

Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6 NO. 2

MARCH - APRIL 1974

NEW MEMBERS -

The society is happy to announce the names of five new members this issue.

Mr. John Schulte Jr. Mr. John Hanacek Mr. David Penner

Mr. Michael Virgadamo Mr. Neil Johnson

CORRECTION -

In retyping Arnold Frenzel's comments last issue (A Report on the Times - Some Further Thoughts NL Vol. 6 No. 1) a key sentence was accidentally deleted which reversed the thought intended. The fourth paragraph should read in part as follows: "...As a general rule art objects are better 'investments' than stocks during a period of inflation, but they are an awful investment during a period of severe recession or significant pause in the rate of real growth. I think we are now seeing this phenomenon." In other words when inflation is raising incomes and tight money makes the stock market look unattractive, then art is at least worth considering as a hedge, for when others are buying for the same purpose, prices can be expected to increase, all questions of risk aside. But when there is a recession with its reduced rates of income growth and altered expectations about future income, then people look more than ever for intrinsic value and it is hard for art to compete. The events of the last four or five months would seem to support this argument.

AF

MEETING HELD -

An informal meeting/get together was held at the home of Rick Mantegani in February attended by Rick, Bill Edick, Alan Harvie and Henrik Olsgaard. General state-of-the-society was discussed and some ideas tossed in for consideration. Moves to improve intra-club relations were discussed with intentions of healing some hurt feelings of years past. More meetings and actions are expected to take place during the course of the year.

Keep
America
Beautiful



SHIRAZAYA MAKER AVAILABLE -

Our new member Mike Virgadamo has gained a reputation out on the coast as a maker of shirazaya. His work has brought complements from collectors and even from Japanese museum officials. His work is done using ALDER WOOD which makes a very pleasant saya. Some of his prices

Yari (Katana 12") \$35, Wakizashi \$30, Tanto \$25, Kaba Kari (pp 50, tsuka \$40, (unwrapped) \$25, etc. This is a much needed service to us collectors and service is fast and reasonable. Anyone interested should write Mike first to verify time required and costs. (See address on first page under "new members".)

MORE ON "TANTO" TRANSLATION -

During the February meeting of the Northern California Japanese Sword Club, a complimentary copy of our translation was presented to Mr. John Yumoto and it's availability made known to the club members. The following kind words and additional information concerning the book TANTO was in turn presented to JSS/US by Mr. Yumoto.

A copy of TANTO (English translation) was presented to me by Mr. Richard Mantegani in behalf of the Japanese Sword Society of the U.S. at the monthly meeting of the Northern California Japanese Sword Club on February 10, 1974. I am grateful to the Society for this kind gift and would like to congratulate them on the splendid cooperative effort shown in producing this great work. I believe this is the first one of its kind, and it is my sincere hope that the students will cooperate in carrying out further study to come out with similar publications in the future.

Although I have not checked each page of the translation, I would like to add some information to this great project which might not have been available previously. First of all, the author of the book is Mr. Keitei Suzuki, presently the Chairman of the Board of Musashi Construction Co., Inc. and a Board member of the NBTHK. He lives at Tokyo, Japan, and is the fifth son of Keitei Suzuki, a Bishop of Myoho Temple of Nichiren Sect in Saitama Prefecture. His father being a great master of Shinbuitto-ryu KENDO and JUDO in Okuyama School, he understudied and mastered these arts.

He studied about TOKEN under his father's guidance and later under Dr. Junji Honma and Dr. Kanichi Sato. He also wrote "NIHON-TO NO KOSHIRAE", mountings of Nihon-to, which is a nice compact photo-filled book on the subject. Unfortunately, it is out of press at the present time. As an engineer, he traveled outside of Japan many times to widen his knowledge of his business. A great deal of his skill and warm understanding contributed to the building of the Sword Museum in Yoyogi, Tokyo.

This TANTO book was published on January 20, 1969. The photograph work was done by Otsuka Kogei of Tokyo who also issued many books on swords and mountings with excellent photos. The publisher is Kogei Co., also of Tokyo. The two characters of TANTO on the cover are the calligraphy of Mr. Suzuki.

YUMOTO (cont'd.) -

At the time of the publication of this book, the Japanese government was enforcing the "metric system" to the extent that other systems of measurement were illegal; however, enforcement has been relaxed so that the old system of measurement is still appropriate for the study of antiques. So, nowadays, we use SHAKU, SUN, and BU for length, width, and thickness of TOKEN. A conversion chart from centimeters to SHAKU and SUN will be an aid to readers, I think. Incidentally, one centimeter is 0.33 SUN and 10 SUN equals one SHAKU.

