

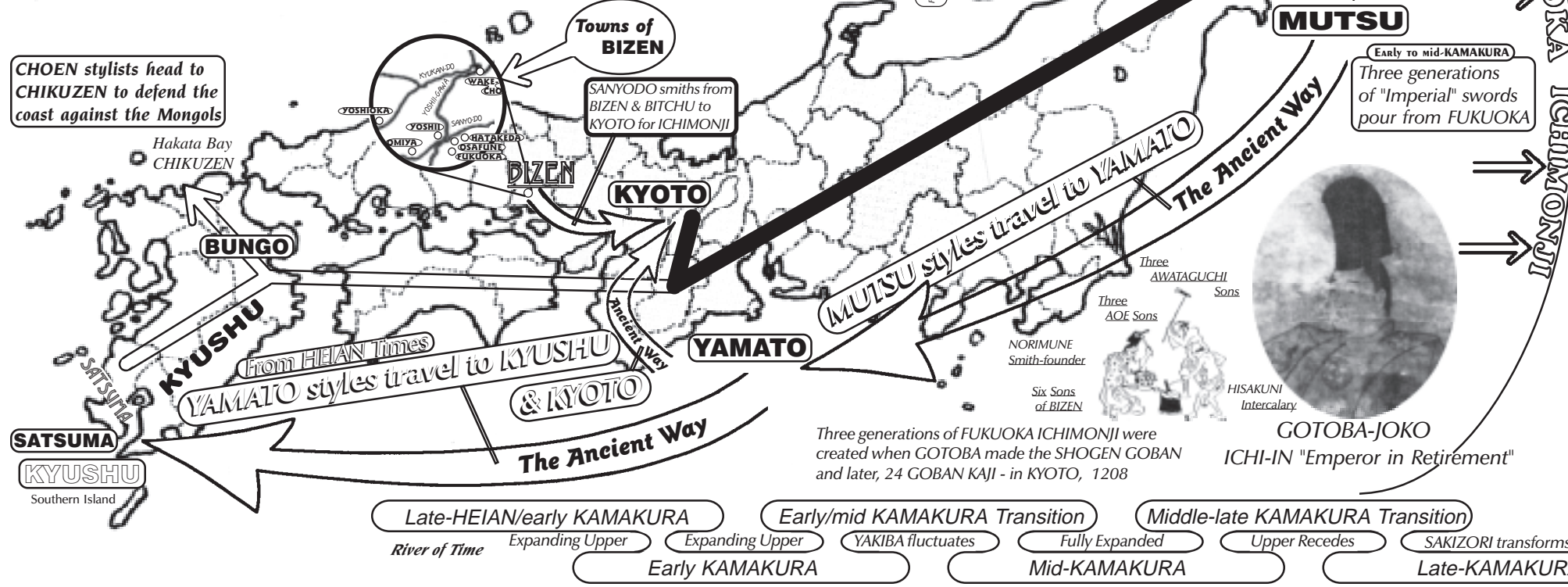
Heian

EARLY KAMAKURA mid-KAMAKURA LATE KAMAKURA

SHO-GEN 承元 1207 JO-EI 貞永 1232 ken-cho 建長 1249 bun-ei 文永 1264 KO-AN 弘安 1278 SHO-O 正応 1288 KA-GEN 嘉元 1303 GEN-KYO 元亨 1321 KEM-MU 建武 1334

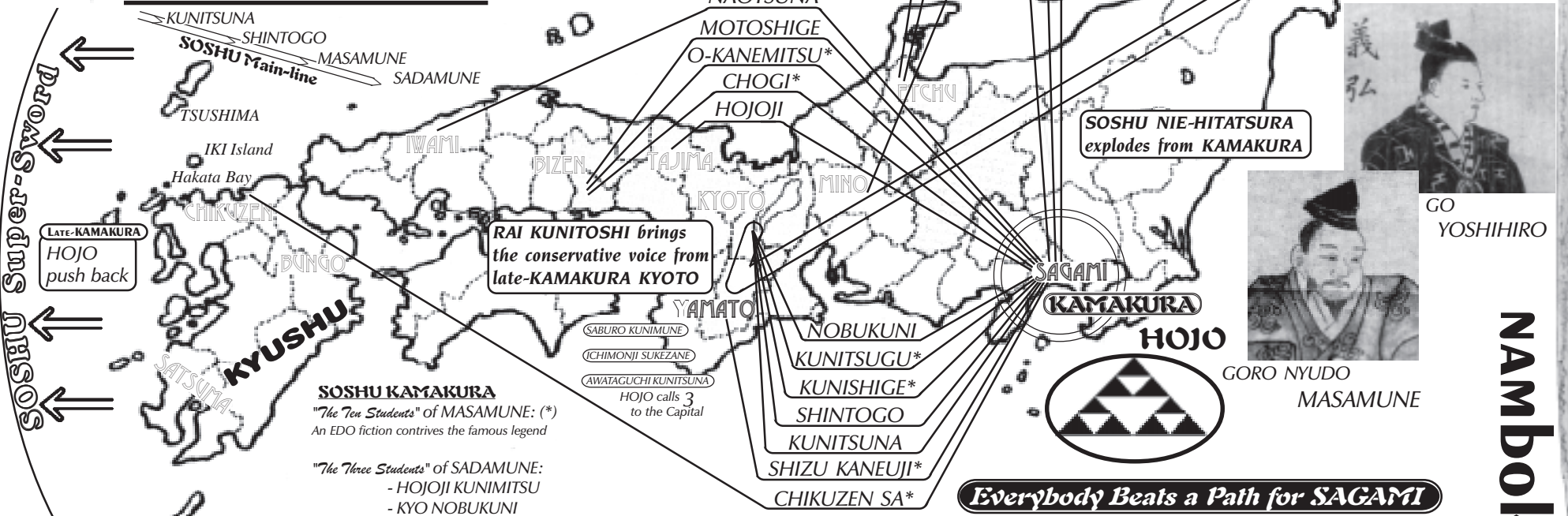
1<sup>st</sup> One needs to understand that the HOJO were the government, that GOTOBA began the original, SHOGEN ICHIMONJI and the later, 24 GOBAN KAJI to create an organized method of arming an Imperial force. These ICHIMONJI smiths were to figure out how to make and produce better swords, and to figure out how to produce them in numbers.

After the Emperor's loss of SHOKYU RAN, War of 1221, his victorious enemy, the HOJO "SHIKKEN-ATE" experienced the exploding band of sword producers at FUKUOKA, what would become a solid three generations, constantly pouring out ever more flamboyant swords, in larger and larger numbers, all screaming "Imperial Origin." By mid-KAMAKURA, the FUKUOKA ICHIMONJI had grown to the largest and loudest sword school in history. For the HOJO, the FUKUOKA ICHIMONJI were constant nuisance and political pain.



2<sup>nd</sup> All the while they, the Samurai-blood "uncouth," contrasted the KYOTO-originated, "Imperial" ICHIMONJI, FUKUOKA BIZEN sword machine, negatively. They needed their own culture and their own super sword, a KAMAKURA super sword.

They hired the country's best. They got SUKEZANE and KUNIMUNE; and SHINTOGO and AWATAGUCHI KUNITSUNA from GOTOBA's OKI island - after GOTOBA-TENNO, had passed.



3<sup>rd</sup> KAMAKURA provided all the energy required for the forges of SHINTOGO students, NORISHIGE, MASAMUNE and son, SADAMUNE. The whole of the "Ten Students" group (false relationship of real smiths) was passionately pushing competition for the new "mystery sword," a thin, wide blade that allowed the temperature to do new and wondrous things with steel. The heat and quench was a more powerful tool that enabled the KAMAKURA smiths to "push the envelope," producing the shocking, new, SOSHU NIE HITATSURA.

Here was the SOSHU "Snow Blizzard" on these very pure, luminescent and blue-steel swords, a significant accomplishment to offset the boisterous flamboyance of the FUKUOKA ICHIMONJI.

Against this competition between ever more loudly stated sword styles, OSAFUNE had kept a solid stream of fine products flowing and KUNITOSHI had brought forward the new, conservative RAI SUGATA of complex and tightly knit, "City" JI-GANE and the RAI SUGUHA.