. are deeply connected with iai performance. The length is as stated. The sori (zori) shape or curves are;

A) Toriizori, B) Koshizori C) Sakizori.

Torii (shrine gate) zori and Koshizori are suitable for iai. However, Sakizori is not recommended as it cuts the fingers very easily.

The weight of the sword should be determined by the body weight and power of the user. An over weight sword could damage the arm muscles, agitate body balance or create all kinds of habits. Also the shape of the boshi is related to noto. A short boshi creates no problems. A boshi which is too long or too big produces difficulties when the kissaki meets the koikuchi.

With regard to the size of the tsuba; a small tsuba is rather convenient in controlling the right wrist. One too large will interfere just as much as a blade that is too long.

To use one's common sense in choosing an iaito, I would recommend the following points;

A) Weight, B) Length, C) Toriizori or koshizori curvature.