At the beginning of the book you will notice, there are congratulatory remarks written by Dr. Kanichi Sato, more familiarly known as KANZAN, his nom de plume, then the chief of the Industrial Arts, National Museum in Tokyo. He is, as you well know, presently serving as the second in command in NBTHK and the Sword Museum. I would like to present his remarks:

Congratulations to TANTO

Mr. Katei Suzuki has brought this book TANTO out to the public. It is obvious that the making of excellent Tanto involves many technical difficulties by examining the splendid Tanto of the olden days. All of the modern swordsmiths agree with this sentiment.

In the history of swordmaking, Shintogo Kunimitsu and Awataguchi Toshiro Yoshimitsu are known as great master smiths of Tanto. The reasons for their fame are that the most ideal shapes and styles are found among their works and the beauty of suguha blended into the shape perfectly.

However, there were, besides Kunimitsu and Yoshimitsu, in the province of Soshu great masters who made excellent Tanto; namely Yukimitsu, Masamune and Sadamune. In the province of Yamashiro was the great group of artists called Awataguchi as well as Rai Kunitoshi and many other great smiths of Rai school. Also in the same province, Hasebe school and Nobukuni were also good makers of Tanto with their own special beauty. In Bizen province the expert Tanto maker Kagemitsu existed. Also, you will find many excellent Tanto by Norishige of Ettchu province and by Samonji, their students and descendents in Echizen province.

These were the masters of Kamakura and Nanbokucho periods. However, in Muromachi period, Momoyama period and even in Edo period, we find excellent Tanto. The long Tachi and Katana hold a great attraction for us, but the small size Tanto give us a different type of charm. Mr. Suzuki was attracted by these charming smaller Tanto, and his desire to show collectors the beauty and characteristics reflected by the different periods and makers resulted in the publication of this book.

His approach was not only to put emphasis on the highest caliber items such as national treasures and important cultural assets, etc. which are well known to most of us, but also to endeavor to

YUMOTO (cont'd) -

introduce items which are rather readily available to the average collectors. Such items are displayed in this book and give an intimate down-to-earth feeling to readers and bring warmth to our hearts.

In the study or hobby of swords, it is important that one study sincerely, dealing with the materials readily available to him and then proceeding to higher, more scarce and more valuable items. After the war, however, the great masters' works were made available to us for appreciation; consequently, many of us have the illusion that we may skip over the items which are within our immediate reach, the items which are not great works, and jump right into the great masters' works. This method, however, will not give one the true enjoyment of the study. In trying to attain the higher level, one will lose sight of the closer items which are necessary to the fundamentals for study. Mr. Suzuki's book, I think, teaches us that one must start with the basic things first and then proceed.

The illustration arrangement of photography is excellent and the descriptions very thorough. This book gives the feeling that rather than to be read, it is a book to be seen and appreciated. It is an excellent book for the study of katana, for if one exposes himself to this Tanto book page by page, over and over, he will understand the real beauty of the Tanto and thereby will be much closer to the utmost study of Katana.

In recent years there have been many publications covering the study of katana. I feel, though, that some are not qualified and, in fact, may even be misleading the students. This book however, is an excellent one. I can recommend it to you as one of the best in this time. I congratulate Mr. Suzuki on his great work.

Signed by Dr. Sato, and
dated late fall of 1969

The Preface of the book by author Suzuki is as follows:

The Japanese Sword is the great artistic work of steel in which the Japanese have great pride. It has a long history - about one thousand years ago Katana with the curvature was created in mid-Heian period. In olden days Tanto was called Tousu. We could call Tousu the forerunner of Tanto and should study them; however, these items fall more or less into the area of archaeology, and since most of us have very little contact with such items, I have dispensed with them in my book.

I would like to emphasize the items within our reach from Kamakura period down to modern time, stressing the Tanto with reliable, genuine signatures. We did not exclude, however, mention of unsigned Tanto of great reputations. Also, in reference to

YUMOTO (cont'd.) -

measurement, nowadays we consider a blade the length of 1 SHAKU or more, which is frequently found in the works of Nanboku period, as Ko-wakizashi; however, in reality, these items were treated as Tanto so we will include these items in the scope of TANTO.

