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NHS-124



NHS CON 14  
San Francisco  
October 3, 2014

**NHS-CON14-SAN FRANCISCO!**  
**NIKON JOURNAL**



**THIS ISSUE**  
PG 2..ADOLPH GASSER PHOTOS!  
PG 8..IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS! PT.3  
PG 14..THE 'RAFURAY'?

**ROBERT J. ROTOLONI**  
**EDITOR/PUBLISHER**



# THE NIKON ISSUE JOURNAL #124

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### NHS -125 DEADLINE!

The deadline for the next issue of our NIKON JOURNAL,  
NHS-125, is SEPT. 1, 2014. Please get all contributions to me  
by that date so I can get the next issue out to you on time. It is  
earlier than normal but necessary because of NHS-Con14! RJR.

## EDITORIAL

This, our 124<sup>th</sup> Journal, is the last issue before NHS-Con14 in San Francisco. The final general info page is just to your right and I hope that it answers many, if not all, of your questions. I also hope that it will stimulate your desire to join us the first weekend of October. We always have a good time since it is a social event and not just a meeting.

We start off on page 2 with nearly 20 very historical photos. In August 1951, Adolph Gasser made his first trip to Japan to meet the leaders of Nippon Kogaku and discuss their cameras and lenses and how to improve them for better sales in America. These are important images for they document the very beginnings of the Nikon camera system with images of the people who were at the top of NK plus factory shots the likes of which have not been published before. These were provided by Adolph's son, John, who still runs his father's camera store to this day. As an aside, we are trying to have John attend our convention as our guest. No final word as yet but we hope to have him there on Friday. Wish us luck.

On page 8 is the third installment of Chris Sap's articles on the 'little things'. He finishes the finders and gets into items like the meters and shades. All types of info that only the trained eye of the collector will notice.

One of the coolest shades made for the RFs is the early all-chrome type for the 28mm lens. Not only is it very difficult to find today, it also came in a unique vertically orientated blue box, which is even harder to collect. Master photographer Tony Hurst gives us 4 mouth-watering photos of one of the premier shade rarities in the system. See page 13.

On page 14 we have part 2 of coverage of Nikon Rangefinder 'copies'. Nothing like what was made for Leica, but possibly more than you thought. This time we concentrate on the S2 copy 'Rafuray', which was made by the same people as the Condors. You will see just how close it was and it might surprise you. Konno-san has sent me more material so there will be future articles on other Nikon RF copies, an actual sub-category collectible for some of us.

Page 18 has 5 more photos by Tony Hurst. This time it covers the quite unusual German market 'Nikkor' Nikonos II camera. You don't see these everyday but now you will know what to look for.

We also have coverage of the latest auctions as well as happenings on eBay. Lots of stuff out there! Amazing how much is still available.

We are waiting for a book to be published on the entire Zeiss Ikon production. It will be huge (I have a pre-publication copy with 900 plus pages!) and is written by Larry Gubas. Naturally, the Contax section will prove the most interesting to Nikon collectors, but the rest is just as fascinating. Larry is having some of the same problems as I did getting mine off the ground. As soon as it is available and a price is known I will review it.

In the meantime, Al Satterwhite has another book, which has made it though the publishing gauntlet. It is called 'The Secret of Mohammed Ali' and is over 100 pages with hundreds of photos of 'The Greatest'. This book follows another recent Satterwhite book, 'The Cozumel Diary, adventures with Hunter S. Thompson in Mexico. Congratulations, Al. RJR

# SAN FRANCISCO: THE GATEWAY TO NIKON IN NORTH AMERICA



This is the final issue of the Journal before NHS-Con14 in San Francisco and my last chance to encourage those still on the fence about attending to decide to join us. I will not fill this page with all the details previously published since all of you are amply aware of them. Instead, I want to make a final effort to get you to come (if possible), to announce a few points of interest that will affect those not yet committed, and give some current information. So here goes.

Because of a misunderstanding on the part of the convention hotel, they failed to set aside a sufficient number of rooms for our purposes. They, and we, were so preoccupied with satisfying their 'minimum' room requirements (which we have met) to get the meeting room & catering at an affordable rate, that they mistakenly only set aside that minimum quantity. That, and the previously mentioned conflict with the huge Oracle software convention in town, left an insufficient number of available rooms. This did not become obvious until we began receiving emails from attendees having trouble getting rooms. Also, when the hotel finally started sending me a spreadsheet of rooms rented it was plain to see we were going to fill them quickly. And we did. Because of this, when you receive this issue there are 'probably' no more rooms available at the convention hotel. However, there are many other hotels nearby as it is the center of town. Other members have already reserved rooms at hotels such as the Regency and Francis Drake. So please use one of the many hotel websites to book your room.

Another consequence of this room problem was that Wednesday the 1<sup>st</sup> was sold out 'before' Tuesday & Thursday. Therefore, many could not book until Thursday. This meant that not enough people would be in town early enough Thursday morning to fill the Napa Tour, which had to be cancelled. However, we are working on a smaller venture to the wine country as well as other half-day & one-day excursions.

This, and all kinds of other information such as...(maps for getting from the airport to the hotel, the BART system, & other transportation; cab rates; parking locations & costs; nearby restaurants and shops; museums to attend; even a local camera store)...will be provided in continuous emails to those who have paid their fees. Once you pay and get on the list you will be provided with various websites containing all types of up to date info as we become aware of it. This is necessary because we have almost 85 days from when you receive this issue and the meeting. We need to stay in touch in 'real time' so emails are the way to go. Those who have committed to NHS-Con14 as of June 22 & will automatically receive info emails on a regular basis, include the following; Dirk Bergmann, Zaza Bekauri, Paul & Mark Bonner, Al Brody, Henry Burnett, Jeff Felton, Dietmar Haenchen, Yuki Kawai, Vick Ko, Uli Koch, Jimmy Koh, Bill Kraus, Wes Loder,

Jim & Setsuko Martin, Veli Miettinen, John Millham, Bill Pringle, Phil Ramsden, Thierry Ravassod, Robert Rogen, Chris Sap, Rod Stines, Mike Symons & Charles Thatcher.

These gentlemen represent countries such as Canada, France, England, Germany, Belgium, Finland, Australia & South Africa! So why not join them. **The Convention fee is \$175 and the cost of the closing dinner is \$77 per person.** One bit of information that will be in a forthcoming email is the closing dinner menu and choices. No room here for such info plus the hotel & the committee will be discussing the menu in a month or so. So this is why, if you plan to attend, the sooner you get on our list the better as you will be kept informed of this, and other, developments.

So I need to once more encourage those who are still thinking about attending to please get your Convention fee, and the dinner if you so desire, to me as soon as possible so we can continue with our plans and keep the hotel up to date. Numbers are very important to determine what is needed in the way of food and refreshment requirements during the meeting as well as the closing dinner. So please contact us soon.

Just to give you an idea of some of the websites and info that will follow include, but are not limited to;

San Francisco Jazz Center <http://www.sfjazz.org/center>  
Sears, a must go nearby restaurant <http://searsfinefood.com>  
Japan Town, food & shops <http://sfjapantown.org>  
Sausalito boat ride <http://www.goldengateferry.org/schedules/sausalito.php>

Cab fares in San Francisco <http://sf.taxiwiz.com/?lang=en>  
Discount camera <http://discountcamera.com/index.html>

There will also be listings of photography museums, shops & local restaurants plus places to see. Also info on the camera show on Saturday. Those who sign up will receive more detailed info on all of this. So if you are coming get on board soon and start receiving the updates.

Our schedule for the day has been covered in previous issues. **Please remember that we start promptly at 9AM on Friday.** We must start on time to get everything in. Please refer to previous issues. If you have anything pertaining to Overseas Finance & Trading (OFITRA) please bring it for the table we will have set up for such a display. There is also the possibility that John Gasser, Adolph's son, may attend. Not definite yet but possible. Those of you who attended in Vancouver may remember we had a Nikon 'give-away' table. If you have anything Nikon that you want to give away then bring it. Literature, trinkets, promotional material, etc. Nothing big or expensive, just fun items.

So I have said all I am going to say at this point. Enough is enough. **All I can say is 'hope to see you in San Francisco'.**  
RJR

# ADOLPH GASSER IN TOKYO..1951

## ALL HISTORIC PHOTOS BY ADOLPH GASSER USED WITH PERMISSION OF JOHN GASSER

By MICHAEL WESCOTT LODER

The young Hans Liholm, manager of Overseas Finance & Trading Company (OFITRA), had made his trip to Japan in April-May 1950. There he had landed the three-year contract that gave OFITRA exclusive North American rights to import any and all of Nippon Kogaku's products for those three years. By then Liholm was actively working with Adolph Gasser, San Francisco's leading camera repairman, to establish a marketing and technical support system for NK's camera and its lenses.

In August of 1951, it was Gasser's turn to fly to Tokyo. He had already been in correspondence with NK's engineers, offering advice on adding flash synch and advising them against moving away from the Contax dual bayonet mount. As with Liholm, Gasser's host throughout his visit was Shigeru Sakai, director of the Far East Mercantile Company. He stayed briefly at one of the better hotels before moving to more modest accommodations. He had many meetings with NK's administration/leadership and toured the Ohi factory and the glassworks. His ideas, opinions and suggestions had a profound effect on NK and affected decisions regarding the camera's future design that would echo through the rest of the decade.

Unlike Liholm, Gasser was an experienced and serious photographer, and he took a lot of pictures. In 2008, Adolph's son, John, located many of the pictures that his father had taken during that 1951 trip and shared 41 of them with me. Attendees at the 2010 NHS Convention got to see many of these pictures, but now here are 19 available for viewing by the rest of the membership.

Most camera factory shots published in the past have been only of the final steps that occurred in the lens and camera manufacturing process. Such images usually show neatly dressed

technicians inspecting lens groups or putting the finishing touches on camera bodies. Gasser's images show a rougher, cruder side of NK and the Ohi factory and are an important historical record of NK at a time when it was finally beginning to enjoy some success from the ever increasing sales of its camera and lenses.

