

Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6 NO. 3

MAY - JUNE 1974

NEW MEMBERS -

The society welcomes two new members into our club.

Mr. Paul Couch

Mr. David E. J. Pepin

It has been noted that Mr. Morihiko Ogawa's name and address was accidentally left off of the 1974 membership roster. He is one of our honorary members. His mailing address is c/o The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Massachusetts.

刀 剣 会

TOKEN KAI

The big happening of 1974 out in Newport Beach, California, took place during the week of June 3rd. Several preliminary reports have come in to date signifying that the show was a real experience to all in attendance. Apparently it was very tough to get top papers on items, and many rejections were also handed down by the shinsa team. Judging from the attitude of those attending who have sent in their reports, the shinsa was less than what was expected. The main exhibit in the Meibutsu Room was loaded with super blades and fittings and was a treat for all to view.

Hopefully we will be able to develop a full and constructive report on this shinsa and exhibit for publication in the near future. Several people have taken pictures of the event and are promising to send in impressions and statistical reports for this future report. Anyone wishing to comment or report should contact the Newsletter.

COLONEL CADWELL BUST DEDICATION -

As was noted in the NBTHK bulletin, the bust of Col. Cadwell was dedicated in October of 1973. The dedication reads as follows: "After the end of the World War II, Japanese swords of a considerable number were confiscated as dangerous weapons by the order of the Occupation Forces of Allied Powers. The policy was later amended at the repeated petition of Japanese sword lovers and authorities, but the situation was little improved, since examining of art swords was still carried on by the Occupation Forces. Colonel C. V. Cadwell,

CADWELL BUST (cont'd.) -

who was in charge of the 8th Army Provost Marshal, was most concerned with the loss of the swords of artistic and historic value, and at his recommendation, there was organized the official Japanese Sword Appraisal Committee, through the activities of which most of the masterpieces of Japanese swords came to be duly protected.

The name of Col. C. V. Cadwell should forever be remembered as the saviour of Japanese art swords." (signed Junji Homma - October 1973).

A letter dated 2/28/74 to Ira Duncan from the wife of the late Col. Cadwell, Mrs. Ann Duncan Cadwell, says in part, "I am deeply grateful to you who helped make the Bust of my husband a reality. Mr. Tosnio Homma, the sculptor, did a marvelous job. Friends who have visited the museum since its unveiling, have written expressing the same sentiments."

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A REPORT ON YAMADA HIDE -

(The following report was kindly given to the Newsletter by Dr. Robert M. Lewert of the University of Chicago).

I have just heard through a Japanese friend of mine, Dr. Sawada, that Yamada Hide (Hide Yamada) died recently of stomach cancer in Japan. Yamada san was a well known and somewhat controversial figure in Japanese sword appreciation. Prior to WWII he was in charge of a large sword collection and had a rather extensive following of students in the appreciation of swords and was a sword polisher as well as a teacher. In all of these activities he was highly individualistic, disagreeing with other authorities and also critical of some of the approaches and techniques of other polishers. As my Japanese friend put it: "He was an eccentric man" and then added, "even for a Japanese he is considered a very eccentric man." After WWII he continued to have a sword appreciation society, the Chu-O Token Kai (Central Sword Association) and he continued to polish a few swords annually if they particularly pleased him. He also found time to author two books, one a more or less scientific approach to sword appreciation and the other a beautifully done volume with excellent oshigata of 40 important blades.

I visited Yamada three times, first in 1966 when I brought to him my Suye Tsugu (more about this later), in 1967 after he had polished it, and again in 1971 when he had partially worked over five other blades that I had delivered to him two years before. I'm sure that some of our members must have come across or met Mr. Yamada and may have formed their own impression of this man. To me he was very impressive. To a large part I think this is due to the fact that he was very gracious to me as I was introduced to him by a gentleman well known to him (Dr. Sawada, a professor at Gunma University, who has an exquisite Nobukuni katana that Mr. Yamada kept for him) and on my first visit brought an exceptionally fine

YAMADA (cont'd.)

sword that he said was the best that he had ever seen brought to Japan by a "gaijin". On this first visit we spent about two hours talking, through the interpretation of Dr. Sawada, of course, with almost all of this a discussion of the blade and its qualities which he stated then would probably be Juyo Bunkazai if owned by a Japanese or even kokuho "if it were longer" (I never did understand what that "longer" part of the conversation was about as it didn't make real sense to me). At any rate, after two hours of kneeling or sitting Japanese style I was numb, although happy and almost refused when Dr. Sawada said that now we were going to go upstairs and look at the "sword library". I felt that the last thing I wanted to do was look at some books. However, to my great surprise the sword library turned out to be the display room for the finest swords and reference swords that Yamada used in his teaching. This was a large room for a Japanese home and about 14 x 28, I would judge. One wall consisted of a series of cases containing perhaps 25 katana and another wall had some cabinets for tsuba, books and other items. On this first visit I recall a tsuba by Miyamoto Musashi and seeing ten blades that were Juyo or better. (One rack of the five I recall held a Masatsune, a Nagamitsu, and two Ichimonji, all superb blades.) On one of my later trips Yamada tried by description and by demonstration to show both Sawada and me chikei, pointing this out in two of my blades and showing us the blade that he thought was the finest in existence, a superb Ichimonji.

Yamada san was reluctant to polish anything but fine koto blades that appealed to him. I had the impression that he only polished a few blades a year in his last five or six years. In a somewhat contradictory manner, since he did approach the study of swords from a somewhat scientific point of view appreciating the metallurgy involved, he insisted that to have the full appreciation of the sword one must have a knowledge of Zen. He was, of course, a student of Zen and in addition to his other accomplishments was a calligrapher. One of his scrolls is a frontispiece in his second book. I learned a great deal from my short contact with Mr. Yamada and found his opinions and expertise to be impressive. He examined a number of blades of mine that have also been examined by experts representing three other schools. All concurred on the excellence of the fine blades, while for those of lesser quality there was considerable disagreement in analysis. I think this is good and to be expected. It is remarkable, rather than usual, to get unanimity in a group of art experts, each of whom has developed his own techniques, impressions, and opinions of a complex art form produced over the last thousand years. In any field even the experts can't grow and develop in their knowledge and ability unless there is disagreement and critical discussion that allows them to crystallize and define the basis for their concepts.

With this introduction I am sending with this an osnigata and description of the Suyetsugu mentioned above which was designated Juyo Token in 1970 and is illustrated in Juyo Token Nada Zutu No. 20.

Sincerely,

(signed) Robert M. Lewert

NOTES ON SUYE TSUGU

Shape/Style:	Naoshi nagamaki, shobu tsukuri, high shinogi
Kitae:	Itame mixed with mokume
Hamon:	Kochoji in komidare, bo utsuri
Boshi:	flame midare
Nakago:	Suriage, 2 mekugiana, 18 cm. long
Hi:	Trace of narrow hi just below shinogi
Length:	2 shaku, 1 sun, 6 bu - 65 cm.
Sori:	2.3 cm.
Mei:	Tachi mei - Bishu Ju Suye Tsugu
Nengo:	Ei Wa ni ni nen hachi gwatsu hi (1378)
Shirasaya:	Striped magnolia
Koshirae:	Black lacquered ribbed katana saya with silver fuchi-kashira and kojiri all in dragonfly motif. Dragonfly menuki, iron tsuba with butterfly, dragonfly and bat, tsuka covered with fine braided black silk cord.
Comments:	This is a rare example of the work of Bingo no Kuni Suye Tsugu of the Bingo Mihara School. Polished by Hide Yamada 1966, signed under habaki on each side. Origami of Chu-O Token Kai (Yamada) 1967 Origami of Token to Rei Kishi (Yoshikawa) 1969 Illustrated in Yoshikawa Journal Showa 45 March pp. 55, 56. Illustrated in Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai Journal Showa 46 June p. 26. Juyo Token 3861 designated June 1, 1971. Illustrated in Vol. 20 Juyo Token Nada Zutu.

TOKEN STUDY GROUP SWORD SHOW -

The usual summer sword show, Chicago area, has been pushed ahead to a fall date due to the many activities running close together this summer. The Token Study Group will hold it's annual sacw/exhibit in Chicago at the O'Hara Inn on October 19th and 20th. A good show and get-together is expected as usual.

WANTED ITEMS - GENERAL INFO -

Wanted: Japanese Navy or Police Saber. Blade 32" x 1" wide. Send photograph. Also want tsuba and other fittings (anything except gunto). Anyone interested in trading or selling blades, please contact with pictures and other information.

Paul Couch
(address - see "new member"
this issue)

Paul also adds: "I am a nidan and branch chief of Master Mas Oyama's Kyokushinkai-kan Karate and teach at two local colleges. I am very interested in the sword as a weapon and would like any material, books, etc., pertaining to iado, kendo and other sword arts. I would also like to correspond with any Kendo instructors.

PC

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IN GENERAL -

The index to SHINTO SHU as mentioned in the last NL is, contrary to the announcement in last issue, not ready for ordering. A lack of time has delayed this and any orders arriving now will be put aside until such a time that it is ready for mailing (hopefully in a few weeks or months).

A four page bibliography listing four pages of reference books related to swords, the samurai culture, old Japan, etc., compiled for the Berkley University course THE MAKING OF A SAMURAI is available. Since the interest in this bibliography is limited, anyone interested in a copy of it should send 25¢ (postage) to the NL with their request. It is a good list of books and a good guide to study.

The annual society Bulletin is coming up soon. Anyone who has extensive articles, translations, whatever, which would be of interest for this years issue should get them to the NL editor as soon as possible. It is my desire to get this issue put into print prior to the hectic holiday season this year - thus avoiding a last minute rush on my part.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - The next issue of the NL is due out the first of August. Please have all articles, requests, info, etc., in hand no later than the third week of July. Send all info to: Ron Hartmann