On the other hand, most of the books on swords up to now have given us study material based on the differences in provinces, differences of schools, etc. I do not advocate disregard for these studies based on the above; however, I would like to classify them and divide them by the provinces in the periods of Kamakura and Nanbokuchō, and after Muromachi period I try to study the changes which appear and characteristic transformations which occur as the years go by. These are the points I put emphasis on. That is to say, all the swords were changed or transformed due to change or advancement of culture, changes in style of fighting or the fad or fashion of the period. Change came about through reform and progress.

My descriptions and my theory cannot be conveyed thoroughly, but I do wish you will study these points by looking at the photographs to which I have tried to add a few words. Obviously, this book is not complete, and though I am not completely content with it, at the time of this writing I am putting all I have learned into this book. I ask that the readers make a thorough study of this book.

To the Japanese Sword Society of the U.S. I extend warmest regards to each member. Thanking you for your kind consideration, I am,

Sincerely Yours,

John. M. Yumoto

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Post Script: A complimentary copy of the translation was mailed to Mr. Suzuki along with a letter expressing our thanks to him for producing such a work.

A letter will also be mailed to the publisher advising them of our translation and expressing hope that the Japanese book of plates will once again be made readily available in the states.

There are many copies of the translation still available. Although many of our members have already ordered their copy, it is suggested that those who have not done so to date, order their copy right away. Your order will not only give you a handsome addition for your library, but will give the society much needed support (\$\$) for future ventures in translating other significant works.

Mail all orders to Ron Hartman do not delay, act today!

INOUE SHINKAI

oshigata

Type and Style - Shinogi-zukuri Wakizashi (1 Shaku 1 Sun).

INOUE KUNISADA SCHOOL: Kunisada was a student of HORIKAWA KUNIHIRO who went to Osaka and founded his own school. Though his skill did not equal that of his teacher, nevertheless he attained fame of his own, as can be seen from the students he had, INOUE SHINKAI - who became equally famous if not much more so than he.

The 2nd KUNISADA or IZUMI no KAMI KUNISADA at first, then later INOUE SHINKAI was also a retainer under the Ito Clan in Hyuga Province as was his teacher. With the defeat of the Ito Clan at the hands of the Shimazu of Satsuma Province, it seems the whole sword making group, led by HORIKAWA KUNIHIRO fled to Kyoto. SHINKAI is supposed to be the 2nd son of the 1st KUNISADA.

SHINKAI along with TSUDA SUKEHIRO is considered the most skilled of all the Osaka Shinto smiths and some have even gone so far as to call him OSAKA MASAMUNE.

(ref: Nihonto Newsletter Vol. 4 No. 6 - Albert Yamanaka)

Pollution vs. The Sword



THE VIII MARAUDER POLLUTION has struck again! Finding his victims among high and low, pollution has incapacitated a master swordmaker, striking a blow at one of Japan's most highly developed and formidable arts. For the past few years, Miyairi Shohei, the dean of present-day swordsmiths and a human national treasure (intangible important cultural asset), has found it increasingly difficult to make fine *katana*.