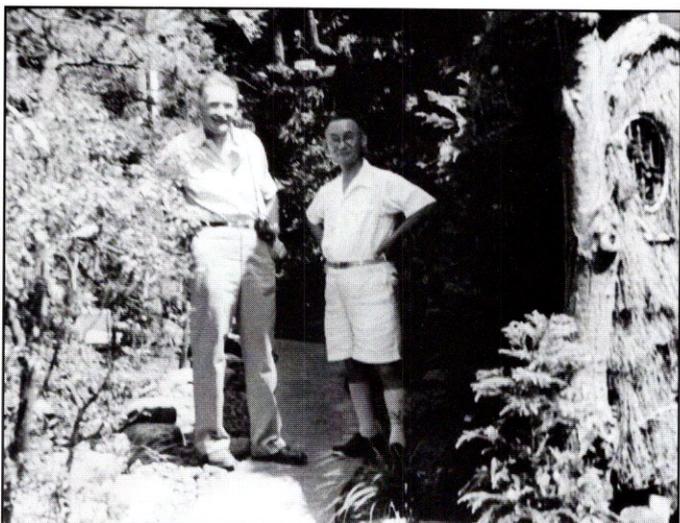
The pictures fall into three groups: pictures from Gasser's arrival in Japan; pictures taken at various dinner engagements and meetings Gasser had with members of NK's administration and leadership; pictures taken inside NK's Ohi factory and glassworks. **(Over the years other such historic images have appeared in our Journal, often being published for the very first time anywhere! An example are those supplied by Tatsuhiko Arakawa. These very important Gasser images rank among the best we have ever published. Wes and I decided to run these in this issue, the last before NHS-Con14 to be held in San Francisco, as a precursor of sorts to that meeting. The tie in is obvious. Both Wes and I wish they had been available when writing our books. Fabulous images indeed. Please enjoy, and thank you to Wes and John Gasser for sharing them with us. RJR)**



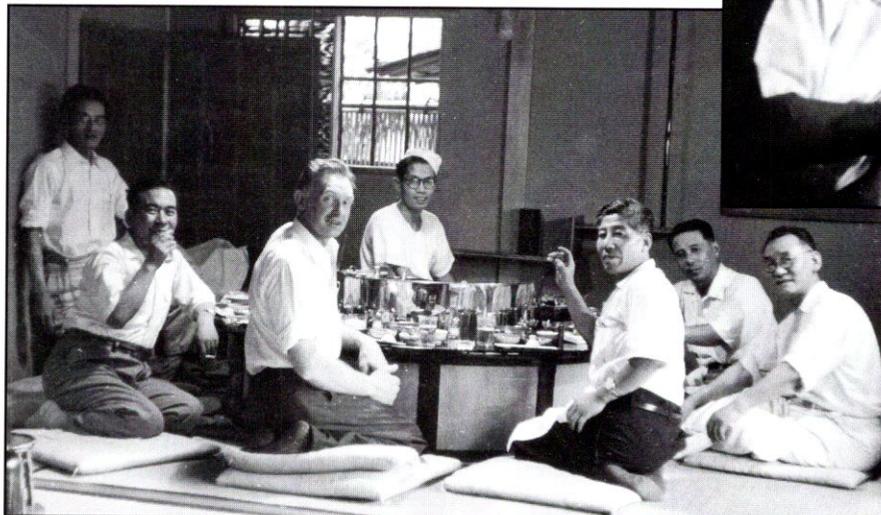
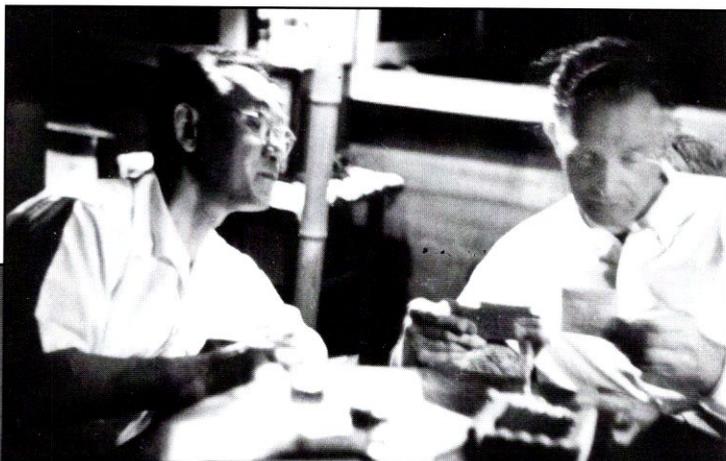
*Left...Adolf Gasser arriving at the airport in Japan. He was met by an unnamed and unknown man, perhaps an official from NK, Sakai and Sakai's female companion. We can assume that this photo was taken by Sakai using Gasser's camera.*

*Above...Sakai and his companion on the train to Tokyo from the airport. Shigeru Sakai was a personal friend of both Uno Lindholm, the owner of OFITRA, and Dr. Nagaoka, Nippon Kogaku's president. As such, he was in a unique position to promote both NK's products and OFITRA as the importer. Apparently he liked Gasser, and tried to persuade Adolph to take over the importation business when the Nikon Camera Company (OFITRA) lost their import license in 1953.*

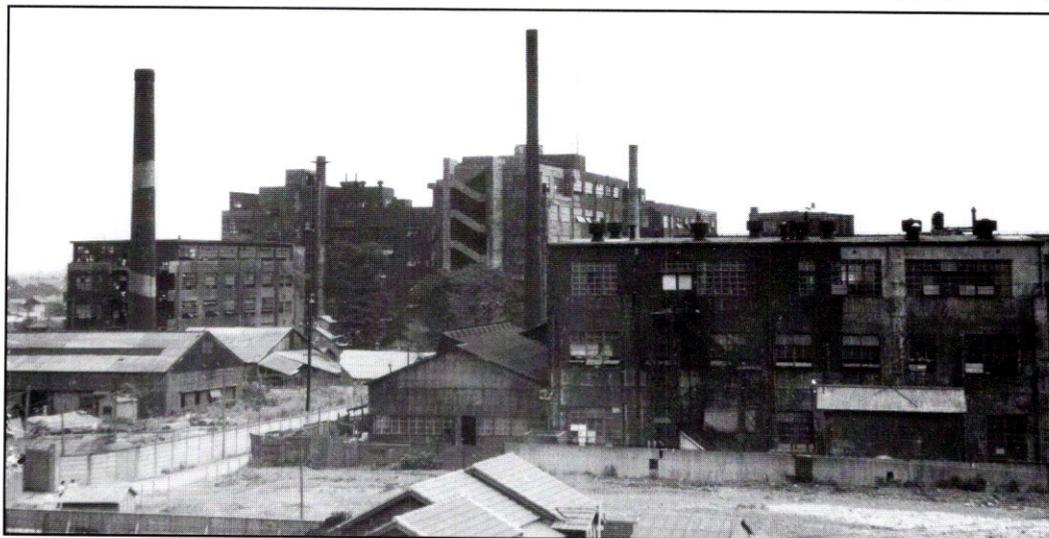




*Above... This image might serve as a footnote to that relationship: In 1969, Gasser made one more final trip to Japan as part of a convention of Lions International. He mentioned to this author that he met with Sanetoshi Kuratsuji, Nikon's director of sales. But he must have met with Sakai once more, for here we see the two much older men together, two who shared so much in creating the Nikon success story.*



*Top... A photo taken at an informal dinner. Nagaoka (center) certainly was prepared to go casual. The IDs of the other two men is unknown. Dress in some of these photos & in the factory is a reflection of the high heat that August & a universal lack of air conditioning. Above... Gasser examining parts with Hiroshi Shirahama, then Vice President for R&D. Left... A supper party. Dress is casual to say the least. Mikio Itoh identified the people as, L-R: Unknown, Morita, a director, Gasser, Noboru Hamashima, a director in charge of exports, Dr. Nagaoka, president, Tsurayuki Yagi, Vice President, and Sakai. I am sorry that I do not have all the names. Yagi had studied optics at Carl Zeiss in Germany before the war and was responsible for the design of the rangefinders used on the great Japanese battleships. Left... The Ohi factory and the Glass Works under dull skies. View is from outside the Glass Works, the ugly building in the foreground. The main Ohi building with its external stairs looms in back. Not the pretty white buildings we usually think of.*



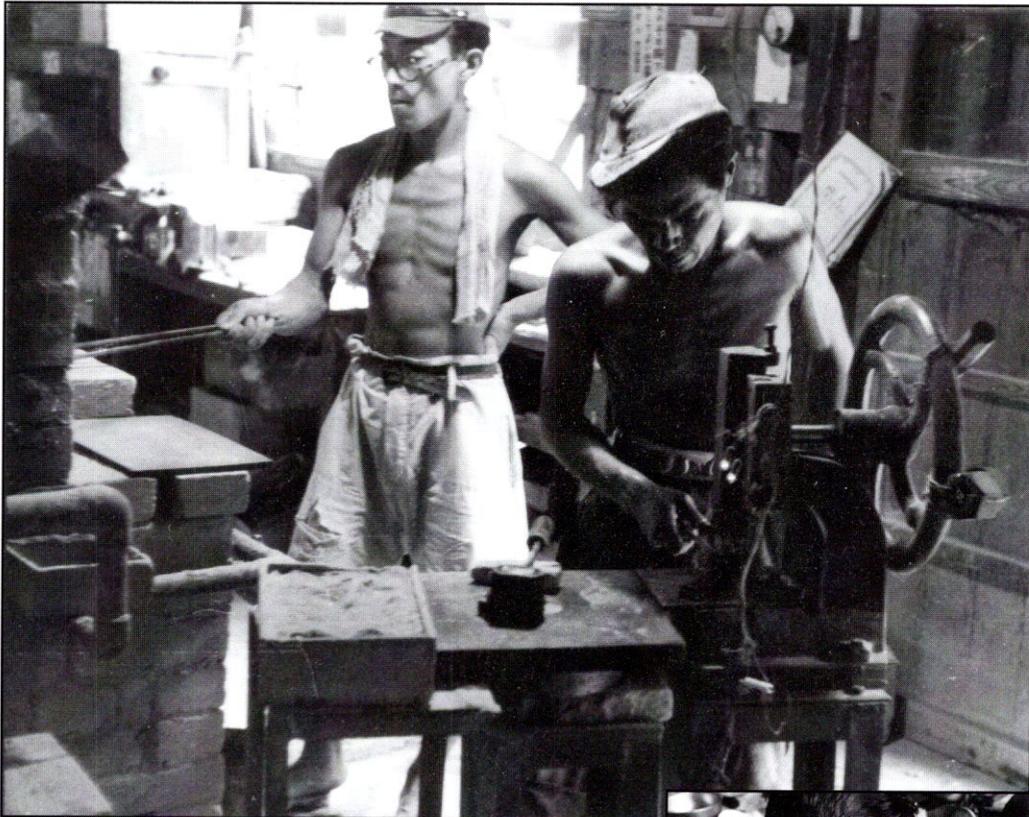


*Left...Inspectors examining & grading optical glass that has already been cut into blocks. Age? Probably apprentices working a 'safer' job, these boys appear to be no more than 12 or 13. Above...A lens grinding section in the factory. The blocks of clay are abrasives that would wear against the molded pieces of glass. Again, note the youth of the worker.*

*Right...In the Glass Works. After a melt, the huge melting vats were broken up and chunks of glass retrieved for selection, cutting and annealing. Here we see glass chunks everywhere.*

