

Menko Corner

1958 Dash 7-8 Set

by Ryan Laughton

The very first set of menko I owned was the 1958 Dash 7-8 set, but little did I know when I bought the box that I truly did have a complete set. In fact, I really didn't stumble upon the fact until I started documenting sumo menko sets. Since that "fateful" day in Japan, I've documented hundreds of sets and thousands of menko, but the 1958 Dash 7-8 Set will always be my favorite. In this issue of Sumo Fan Magazine, I'm going to give a quick rundown of the set and then "break" my box of Dash 7-8 open and see how the box was stacked and collated from the factory!

To this day, I still have yet to discover or find who manufactured the Dash 7-8 set, but this is not uncommon for many menko sets as most manufacturers didn't put their company mark on the backs of the menko. If I had to take a quick guess, slightly more than half of the documented sumo menko sets have unknown manufacturers. Unfortunately, the quest to find the true manufacturers will only get harder and harder as the years go by and many will probably never be identified. Regardless, the Dash 7-8 is a nice set in terms of production quality and content. The set has very vivid colors and great images of the rikishi. Most of the menko are nicely centered and the only complaint with the printing is the red color sometimes is seen with a bad register. This can lead to a funny-looking mouth with a red mustache or the red of the lips down where the chin is. It's very minor and doesn't detract from the overall appearance of the set. The back has a nice and simple design to it. The shikona is

vertically in the middle of the menko with a Gu-Choki-Pa mark above it. On the right side is the rikishi's height and on the left side is the rikishi's weight. At the very bottom is a 7 or 8 digit Fighting Number and all this information is surrounded by a dashed border. They are great looking menko all around. The one interesting feature to this set is there were gold-inked menko sheets that children could win if the pack they bought had a red winning stamp on the back. Four levels of prizes existed (See [SFM October 2007](#), for more information on prize structure). A #3 stamp on the back would win you a 3-menko gold-inked sheet. A #2 stamp would win you a 4-menko gold-inked sheet and a #1 stamp would win you a 5-menko gold sheet. There is supposedly a "Grand Prize", but I am still investigating what that is. Up until a few months ago, I had never seen what the stamp looked like, but it is a simple red number stamped on the back. Two types of menko were issued; one with a blue back and one with a green back. Blue backs are much harder to find than green backs, but gold-inked green backs are the hardest of all to find. The fact that I've never seen a gold-inked green back is an indication of their rarity.

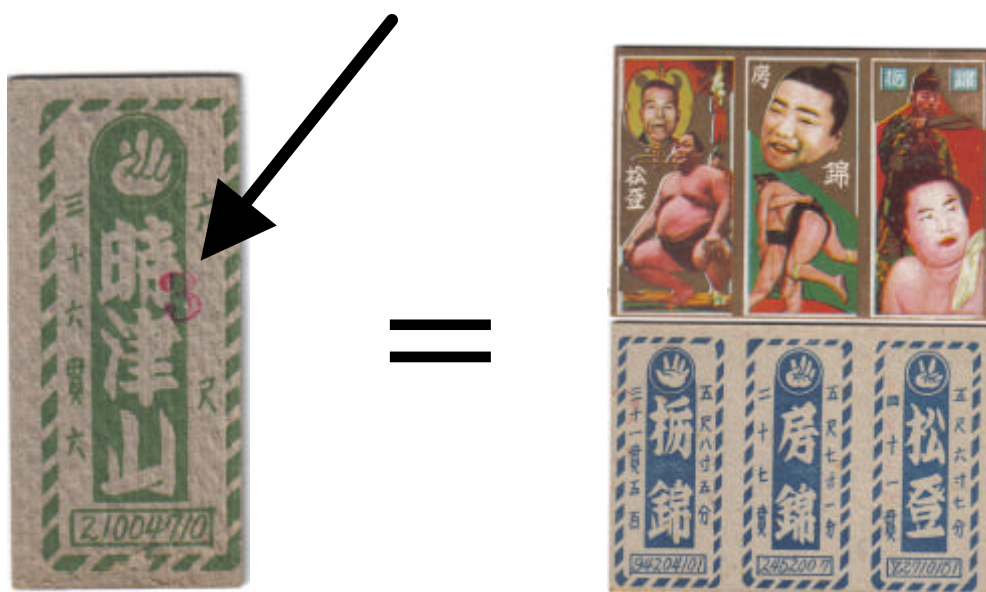
The set contained the top rikishi of the day and was printed at the very end of 1958 as the two more dominating yokozuna of the 1950s, Chiyonoyama and Yoshibayama, are absent from the set. This also has one of Yokozuna Kagamisato last menko in it as well as the up and coming Yokozuna Wakanohana and Asashio as ozeki. All in all, of the 12 menko in the

set, 8 are from the sanyaku ranks while 4 are from the maegashira ranks.

Let's take a look at what exactly came in a box of the Dash 7-8 menko. The box itself is interesting as it explains what exactly children could win if they pulled a winning stamp. Also written numerous times all over the box are "Gold Print", "Special Prize", etc.... However, no indication of the manufacturer appears on the box. The box measures approximately 8" long, 5" wide and 1" deep. It is sealed by a piece of twine and when you open it up there are approximately 100 4-menko packs wrapped in fine tissue. On top of all those packs are the gold-inked prize menko that children would win. Interestingly enough, there is no prize sheet to attach them to as was done with many sets that used this type of prize structure. Each individual pack contains the same 4 menko, but is sealed in such a way that you can't see which rikishi you were buying or any of the winner stamps. I cheated and used a pair of tweezers to slide the middle card up slightly out of the wrapper to see which rikishi it was and then slid it back down. [Here](#) is how the set broke down as sealed from the factory.

This is an intermediate level set to build and definitely a challenge to build from the single menko that seldom appear on the market. What is even more challenging and fun is to try and complete a set in both green and blue backs along with the gold-inked menko. For all the sumo menko collectors out there, thanks for tuning in and until next time...cheers!

Yokozuna Kagamisato	4 packs, 16 menko, 2 gold ink
Yokozuna Tochinishiki	7 packs, 28 menko, 5 gold ink
Ozeki Asashio	9 packs, 36 menko, 4 gold ink
Ozeki Matsunobori	5 packs, 20 menko, 12 gold ink
Ozeki Wakanohana	11 packs, 44 menko, 4 gold ink
Sekiwake Tokitsuyama	6 packs, 24 menko, 0 gold ink
Sekiwake Wakahaguro	11 packs, 44 menko, 4 gold ink
Komusubi Tamanoumi	12 packs, 48 menko, 0 gold ink
Maegashira Annenryama	9 packs, 36 menko, 7 gold ink
Maegashira Fusanishiki	4 packs, 16 menko, 7 gold ink
Maegashira Kitanonada	16 packs, 64 menko, 7 gold ink
Maegashira Tsurugamine	6 packs, 24 menko, 4 gold ink



3rd Level or #3 winner menko back & corresponding gold ink 3-menko sheet prize