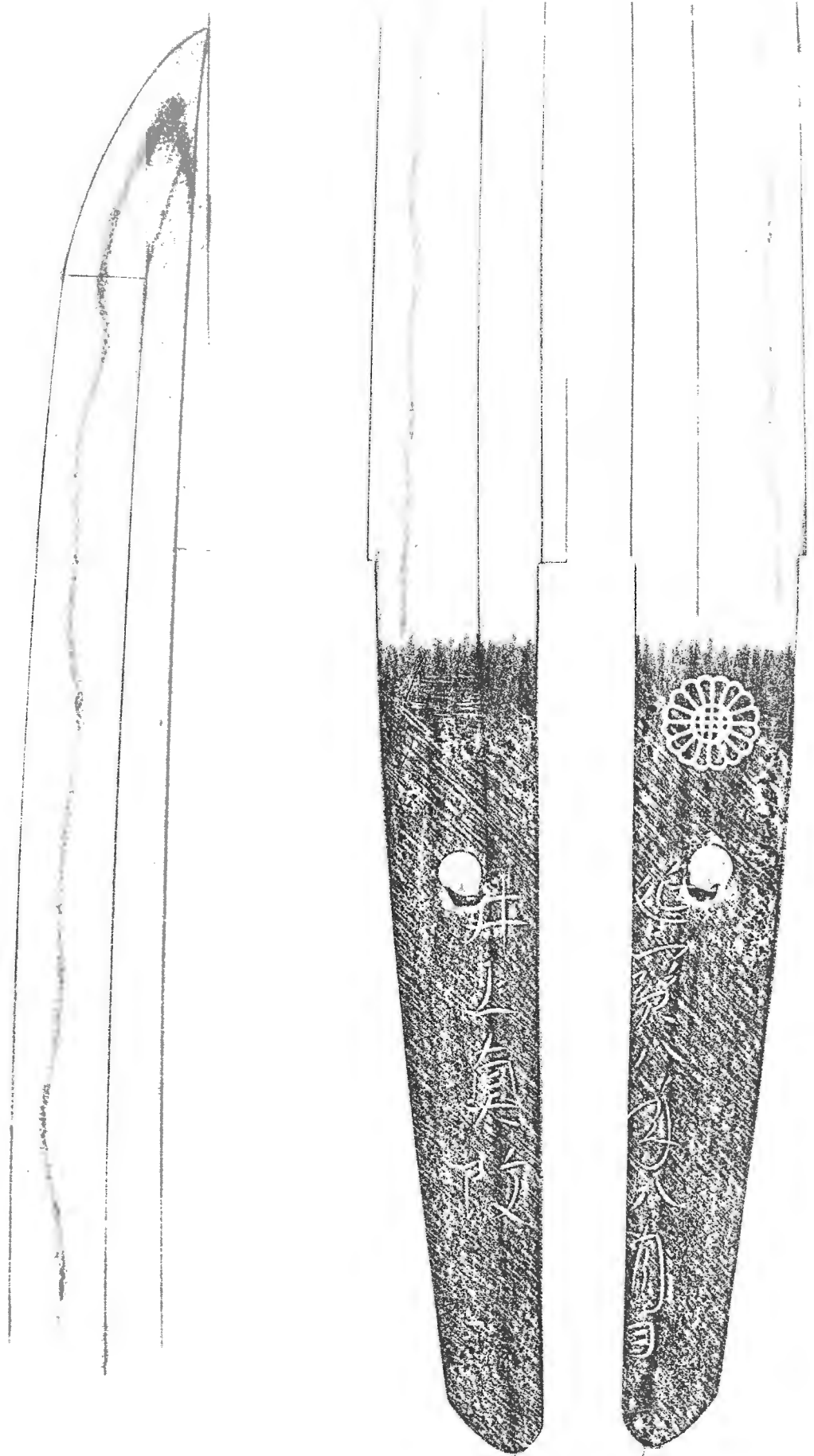
His harasser was the phenol-containing water drained from a nearby pharmaceutical factory which invaded the well water of the 39-year-old swordsmith. The foul, polluted water consistently caused smears and cracks on the blade and, Miyairi's efforts proving of no avail, he became increasingly upset and finally took to bed from time to time.

However, the problem was suddenly solved at last when the factory moved to the opposite bank of the Chikuma River flowing near his house located in the rural town of Sakashiro, Nagano Prefecture. While tempering a sword with the now clean water, Miyairi was delighted by the reappearance of the

inazuma-mon or beautiful silvery patches (1 to 0.1cm by 0.5mm) on the blade.

This is a sort of effect called *nie* caused by the sudden change in temperature when the heated *katana* is cooled by plunging it into water. Signifying the strong spirit residing in the *katana*, *nie* composes an important criterion for the beauty of a sword. To produce this effect, quality water is vital. Miyairi's masterworks will be put on display at the exhibition of the latest works by National Human Treasures scheduled for mid-May at Matsuzakaya Department Store in Ueno, Tokyo, under the sponsorship of the daily newspaper, *Mainichi*.

THE EAST, Vol. VIII No.4, April, 1972



Wakizashi signed: INOUE SHINKAI and dated 1679 with Mon

1974 Membership Roster

Appelget, Kuniko
Barandes, L.A.
Barc, Daniel
Beck, Don Box
Bleed, Peter
Bowman, R.C.
Bretnor, Reginald
Bullock, Peter
Caldwell, R.B.
Carman, Bruce
Clark, John
Cress, Richard
Criscuolo, Robert
Crotty, Steve
Cuta, Louis
Duncan, Ira
Edick, Bill
Ekeskar, Sune
Erickson, Edwin
Eshelman, Marie E.
Falbey, Frank
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Inst
Frenzel, Arnold
Gassan, L.
Gomes, C.Z.
Hanacek, John
Hartley, Dean
Hartmann, R.C.
Harvie, Alan
Hashioka, Roy
Hayashi, Richard
Hazard, Ben
Hoopes, Thomas
Masao and Masahiro Ide
Johnson, Billy
Johnson, Neil
Katsunuma, Akio
Kikuchi, William
Lewert, Robert
McDonough, Douglas
Mack, Harry
Mantegani, Richard
McGregor, R.H.
Mitchell, Jim
Mochizuki, Akio
Monson, Leo Jr.
Naemura, J.S.
Nekrosius, Scott
O'Hara, William