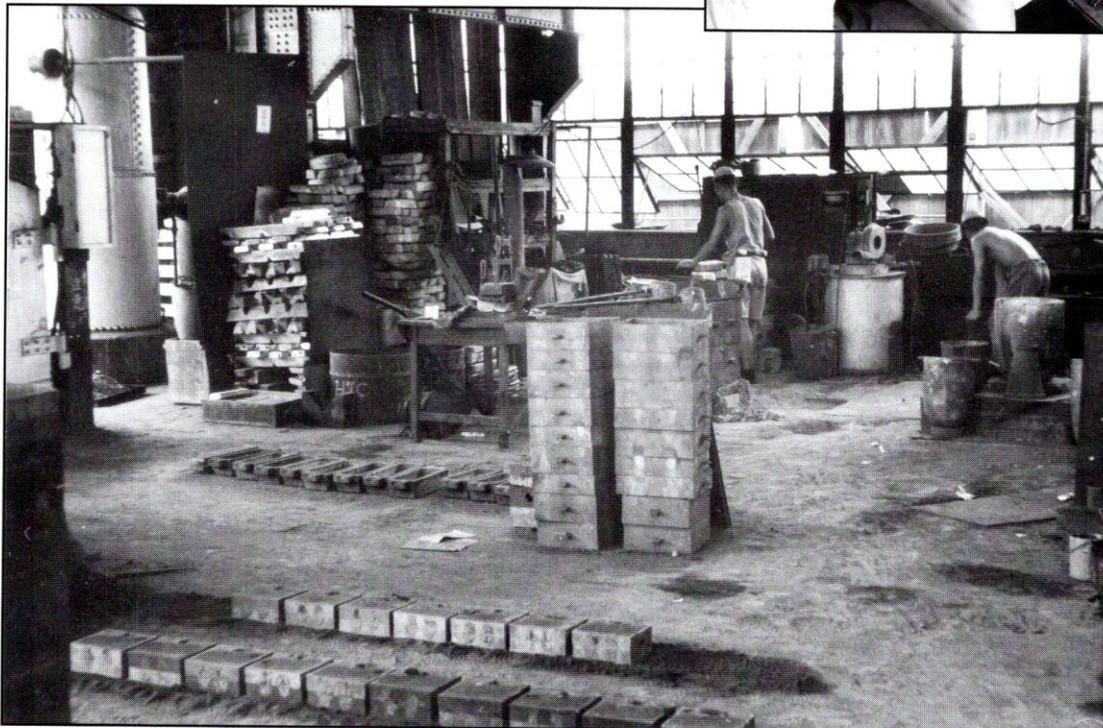
*Bottom...Lathes in operation. Gasser's guide and interpreter is to the right. Note the wrist watch. Note the worker in his sandals carrying oil for his machine. Wetting the floor might have helped cool the room and limit the danger of sparks. Poor lighting but lots of windows to compensate. Building lens mounts took a lot of cutting, grinding and turning.*





*Top...Foundry work: two workers heating metal pieces and using a punch. If they were any thinner, would they still be standing? Here we see the dark side of post-war Japan where many people starved and dressed in rags before the industrial miracle that the Nikon sparked lent a future.*

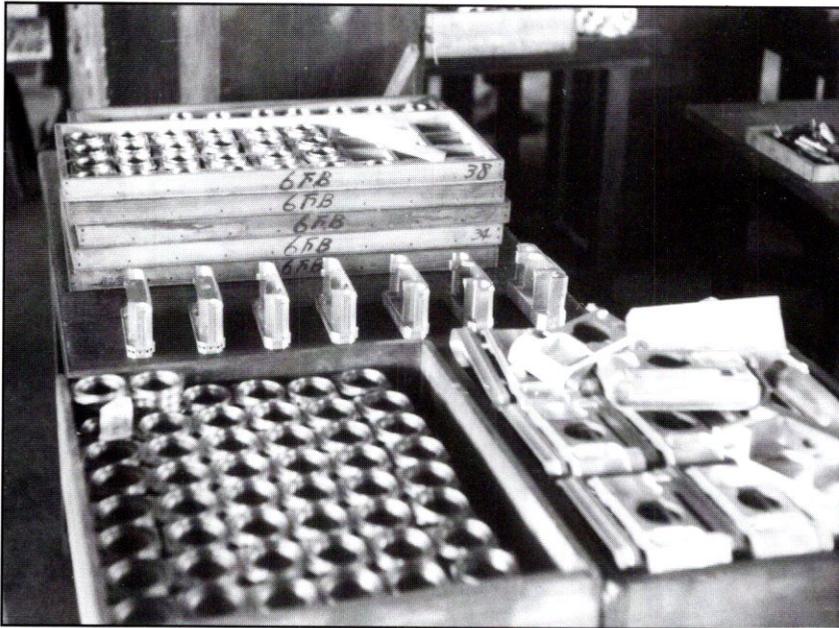
*Right...A worker taking his lunch at his bench. A frugal repast, it would appear. Bottom...A shot showing part of the sand-casting works. In the summer of 1951, NK was still sand-casting the Nikon bodies, a difficult process that required laborious hand-finishing afterward. That fall, the company would turn to injection molding, but here we see the sand works still in operation. Each box in the photo would hold a mold for one cast.*





*Above...In the foreground is the outside of a mold for what might be a reflector. The worker is fine-tuning the inside cavity. Behind him lies the master piece he had just used to form the cavity into which molten metal will pour. Labor-intensive and no two pieces will be alike. Below...Another worker prepares a different mold. This may be for a Nikon camera body. This is the inside of the cavity with the spaces for the film magazine & the take-up spool. Note the 'work shoes'. He is surrounded by his tools: a tamping mallet & shaping utensils, & is using a blow tube to gently remove any remaining loose grains of the fine, black sand that was the essential ingredient for any successful sand-casting.*

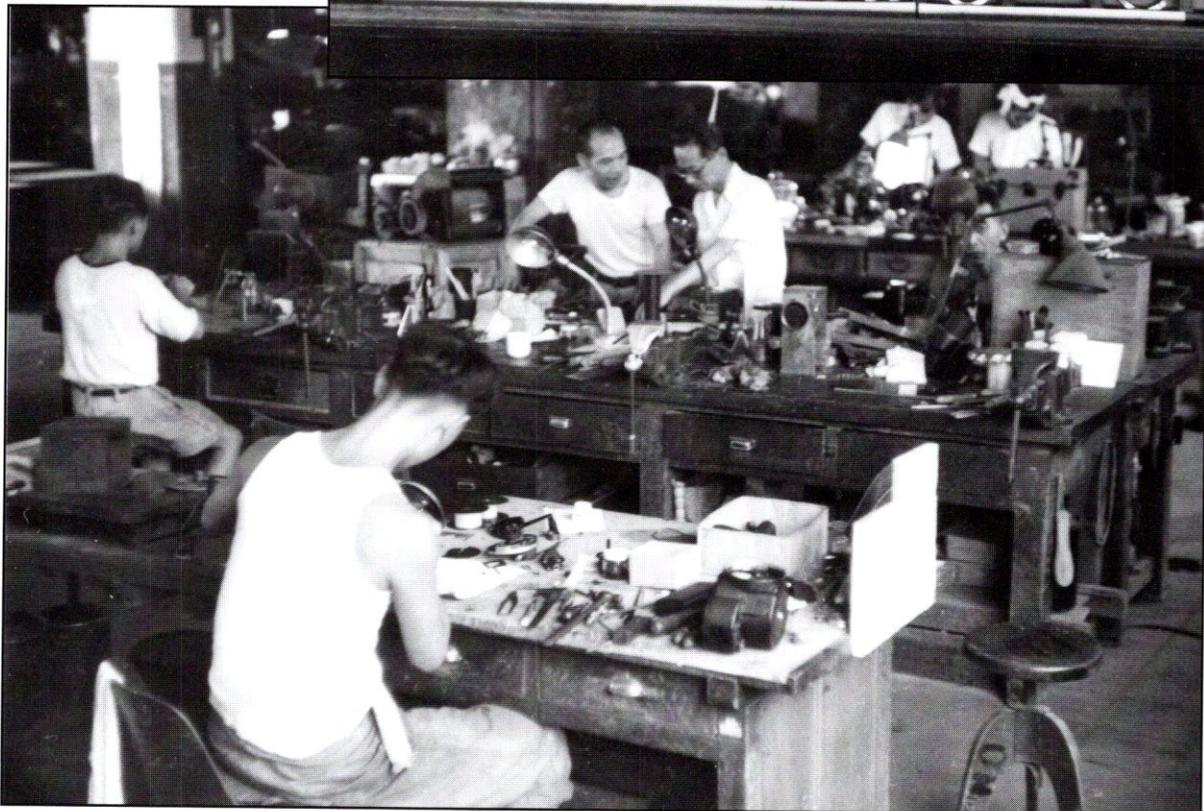
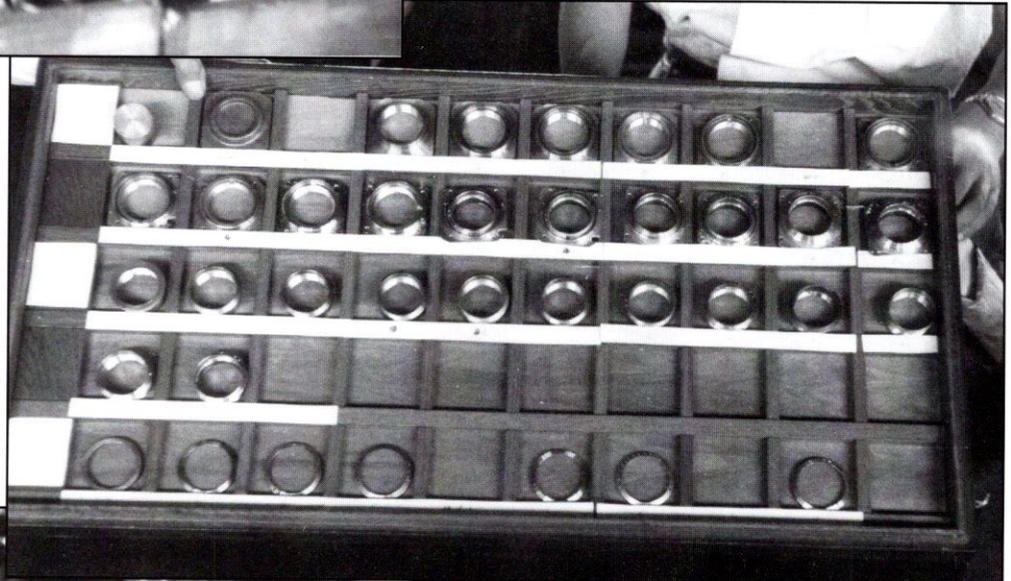




*Left...Body castings fresh from the sand castings, still bright white and ready to go into trays for the assembly process. Note that some have already been drilled for the flash synch sockets, others have not. The helicals in the foreground may be for the cameras, or for other lenses. It is hard to tell. Note that these, like all Nikons prior to the S2, are in the 6FB series.*

*Below...A tray of lens mounts in progress. Some are finished and ready to install. Other slots just hold parts. Gasser's guide with the wrist watch holds one end of the tray.*

*Bottom...A room filled with work benches. This is as close as we have seen before of workers assembling cameras. But what are these workers doing? Again, note the youngster on the left and the thinness of everyone.*



# 8

## IT'S THE 'LITTLE' THINGS THAT MATTER...PART III

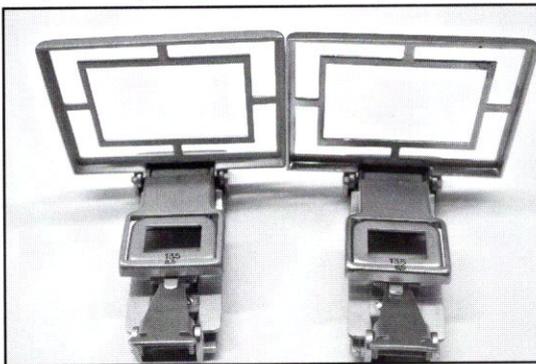
By CHRISTOPHE SAP

Pic4

In the two previous parts of this series I entertained you about the more common finders. To finish with the 'little things' let us have a look at some other small accessories. But to put the finishing touch on the subject of finders, let us discuss just two more items, starting with the Sports-Frame finder.

On page 497 of the book it says: "at least two versions" exist. But what do you think? Indeed, in what is called Version Two (the "yellow" one) I have three different ones. Only one of those Type II has the yellow paint on the back. Type I, Type II yellow and the other non-yellow Type II have JAPAN engraved, but not painted black.

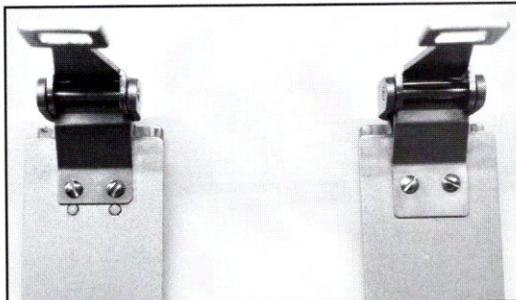
(Pic 1)



Pic1 ▶

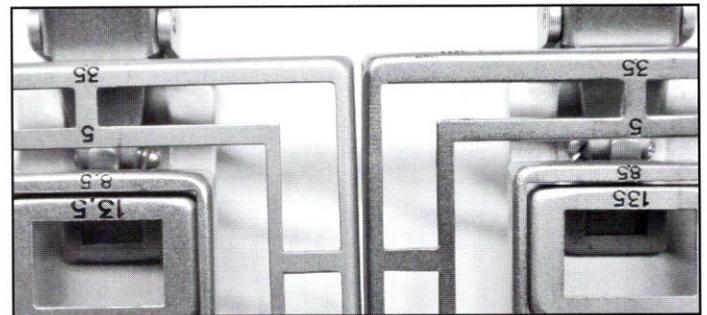


Pic2



Pic3 ▶

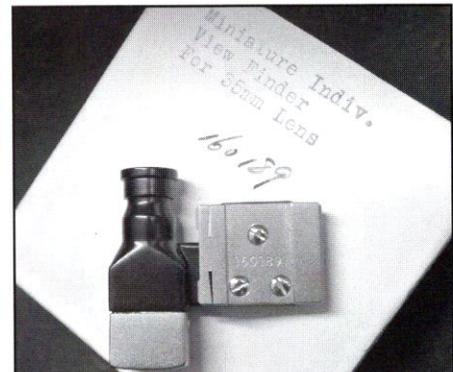
The other Type II has JAPAN painted black. (Pic 2) Besides that it has another interesting difference. The holding plate of the 'eyepiece' is shorter, which means that 2 of the 4 screws securing the mounting shoe on the opposite side are visible from above. (Pic 3) Also note that the numbers (3.5-5-8.5-13.5) are larger than on the others. (Pic4)



Well, that is about it for the finders. But wait, I hear you asking: what about the Mini-finder?

That is correct. Except for numbered or not numbered, I have nothing to add. But I would like to illustrate a picture of the very uncommon numbered version in its box. The box is interesting, as it gives the full name of this finder. It reads: 'Miniature Indiv. View finder for 35mm Lens'. (Pic 5) Furthermore, this mini-finder is somewhat

interesting. Have a look in the book on page 496 and find out.



Pic5 ▶

Since this is it for the finders, let us see if I have some surprises regarding other "little things that matter".

Page 464 of the book begins coverage of the Nikon Exposure Meter. It speaks about two distinct versions, with some variations in the second version. But it is the first version that is most exciting.

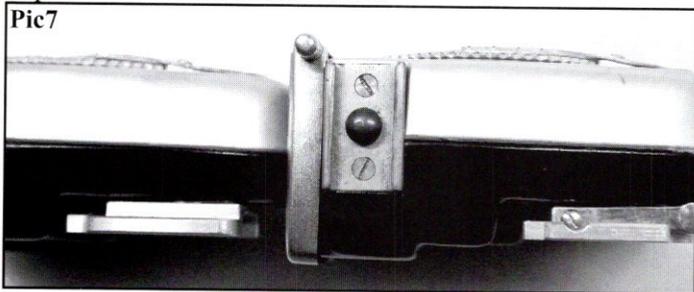
Indeed, the early ones are different from later ones, not only the meter itself, but also the boxes. Let me explain.

All meters have a shoe and in that shoe there is a spring. But.. the early ones have no such spring and there cannot be too many of these as #950095 (the 95<sup>th</sup> made) already has the spring, so LESS than 100 have a shoe with no spring, which makes them an absolute rarity!

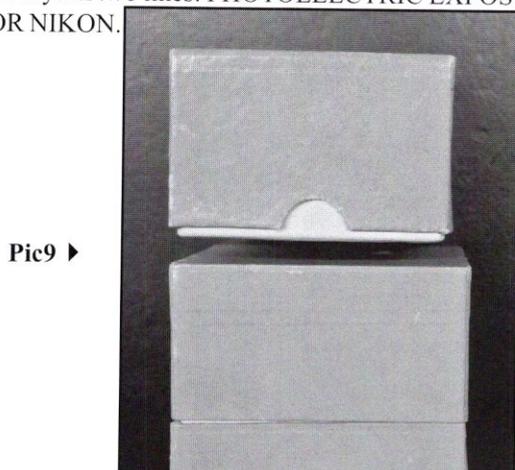


Pic6 ▶

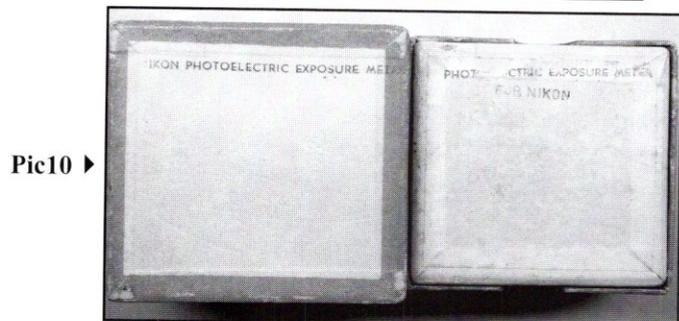
Pic 6 shows you the underside of 950057 and 950095 (this photo is on page 465 of the book as well). Pics 7 & 8 show details. I think they added that spring because without it the meter could slip out of the camera's flash shoe.



Also the box and case are interesting. The early boxes were not only larger in all three dimensions, but have kind of a second cover on the underside, which cannot be removed. (Pic 9) the undersides of the boxes (Pic 10) also have a different printing: NIKON PHOTOELECTRIC EXPOSURE METER on box for 950057 and for 950095 it says in two lines: PHOTOELECTRIC EXPOSURE METER FOR NIKON.



Pic9 ▶

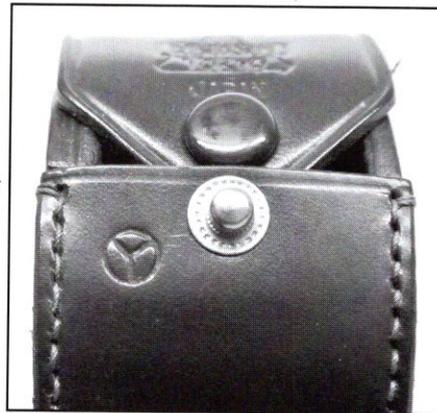


Pic10 ▶

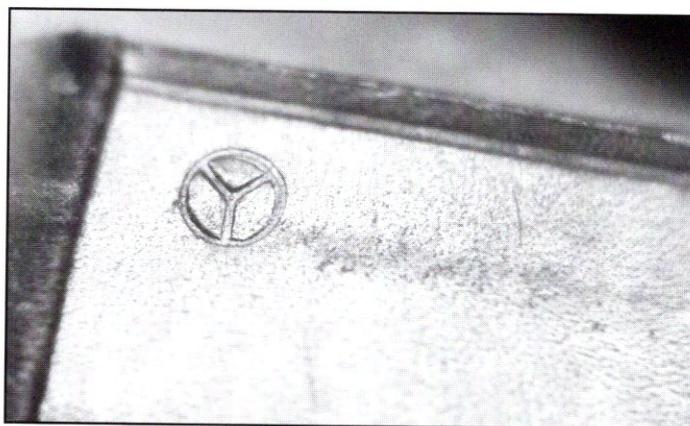
The cases for both 950057 and 950095 are identical, but later cases are different. This can be seen on Pic 5 of the book on page 469. Besides the two shown differences there is a third one. The tiny strap at the inside of the earlier cases is gone.

We now come to the Panorama Heads. I found there are some minor variations: Nippon Kogaku or Nikon; cm or mm; and some are PAT. PEND, others are not. And, of course, different boxes.

On one of the leather cases I found a sign, which looks like the letter "Y" in a circle. A same "Y" can be seen on the inside of some camera cases. Till now no one can explain to me the meaning of this "Y" in a circle. (Pics 11a & 11b)



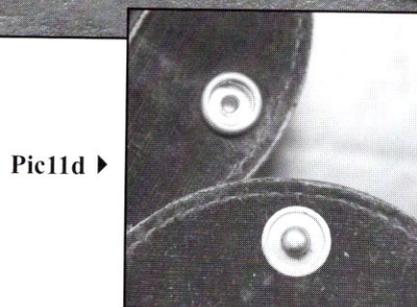
Pic11a ▶



Speaking of that "Y" found on some cases, let me make a little side jump to only two small differences on camera cases (there are a lot more). See Pics 11c & 11d and let them speak for themselves.



Pic11c



Pic11d ▶

As for the Bubble Levels, like the Panorama Heads, they can be marked either Nippon Kogaku or just Nikon. There are also several types and colors of boxes. But there is a small variation that is hard to spot. Some shoes 'seem' to be thinner, but they are not. All four edges of the shoe are a little rounded, which might have made it easier to slip it into the flash shoe. (Pic 12a & 12b)



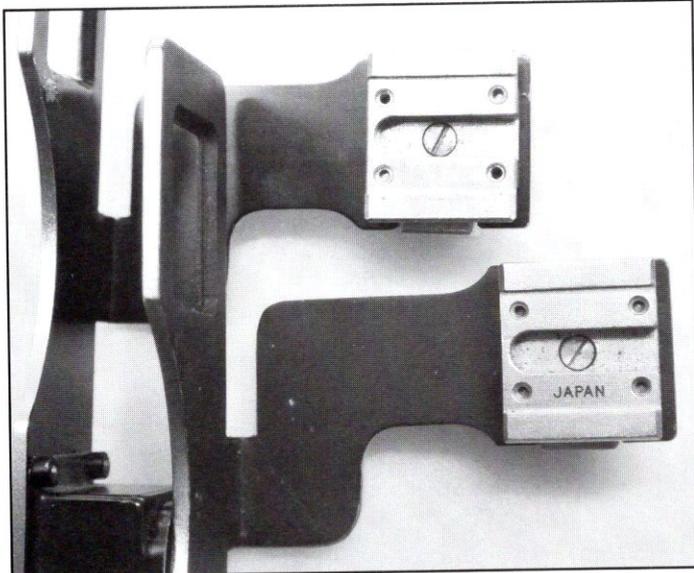
Pic12a



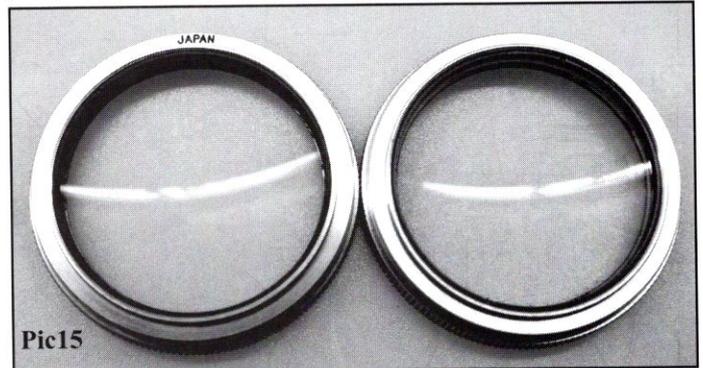
Pic12b

The Close-Up Attachments & Lenses also have some minor variations, but for collectors always interesting. The mounting shoe can be with or without JAPAN (Pic 13), and the same for the rear of the lenses. (Pic 14) But that is not all. The engraving around the lens can be 'large' or 'small'. Pic 15 shows four lenses: top left the very early 41247, right is 41430 (with a nice misprint). Both are the 'large' type. Bottom left is 42001 and right is 42695 both the 'small' type. Also note that 42695 is higher than the last one quoted in the book on page 498.

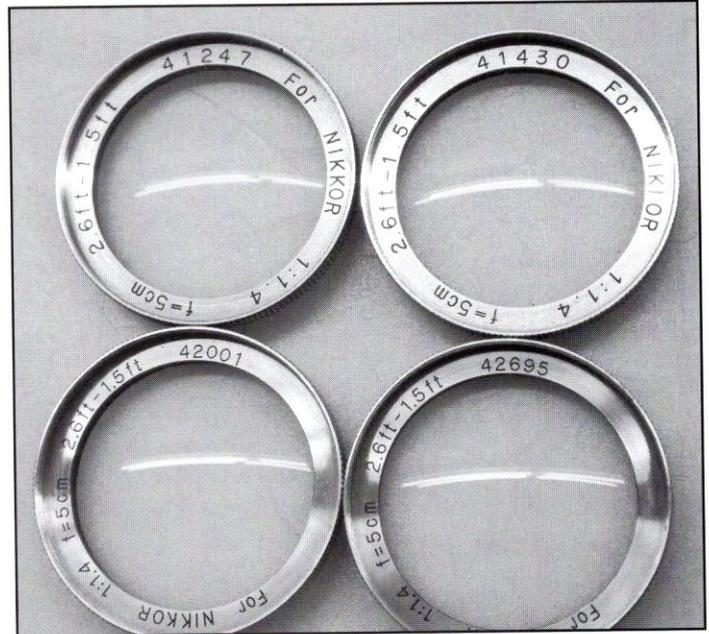
Pic13



Pic14



Pic15



The small and large engraving type on the underside of those that have JAPAN engraved. A large engraved front has a large JAPAN and a small front a smaller JAPAN. (Pic 16)



Pic16 ▶

And to finish with 'those little things' just a few lines about the 5cm/f1.4 Hood, as there are a lot of variations, but easy to spot, so I will just name them:

F=5cm 1:1.4 or 50/1.4

With or without:

U.S. PAT. J. PAT. PEND.

US PAT 2.837.957 J. PAT. PEND.

U.S. Pat. 2.837.957 J. Pat. Pend.

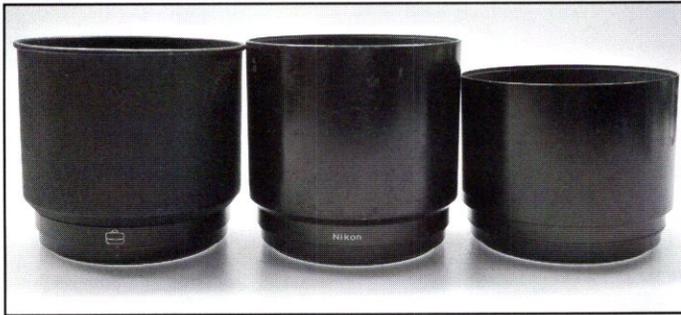
So variations are countless, and other hoods have several variations, too much to list them. I am sure there are more out there, so keep your eyes opened.

Now give me some time so I can draw your attention to a bigger item. It is about the 35cm lens. On page 386 of the book, picture 3: "two versions of the shade are known". Well, I am happy to present to you a third version. (Pic 17)

Pic17



Pic18



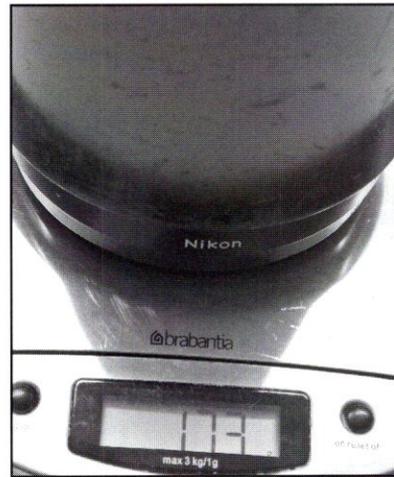
As can be seen in the book those two versions have about the same dimensions and one is crinkled finished. The crinkled one has the NKK logo and JAPAN, the other says Nikon JAPAN (Pic 18). This makes me believe that the crinkled one was the earlier type. Also it came on lens 352543 while the smooth one came on 354723.

Dimensions of these two are about the same, but not the weight. The crinkled one is 104 grams (Pic 19), the other is 173 grams (Pic 20). The THIRD version is 115 grams (Pic 21).

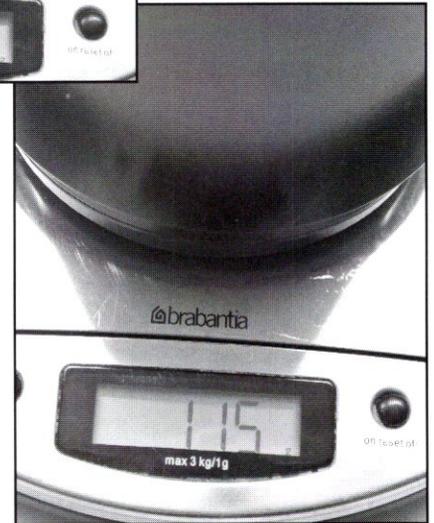
Pic19 ▶



◀ Pic20



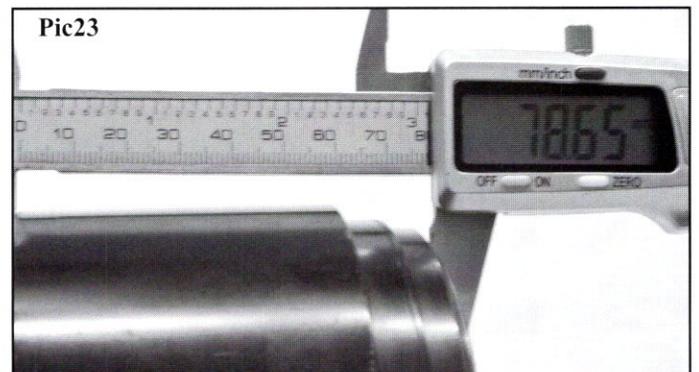
Pic21 ▶



This third version has the same width as the other two, but it is more shallow. Whereas the other two are about 94mm deep (Pic 22) this one is only 79mm (Pic 23), or a difference of 15mm (1.5cm). Pic22



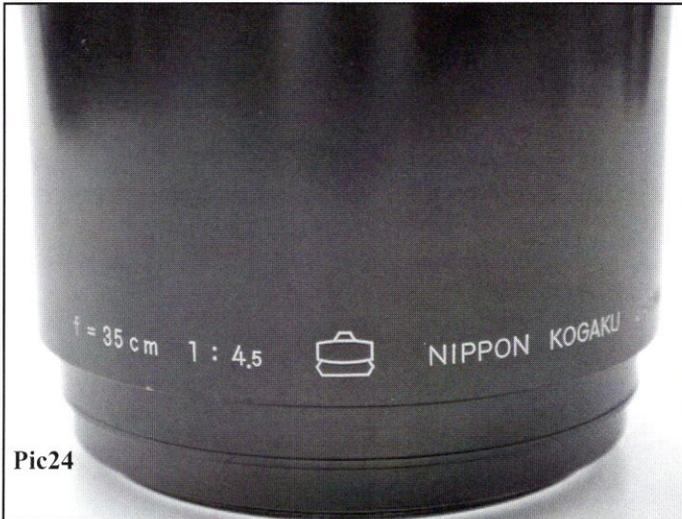
Pic23



Could it be for the 18cm/f2.5 lens (as the 35cm hoods fit the 18cm lenses also)?

No! Why not?

Well, simply because it is engraved:  $f=35\text{cm } 1:4.5$  followed by the NKK logo and NIPPON KOGAKU JAPAN (Pic 24). This hood came on lens 354674.



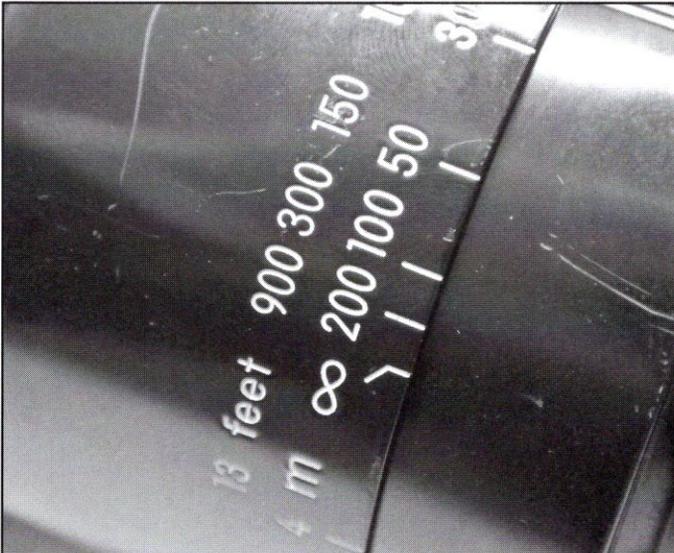
Pic24

And the 35cm lens has another variation you might not have noticed. All I have seen have the distance scale in both feet and meters. But...where meter scales are white, the feet scale can be RED-ORANGE or YELLOW, clearly visible and not due to discoloration. I would have loved to demonstrate this, but in B&W it simply doesn't show. As far as I could determine, the red-orange ones seem to be the earlier lenses.

