

# Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



## NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6 NO. 4

JULY - AUGUST · 1974

### NEW MEMBERS -

The society wishes to welcome four new members at this time:

John R. Nettles

Ed Dobrzanski

Paul D. Harter

Allen E. Feldman

### SPECIAL BOOK OFFER -

The excellent book, EARLY JAPANESE SWORD GUARDS -SUKASHI TSUBA by Masayuki Sasano, which was reviewed about one year ago in the NL, has been offered to our membership at a special rate. The enclosed flyer gives a description of the book and is the size of this most beautifully bound text. The special price is \$12.00US for members of the society. This is \$3 less than the stated price on the flyer -a super offer for a super book! Order your copy direct from the publisher ( see order form) -CALIFORNIA MEMBERS MUST ADD ON 6% sales tax.

Anyone not having a copy should order fast -it is perhaps the best (if not only) english book on tsuba available, giving one a new and fresh understanding of what sukashi tsuba are all about. This offer has been made available through suggestion of the author, Mr. Masayuki Sasano.

**IMPORTANT** -clearly mark your order form "JSS/US member" and cross out the stated price and enter the \$12 price.

### 1974 JSS/US BULLETIN -

Once again it is time to start work on this years issue of our annual BULLETIN. Jim Mitchell has asked to be relieved of his job as Co-editor due to a lack of available time to work on this project. To Jim we say thanks for his past efforts and assistance in this annual paper. Hopefully, we can look forward to more fine articles at some future date like Jim's past article on Habaki making.  
(cont'd. Page 6)

Keep  
America  
Beautiful



YASUNORI Gendaito

by Dean S. Hartley Jr.

SHAPE AND STYLE - Shinogi-zukuri, Ihore-mune (low), Bizen-zori, Ko-kissaki, a dense and heavily forged blade.

KITAE - Itame hada, running in areas, few mokume.

HAMON - Chu-suguha midare, ashi and yo. Worked in Nioi.

BOSHI - Midarekomi, ko-maru, short kaeri.

NAKAGO - Ubu, one mekugi-ana, kiri yasurime, kurijiri.

LENGTH - 2 Shaku 3 Sun 5.5 Bu (71.4cm)

MEI - Omote: SHOWA JU NEN JU-ICHI GATSU KITSU HI (Lucky day in November, 1935).

Ura: YASUNORI (tachi mei)

SORI - Bizen-zori of about 2.2cm

DISCUSSION -

In 1933, three smiths working in the precincts of YASUKUNI JINJA were ordered by the Minister of War, General Araki, to incorporate the character YASU of Yasukuni Jinja into their names. These smiths were YASUMITSU, MIYAGUCHI YASUHIRO (who later adopted the name of TOSHIHIRO), and KAJIYAMA YASUNORI.

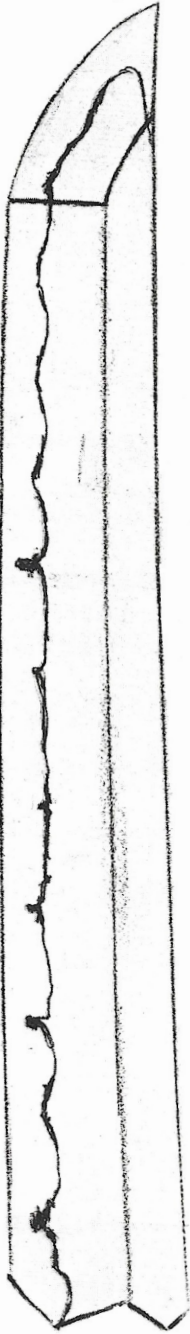
One of these men, YASUNORI (see oshigata) according to Dr. Homma, (who said the signature was genuine), was trained at NIPPON-TO TANRENJO at Yasukuni Shrine. According to a mei on another blade by this same man (second oshigata), he also signed KOTANI YASUNORI KINSAKU and on that particular blade is a dedication to the Gods in commemoration of the 2600th year since JIMMU TENNO, as ordered by the Governor of Kanegawa Prefecture. He was a student of YOKOYAMA SUKEYOSHI, one of the last important Bizen smiths.

The definite MIDARE HAMON seen on this first blade is rare for YASUNORI, according to Dr. Homma, was famous for his suguha and practically never made midare hamon. This blade has a beautiful shape which is obviously made in the traditional Kamakura Bizen shape.

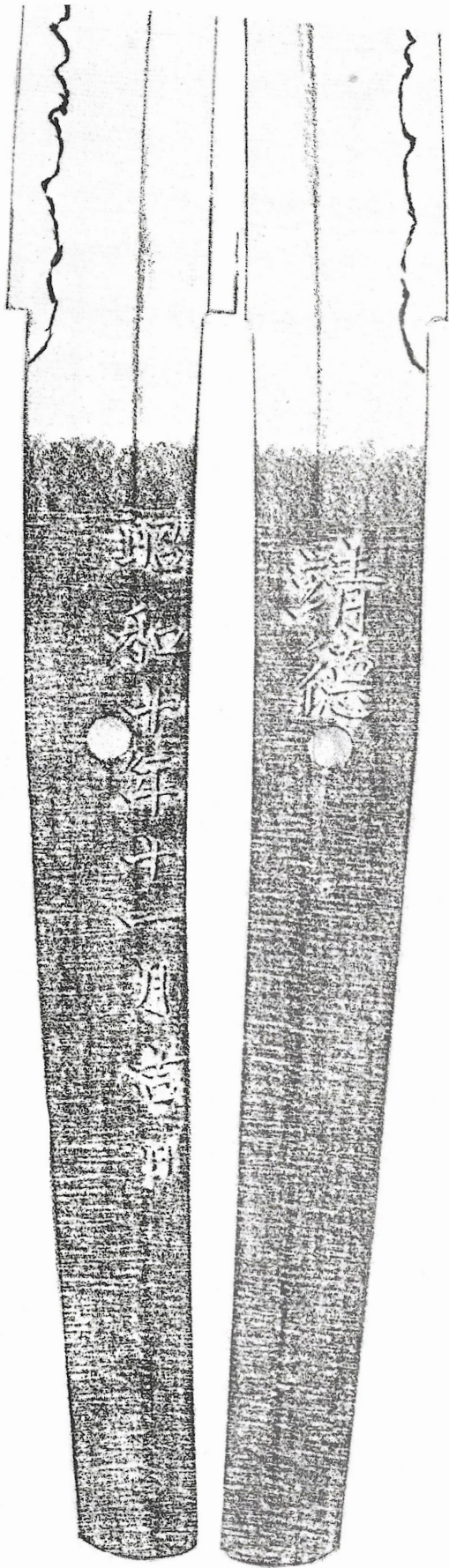
The above information is in part credited to Bing Siong of Holland who had passed this interesting account along to Dean Hartley.

1. Yasumitsu is the 11th generation desendent of Masahide's pupil Isshu of Dewa. He was ordered at one time to make a sword for Prince Mikasa to wear at the Coming of Age ceremony in 1935.
2. For some explanation of this anniversary date, see Newsletter Vol. 4 No. 5

2-3-54



Oshigata No. 1 (1935 blade)



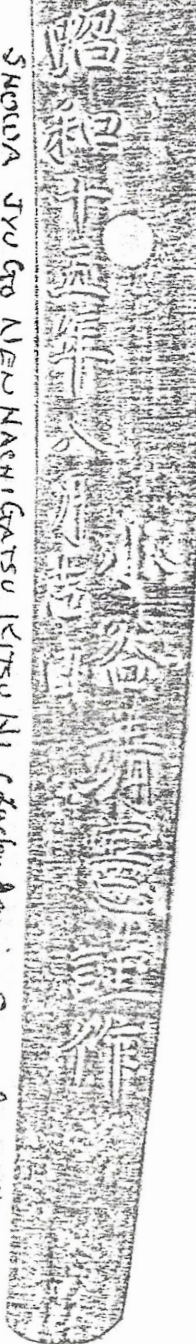
SHIN ZEN (BEFORE A SHRIJUE)

KAMEGAWA KEN CHAIJI, (GOVERNOR OF PREFECT)  
OF KANAGAWA



KI KEN NI SEN ROKU HYAKU NEN KI NEN  
Commemoration 2000<sup>th</sup> years  
since Jinnin found

SHODA JYU GO NEN NACHI GATSU KITSU NI (Sucky Day in August 1940)



Oshigata No. 2 (1940 blade)

Signed: KOTANI YASUNORI  
KIN SAKU

TADAYOSHI Oshigata

by

Dean S. Hartley Jr.

SHAPE AND STYLE - Shinogi-zukuri, Ichori-mune, slight sori,  
Chu-kissaki, heavily forged blade.

KITAE - Tight ko-mokume, nearly nashiji.

HAMON - Chu-suguha in nioi and a few very small ko-nie where  
the hamon shows signs of 'doubling' just as it approaches  
the yokote. (This is shown on the sketch and is not a  
mistake in drawing it in.).

BOSHI - Smooth suguha, ko-maru, short kaeri.

NAKAGO - Ubu, one mekugi-ana, kiri yasurime, kurijiri.

HORIMONO - Omote: Ken and dragon, small budding branch.  
Ura: Flowering Plum tree, with buds and open  
blossoms, etc.

Both of the above horimono are crisply and beautifully  
done. I have a blade of another smith of another of  
the Hizen schools which has this same type of plum  
horimono, which was attributed to SADAKAZU.

LENGTH - 1 Shaku 7 Sun 8 Bu (54cm).

SORI - Very slight sori of about .5cm

MEI - OMI (no) DAIJO FUJIWARA TADAYOSHI

DISCUSSION -

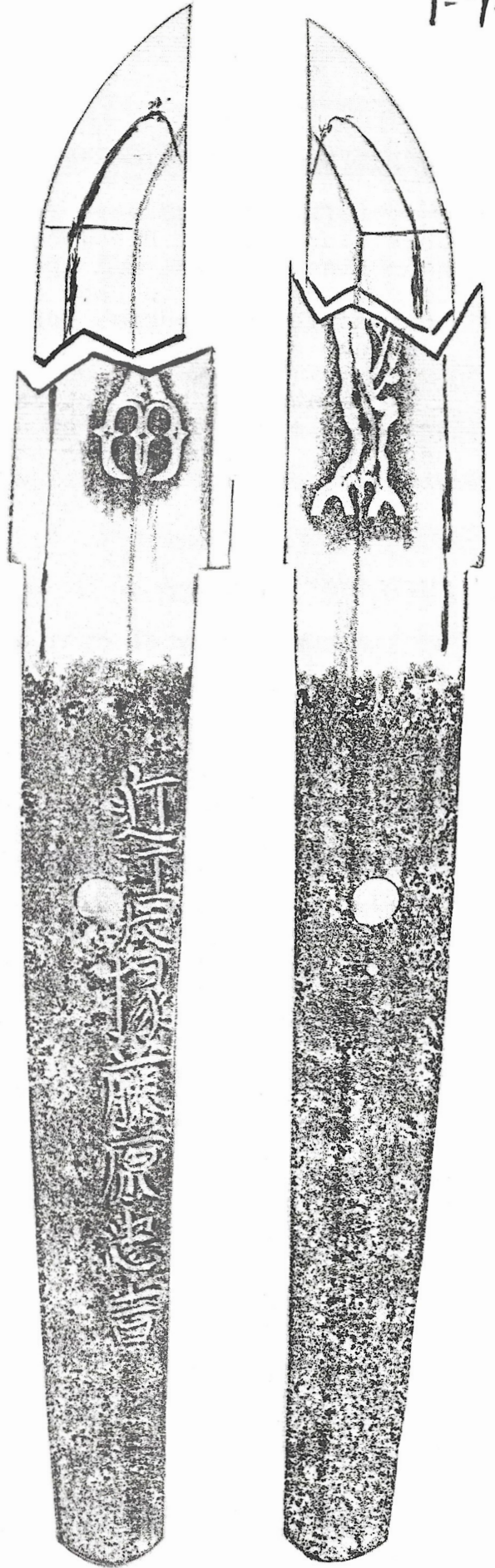
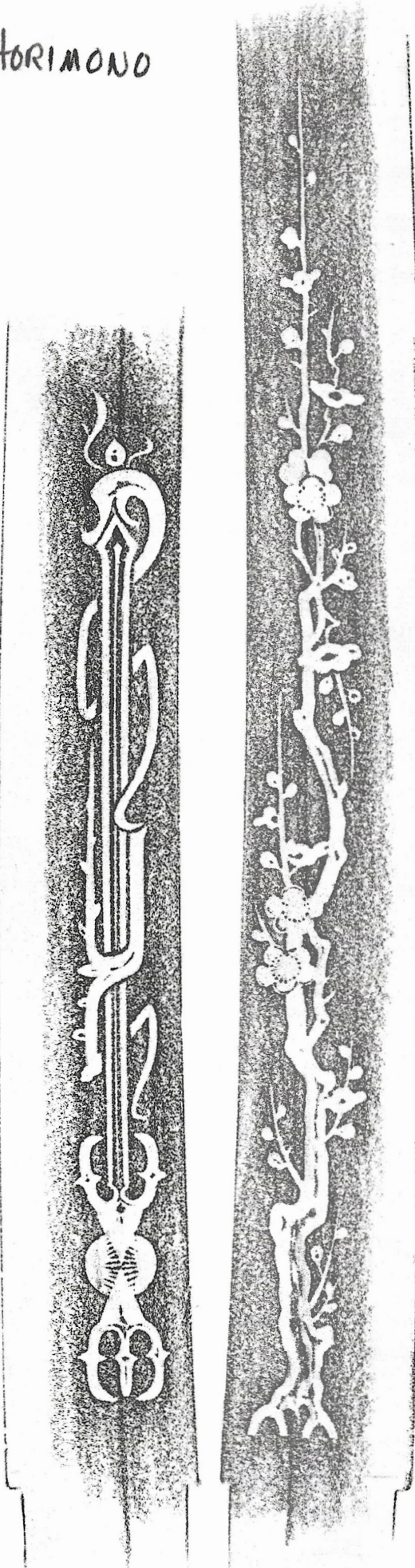
This has every qualification of being 4th generation Tadayoshi  
of circa 1688. A very nicely made blade which fully justifies a  
rating of 35 points /. Tadayoshi IV died in 1747.

\* \* \* \* \*

As a point of interest, Dean has passed along the information  
that his beautiful MASAZANE tachi (Newsletter Vol. 4 No.2) has been  
given JUYO rating.

HORIMONO

1-7-8



BULLETIN cont'd.

A few feelers were let out to see if anyone else would help with this task. Peter Bleed came to the rescue and offered to assist in gathering material and some typing, etc., which is what was needed. So our thanks go to Pete and also to the other members who have started to contribute material for this year's issue. It promises to be of reasonable size and significance as always.

So at this time let me say again - if you can submit any papers, translations, reprints of articles, etc., for this year's issue, please send them in promptly or at least let me know of their coming. We will welcome all material with opened arms - thanks. Rn

NL/Bulletin Editor

SUPPLIES AVAILABLE -

A new supply of oshigata paper and ink stones has arrived. See past Newsletters for prices.

All of the "complete" back issues of the past society papers are now gone. We still have a supply of most back issues which are available as incomplete sets - but still very worthwhile. If interested, write for what is available and for a price.

NIPPON BIJUTSU TOKEN HOZON KYOKAI -

Several members have been asking about membership in NBTHK and how to go about becoming a member. Membership is \$30US/yearly for which you receive their excellent monthly magazine (in Japanese) which is full of super oshigata of swords and pictures of fittings, etc. Their address is: NBTHK, Token Hakubutsukan-Nai, 4-25-10 Yoyogi, Shibuya-Ku, Tokyo, Japan.

As a future service of our society, we are looking into the possibility of translating various articles from the NBTHK magazine. A basic regular feature would be at least a full translation of the monthly fold-out oshigata which is in their booklet. At least such a translation effort would assist us non-japanese members greatly in appreciating the excellent swords pictured monthly by the museum. More on this project later.

WANTED ITEMS -

Wanted to buy - blades by any smiths with RYOKAI in the signature, such as RYOKAI YOSHISADA, RYOKAI NOBUMITSU, etc. Contact: Mr. Paul Couch c/o Sheriff's Dept., 716 N.21st St., Birmingham, Alabama 35203.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - The next scheduled Newsletter is due out the first of October. Please have all information, whatever, into the Editor no later than the last week of September. Send to:

Ron Hartmann - Editor