Clsgaard, Henrik
 Oka, Nel
 Fepper, David
 Phebus, George
 Quigley, Mike
 Robinson, B.W. Victoria and Albert Museum,
 Rodriquez, Andres
 Rosenbloom, Nathan
 Rosin, Henry
 Sato, Junzo
 Sawitzky, Ken
 Schulte, John Jr
 Schultz, Herman
 Cyril, Mass. Inst. of Tech., Cambridge,
 RR.1, Carlock,
 Takahasni, William
 Tischmann, John
 Tobin, James
 Torigoe, Kazutaro
 Trojan, Robert
 Vanice, L.L.
 Whitney, C.R.
 Wysocky, Ted
 Yamanaka, Albert
 Virgadamo, Michael 1

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SUPPLIES AND BOOKS AVAILABLE -

During the course of the year the following items have been mentioned and offered for sale by the society. Perhaps a summary of what is available at this time will suffice for 1974.

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| Uchiko kits (oil, uchiko, hammer, etc., boxed)..... | \$5.00 |
| Ink stones (for making oshigata)..... | \$3.00 |
| Oshigata paper (20-9"x12" sheets of rice paper)..... | \$2.50 |
| Mekugi stock (6" sticks of bamboo)..... | \$.25/2 |
| LIST OF NAMES AND KAKIHAN by Joly (retails about \$16)..... | \$10.00 |
| Indexes - SHINSHINTO TAIKAN..... | \$1.00 |
| SUKASHI TSUBA by Shibata..... | \$2.00 |
| HYAKU-TSUBA-SHU (collection 100 tsuba)..... | \$1.25 |
| Sword Oil (can be ordered direct from A. Yamanaka @ \$2/bottle.) | |
| Tanto (english translation)..... | \$5.00 |

Back issues of our society BULLETIN are requested from time to time. A small quantity of complete sets is still available (about 600/ pages of information) and can be bought for \$30 while supply lasts. Back issues of the NEWSLETTER (all but a few issues) is also available and can be bought for \$6. This is a real bargain for a total \$36!

SUPPLIES/BOOKS (cont'd) -

A new index translation is being made ready at this time and orders can now be accepted. This will be an english translation of the index to SHINTO-SHU (available Hawley \$20). The translation not only lists all the smiths in the book, but a cross-index has been added which references to Fujishiro KOTO/SHINTO books, Kawaguchi KOTO/SHINTO books, and Hawley's LIST OF JAPANESE SWORD SMITHS. This will probably be 8 typed pages and will sell for \$3.00 .

Send all orders directly to the NEWSLETTER editor, check in US\$ only made payable to the society. Your order will be sent within the week. An exception will be SHINTO-SHU index which has not been printed to date and will take a few more weeks until it is ready for mailing.

A REMINDER! Anyone who has ordered items in the past and has not received them within two/three weeks should write again. If the order has not arrived in that time it is probably due to our postal service and must be considered lost.

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TKK '72 LECTURES -

A typed copy of the lectures delivered in Dallas during the great show of '72 is available thru the TOKEN STUDY GROUP in Chicago. These lectures had been offered to their membership last year with the remaining copies being offered to us at this time. It has been suggested that for the membership fee of \$5, mailed directly to Mr. Ted Wysocky, the package of lectures will be mailed to you plus another paper in the planning on the MISHINA SCHOOL study session which was mentioned in the last Newsletter. The fee is intended as an off-set for their costs and also helps towards other such papers in the future. Mail your order directly to: Ted Wysocky

WANTED ITEMS -

WANTED: Wakizashi by SADAYUKI (貞行), Bungo Takata circa 1596
Contact Mel Oka

WANTED: Iron sukashi tsuba of good quality. Also interested in sword and tsuba books of good quality. Write Ron Hartmann (Newsletter).

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE -

The next scheduled NL is due out the end of May/1st of June. Please have all information, requests, articles, etc., to the NL no later than the third week of May. Send all material to: