



sword furniture

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SWORD furniture may be called mountings. They consist of all the fittings of the sword exclusive of the blade. Many of these component parts of the sword were artistically made and are today considered treasures by swordsmen and collectors interested in the Japanese sword.

One such a maker of mountings was Kihosai, or otherwise known by the name of Hamano Shozui, who lived in the Edo era (1600-1868). At the age of sixty-six Kihosai designed and made the mountings which are featured in this article. They are artfully made pieces, but sturdy, and served a practical purpose.

In the photograph and to the left will be seen a pair of matching *menuki*, the small ornaments which are placed on

either side of the *tsuka* of a Japanese sword. As decorative as *menuki* sometimes are, they served to strengthen the grip of the swordsman. These *menuki* by Kihosai are in the form of horses in action.

In the middle-portion of the photograph is the *kashira*, a metal cap which fits over the butt-end of the *tsuka*. This one by Kihosai displays a horse and thus matches the *menuki*. The object at the extreme right of the photograph is the *fuchi*, a collar used to strengthen the *tsuka* at its end nearest the handguard; we observe the artists name and age engraved on its under surface.