In this series I presented some misprints, but could it be that actual mistakes also happened? I think yes.

We all learned at school that one meter equals 3 feet 3 & 3/8 inches. Easily calculated 50 meters is about 150 feet, 100 meters is about 300 feet, and this can be seen on the distance scale of the 35cm lenses. But have a look at what comes next (Pic 25). How can 200 meters ever be 900 feet? Or how can 900 feet ever be only 200 meters? Is it 600 feet and 200 meters? Or is it 900 feet and 300 meters?

Pic25



So far this is the end, but as I said before, I am sure there are many more variations and differences to find. Happy hunting.

Now I have a request: if you have items that differ from those seen in this series, please send me pictures to: Csap@skynet.be. And thank you.

(I would like to thank NHS member Bill Kraus for his kind help by correcting my texts.)



Above..The author as photographed by David Douglas Duncan.

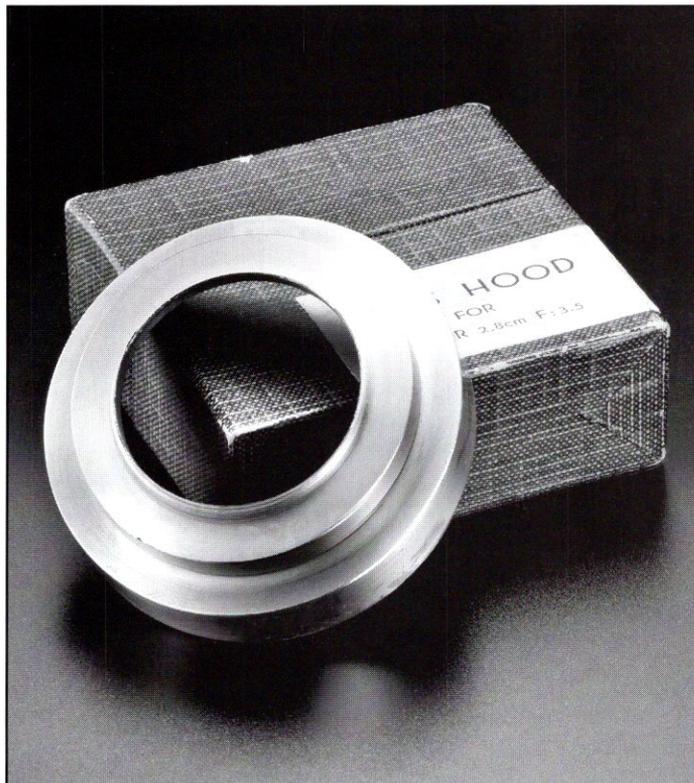
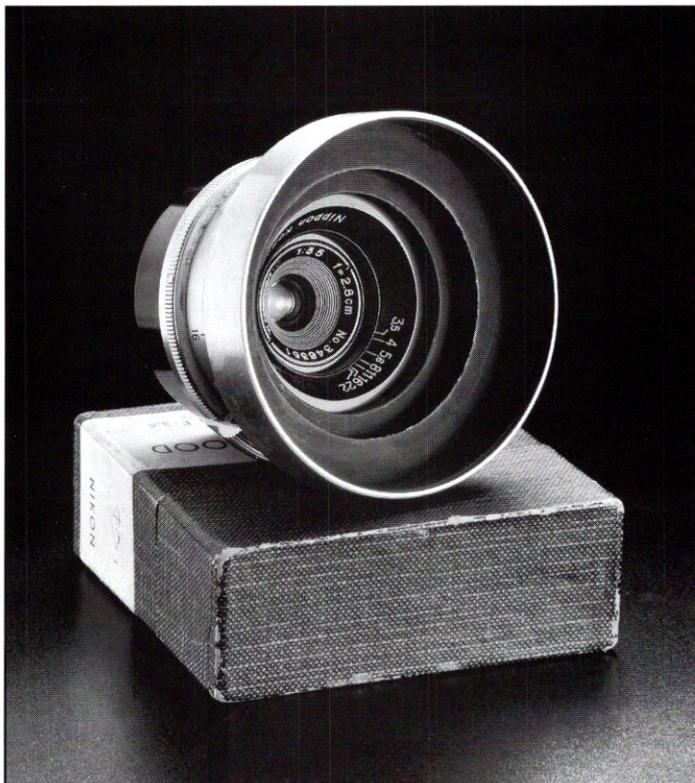
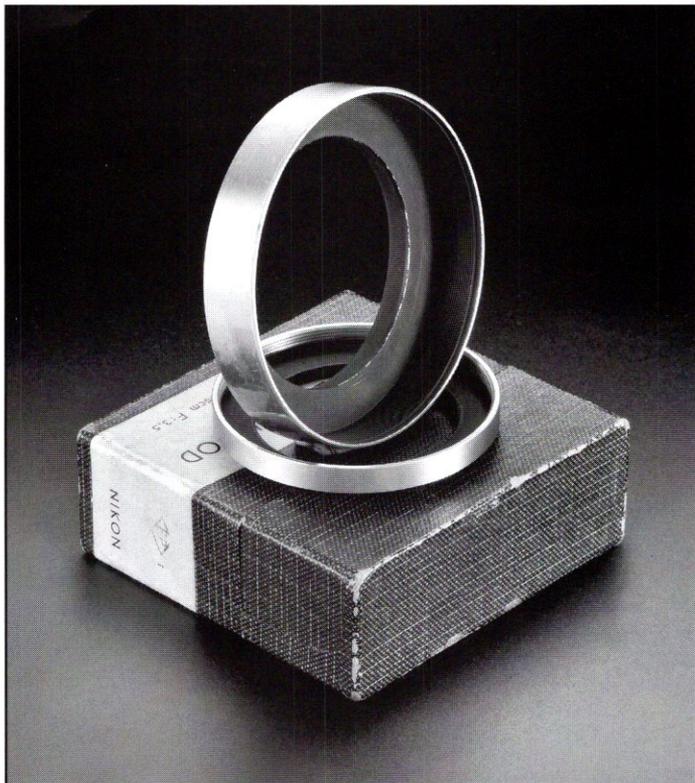
**Both Wes Loder & Christophe Sap will be speakers at NHS-Con14 in San Francisco in October. Both will deliver interesting and informative talks on various aspects of Nikon collecting. Both are very knowledgeable about things Nikon. Please join us for what will be an informative meeting indeed.**

# A MOST INTERESTING LENS HOOD!

PHOTOS BY TONY HURST

One of the most interesting lens hoods ever made for the RF system is this all-chrome two-piece screw-in version made for the early 28mm/f3.5 Nikkor, a lens that came out in late 1952. Never an MIOJ item it is of great interest because of its apparently low pro-

duction & unique little box. I have owned 2 of these the last 40 years & have seen 2 others. Not common at all. And its blue vertically orientated box is really neat. (I have seen a similar box for the 35/f3.5!) A handsome piece that only Tony Hurst could improve.



# 14

## ...THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY PART II.....THE ALMOST UNKNOWN RAFURAY

By ROBERT J. ROTOLONI & TSUYOSHI KONNO

In NHS-123 we had extensive coverage of the seldom seen 'Condor' copies of the Nikon S2 with photos supplied by Japanese member Tsuyoshi Konno. I am sure you were surprised to see such close copies made by the small Japanese maker 'Sanyo Kogaku-Kikai Co. Ltd.' for these cameras are very uncommon today. Also, we are so used to all those nearly exact copies of the Leica II/III models made in Japan that we may not be aware that the Nikon RFs were also copied.

I mentioned in #123 that more info was coming on yet another, even lesser known, S2 copy made by the same people. That camera is the 'Rafuray' (such an odd name) which is a 'cheaper' model of the Condor IIIS.

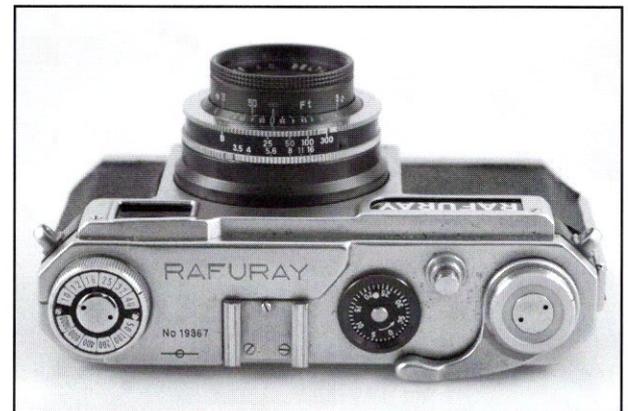
Since I actually own a Rafuray, I thought I would dig a little deeper and see just how close a copy it is. Of course, a fixed lens leaf shutter camera will differ greatly from the interchangeable lens, focal plane S2, but we are not talking an exact copy like those Leica-look-a-likes. The Condor/Rafuray cameras simply mimic the 'looks' of the Nikon in an effort to sell more cameras. So how close did their 'cosmetics' actually get?

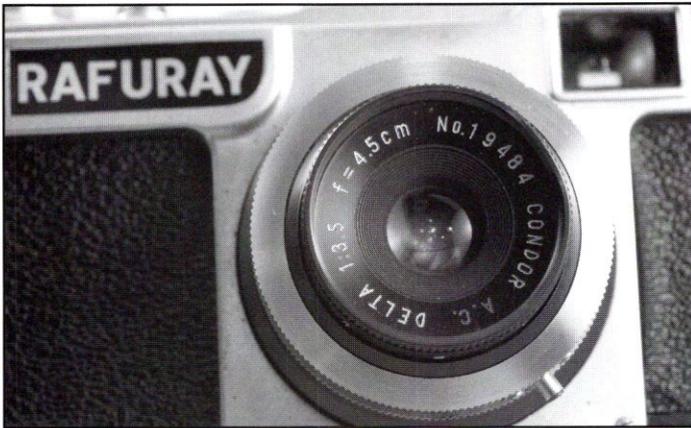
From the photos last issue and here in #124 we can see that they got darned close. However, the real fun of this project for me was comparing the front chrome decorator plates on both cameras. Unlike the Leica, where the top plate is the most important part to mimic, the Nikon's most obvious external identification is that front plate. Other makers fitted their cameras with 'modified' plates that reminded one of the Nikons (I may get to those at a later date, as well as Nikon S copies), but the front plates on the Condor/Rafuray cameras are nearly identical! How close are they? The only way to tell for sure is to remove them and see how they match up. And that is what this little article is about.

The Rafuray is a Condor IIIS with no rangefinder. Therefore, no cutout is needed for the second RF window. Instead, a much larger cutout is used and fitted with the quite large RAFURAY nameplate. Otherwise the front plates are the same. When removed and placed side-by-side it is obvious that they have identical dimensions save for the size of the circular cutout for the lens mount (the Nikon's is smaller since its lens assembly is smaller). So the S2 front plate will not fit the Rafuray because of this. However, all the screw holes line up! Check out the photos!

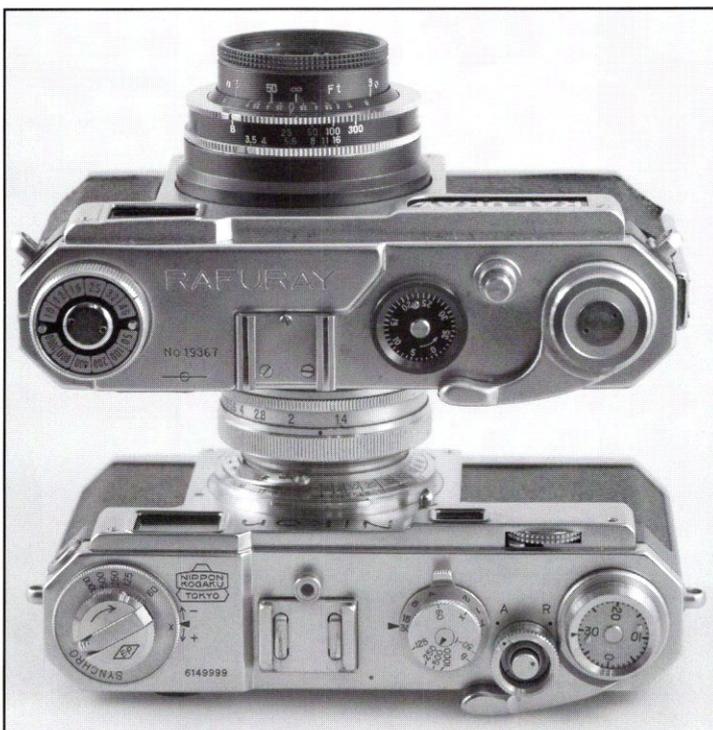
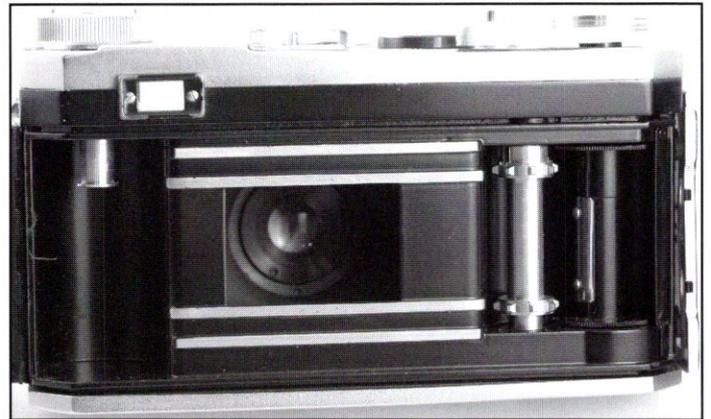
*(Just before going to the printer with this issue I received a large package from Konno-san with a tremendous number of photos of all types of things. Included were some pertinent to this subject and will appear in the next installments on the Nikon RF copies.)*

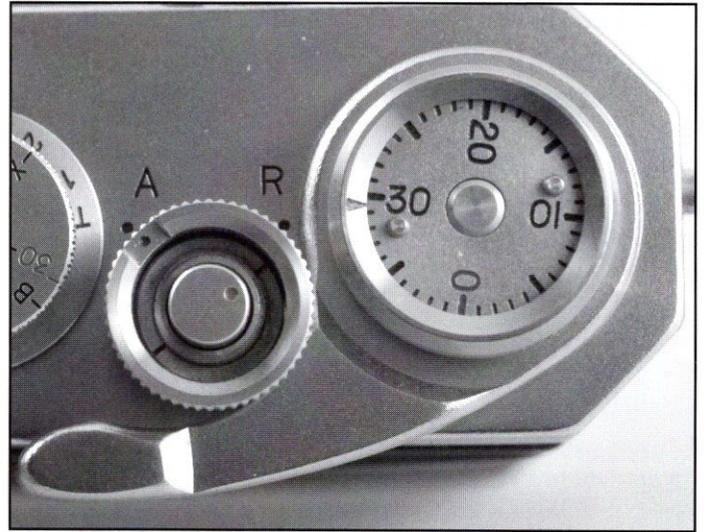
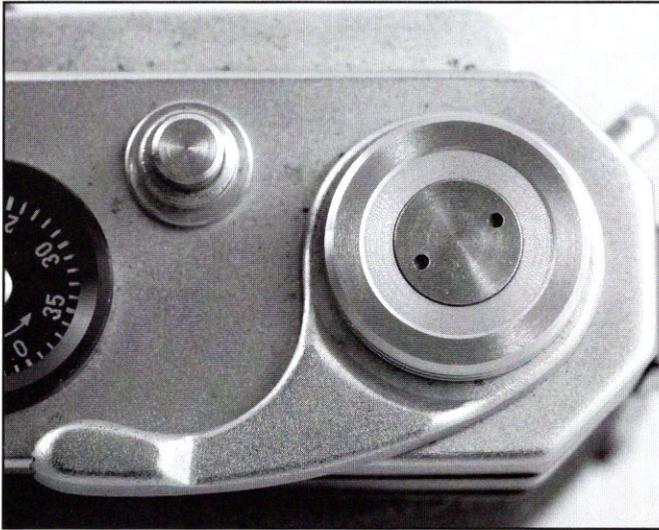
***On this page we have front and top views of the Rafuray beneath the identical views of the Condor IIIS. Except for the nameplate, no RF feature, other badges & the rewind knob, they're identical.***





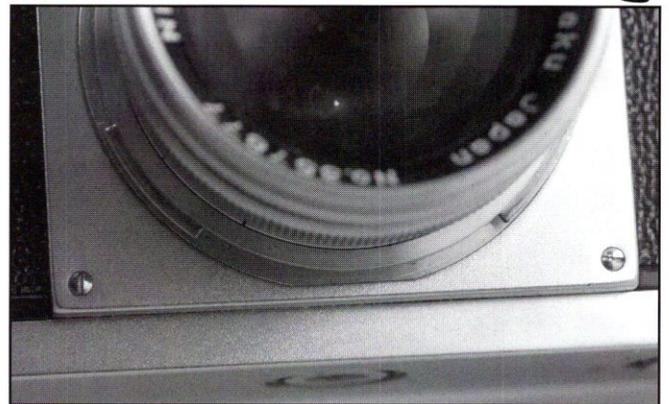
*Clockwise from directly left..Front view with lens & nameplate detail (note the 'Condor Delta' wording on the lens); rear view; bottom view; makers ID; interior of the Rafuray; interior of the Nikon S2 (note how Condor mimicked the film guide rails & sprocket very closely); & finally both cameras stacked together for comparison. Specifically note the wind lever, accessory shoe location, the rewind assembly & the frame counter where the Nikon shutter speed dial resides. Even the shape of the body is similar.*





*Condor copied various features of the Nikon S2 to the point of duplication. The wind lever is a faithful reproduction. The viewfinder window is identical in size and even the mounting screw for the front plate is in the exact location. The curve of the frontplate is duplicated as is the screw location here as well. Only that overly large nameplate sets it off.*



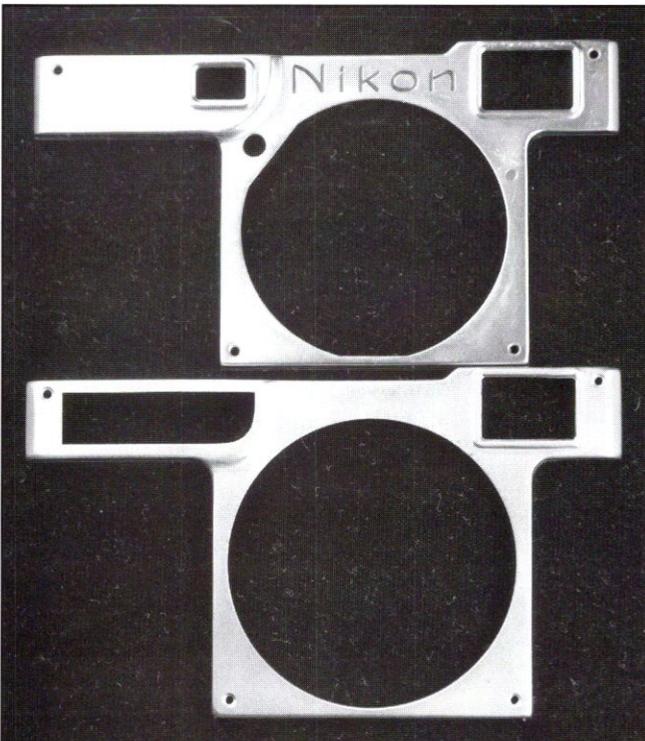


*Above..Even the final two front plate screws are exactly where they belong!*

*Left... The two front plates removed & set side by side for comparison. Note the only real difference is the size of the lens opening. (Because there is no focusing wheel on the Rafuray, its plate does not have the cut-out for the wheel. Therefore, it will not snug up to the top plate because the wheel is in the way. If you remove the wheel then all 4 screws can be mounted.*

*Below...Drop the Rafuray plate onto the Nikon plate and they line up perfectly!*

*Bottom...And the final comparison test is... you got it. The Rafuray front plate on the S2 body. How is that for a copy?*



*OK, so tell me, what the heck is this?  
See you next time.*

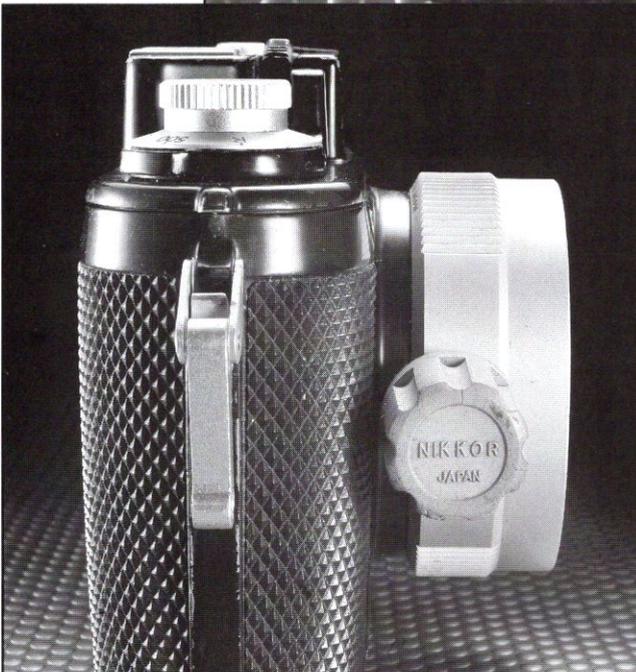
*RJR*

# A GERMAN 'NIKKOR' NIKONOS II

PHOTOS BY TONY HURST



*From master photographer Tony Hurst, we have these gorgeous shots of a version of the Nikonos II that is desirable on two levels. Firstly, it is the seldom seen "CALYPSO/NIKKOR" as it was marketed in Europe. In the US it was simply the Nikonos II. However, this particular sample has another feature that separates it from the 'average' Calypso/Nikkor in that it is marked in at least two places as a 'Nikkor' and not a 'Nikon' product, making it suitable for sale on the German market during the Zeiss-Ikon injunction period. The 'Nikkor' moniker is found on the back of the case as well as on the lens control knobs. A nice find and a true collectable.*



## THE AUCTION SCENE

In this issue is my first review of the Auction Team Breker Sale held in Cologne, Germany. Though usually light on Nikon items of interest to us, the sale held on March 29<sup>th</sup> had some interesting items. There were 504 lots in this sale but only 13 were Nikons. All prices are converted to dollars & include the buyer premium.

**Nikon S #6099048 w/f1.4. Early but only a parts body!.... \$510**  
**Nikon S2 #6149695 w/f1.4. Nothing special but sold for... \$600**  
**Nikkor 85/f2 #404533 in calibrated in METERS! ..... \$400**  
**SP #6200182 w/f1.4. Very early body & clean ..... \$1200**  
**Reflex Housing II #471546 complete outfit..... \$1360**  
**SP #6204322 body with original box & manual..... \$2400**  
**Olympic S3 #6320563 w/correct f1.4 #140466 in really nice condition. DOUBLE BOXED! ..... DID NOT SELL!?**  
**S4 #6505229 w/ALL BLACK F2 LENS..... DID NOT SELL!?**

Stan Tamarkin held his 31<sup>st</sup> auction on May 29<sup>th</sup>. A lot of Leicas but still some nice Nikon items. Prices include the buyer premium.

**Nikkor 28mm/f3.5 in black barrel #716057..... \$500**  
**Another 28 but in chrome & Leica SM #348479, box!..... \$350**  
**Nikon S3 Year 2000 complete, boxed & new!..... \$1700**  
**Nikon S3 #6304498 body & exp. Meter ..... \$750**  
**Micro-Nikkor #523614 w/caps in beautiful shape ..... \$2500**

Any surprises? You bet there were! Two black SPs with lenses did not sell, nor did an early chrome SP #482! All had reasonable estimates but sat there. Same for an SA Copy Stand and a black Variframe. But three other items did sell!

**Reflex Housing I #371169 with a mis-matched 90 degree prism #77019 (made for the type II) went cheap at ..... \$3800!**  
**Nikon SP #6212198 BLACK in nearly perfect condition! Just gorgeous with black 28mm lens.....Sold for ..... \$8500!**  
**Nikon Rangefinder Illuminator w/case sold for ..... \$2250!**

Wow. The black SP was worth it but that Illuminator went for an over the top price!

Member Chris Sap tracks auction hammer prices and has noticed some interesting points. From the last Westlicht sale; Nikon I #609518 sold for \$66,700. The same camera sold in 1994 at Christies, minus the box, for 26,500!; Stereo #241973, without case or filter, sold for \$66,700. The same lens was sold at Westlicht in 2006 for \$41,330, but that lens had the case & filter! Interesting.

From the Breker sale; Reflex housing II sold for \$1360 while the same unit sold at Christies in 2003 for \$2040! The S4 #6505229 that did not sell did sell at Christies in 2003 for \$2780, but it had an f1.4 back then and not the much rarer all black f2 it mounted this time around.

It looks like some items are turning up at multiple sales.

## LETTERS...LETTERS.

**Wes Loder's reply to Rick Lent's letter in #123...**

Both the Flektoskop & the first model Panflex were designed by Wolfgang Jacobi, a technician in the Scientific products division of Zeiss Ikon. The Flektoskop came first. Since almost all were sold with a long-focus lens (180,300 or 500) in a kit, it is difficult to see bench work as the primary function. The finder is not interchangeable. Even the Zeiss historians today shake their heads trying to understand why the housing image was designed to be reversed and upside-down. It must have made follow-action

photography a real challenge.

The Panflex I is almost the same as the Flektoskop, but smaller & uses the external Contax bayonet mount. The strange imaging system is the same.

Zeiss did prototype a 135mm/f4.5 lens in short mount specifically for the Panflex shortly after the war. It was the first lens to feature a pre-set diaphragm, but it never made it into production.

Both the post-war Flektoskop (East German) and the post-war Panflex (West German) offer upside-right & non-reversed images.

**From Nico VanDijk...**

It's amazing to see some of the prices, low and high, seen on eBay. It is worth it to continue to sell there? Couldn't we start a buy&sell page on the NHS website? Or-at least-to inform NHS members via 'our' site what one has for sale before using eBay?

## SOME BOOK UPDATES..... AND BROWSING EBAY

Here are some of the items that recently appeared on eBay and other auction sites. Great stuff just keeps coming out!

**Exacta 135 #256172, which marks a new 'low' number for this variation. A Nikon S2 #6142760 w/Aluminum f1.4 #358202 was listed on eBay by a seller who did not know what he had! Final price was \$2000, which I am sure surprised him. Nikon M609893 with CPO markings has surfaced. I hope to have photos at a later date. A 50/f3.5 in SM #570790 mis-engraved as "Q-O" and not "Q-C" sold for \$633. Quite rare. The rare 35mm/f1.8 with black front rim #351834 can be added to that premier group. The same for MIOJ 35/f3.5 #612123 from the extremely rare first group made & the highest seen to date was recently reported. And for that nearly unknown first type 50/f3.5 EL-Nikkor in chrome can be added lens #707202! A hard to find lens is the all-black 50/f2 (even rarer than the f1.4) but another was recently seen. It is lens #738127. Another f2 #50375 in Canon Hansa mount was listed on eBay at \$6000 but did not sell. An early Type II Microflex is unit #30180 also seen on eBay. Black 28/f3.5 #719715 sets a new high for this version. Finally, the 'dream' to top all dreams...the conical leather case for the 50mm/f1.1 Nikkor for \$10,000??! Seller did reduce it to about \$3000 but no sale! Can you believe it? For a leather case?**

RJR

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Those of you who wish to obtain a signed copy of my book from me need only to contact me. Besides personally signing the book, I have also had made up labels stating to the fact that 'this copy has been purchased directly from the author'. Prices are as follow and include all shipping and postage costs. .

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Please make all checks/money orders payable to:

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or MYSELF**

**THANK YOU.....RJR**

# 20

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**SELL LIST... I am now on EBAY on a regular basis!** You might want to make me a preferred seller so you can keep track of what I have currently listed. My ID is '6091'! . **RJR roto-[loni@msn.com](mailto:loni@msn.com)**

**WANTED...**Photos wanted if possible for any of the following lenses: NIKKOR 21mm.f4.0 in LTM; NIKKOR 25mm/f4.5 in Nikon mt; NIKKOR 28mm/f4 in Nikon mt; STEREO-NIKKOR in LTM!; KINEGON 35mm/f2.5 in Nikon mt; KOMURA 28mm/f2.8 in Nikon mt. Rare non-Nikkor wide angle lenses for Nikon RF mount. **Akito Tamla, Suginami-ku, Kami-igusa 1-25-11-104, Tokyo 167-0023 Japan. Cell phone email [aki-to49@wm.pdx.ne.jp](mailto:aki-to49@wm.pdx.ne.jp) Thanks.**

**WANTED...ALL NIKON RANGEFINDER ITEMS,** also F bodies, scalloped AI and non-AI lenses and anything else interesting. What do you have? **Peter Walnes, PO Box 332, Penzance TR18 9PD UK. Tel +44 1736 719461. Fax +44 1736 719538. Email; [pwalnes@truemesh.com](mailto:pwalnes@truemesh.com) Website; [www.peterwalnes.com](http://www.peterwalnes.com)**

**FOR SALE/TRADE...**Nikon 'MR' case in **BLACK!** First known about only a few years ago & only the 4th one I am aware of. Not Mint, but the nicest one I have seen. Not cheap, but if you own a black SP/S3/S3M, only a drop in the ocean & your camera deserves it. Offers accepted, or will trade up, down or sideways for interesting early F or Nikkor items. I can deliver it at NHS-Con14 if you wish. **Bill Pringle, (209) 848-2616, (209) 988-6886 or [redchips@aol.com](mailto:redchips@aol.com)**

**WANTED...**Nikon 35mm/f1.8 in Leica SM. Prefer clean glass & cosmetics. Authentic BLACK Canon rangefinder body, preferably a VIT or VIL model. NO repaint-only original. Nikon 3.5cm bright line finder. **Bob Rogen [teamrogen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:teamrogen@sbcglobal.net)**

**WANTED...** 8mm/f2.8 **FISH EYE NIKKOR**, 13mm/f5.6 **NIKKOR**, **120 FISH EYE SKY NIKKOR**, experimental NIKON cameras and/or lenses/accessories, even if broken. **NIKON S2 & SP (BLACK), ALUMINUM 5cm F1.4 NIKKOR. PH Van Hasbroeck, 56 Albert Court, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BE. tel: 0044 (0) 20 7584 0077. Fax: 0044 (0) 20 7591 3848. email address: [HASBROECK@AOL.COM](mailto:HASBROECK@AOL.COM)**

**WANTED...**Common models of Autographic Kodaks, & also large size Ansco models. Contact: **Tony Hurst (Dublin) at email [nippon54@hotmail.com](mailto:nippon54@hotmail.com) or telephone me at (353) 1288- 4896.**

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# odds 'n ends



## ***HAVE YOU SEEN ONE OF THESE BEFORE??***

Member Chris Sap of Belgium recently sent me this photo with the above line attached to it. I had to admit that I had never heard of nor seen a photo before of this really interesting fitted leather case designed to accommodate a 180mm/f2.5 Nikkor mounted on a Type II Reflex Housing. Look closely and you can see custom fittings for holding both housing cables, the finger tip release, film cassette & even the front cap for the housing. In addition, in front of the lens can be seen a leather flap. Under it is a Nikon body, in this case an S2, with a lens attached. All is held by a fine leather case with handle and strap and obviously intended to be carried over the shoulder. Does anyone have any info on this item? Anything in the literature? Does anyone own such a piece?

(From the look of it a 90 degree prism for the Housing might even fit (there appears to be room for it) which would date this case to late in the RF era.)

CREATED FOR THE "NHS" BY *Tony Street*

