

Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6 NO. 5

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1974

NEW MEMBERS -

The Newsletter is happy to welcome four new members this issue.

Neil Keen

June M. Tanaka

Robert Shannon

Howard Sloan

AUCTION COMING -

A public auction by BUTTERFIELD & BUTTERFIELD will be held on November 11th, 1974. The items include Early Iron Tsuba, Swordsmith Tsuba, Fine blades and polearms, Armor and other good items.

For any inquiry or additional information, please contact Robert Haynes, Oriental Department, at Butterfield & Butterfield - 1244 Sutter Street, San Francisco, California 94109.

TOKEN STUDY GROUP SHOW -

The TSG held their 6th annual sword show at the O'Hare Inn in Chicago the weekend of October 19th and 20th. The show was well attended (including some 20 JSS/US members) with many fine blades and fittings being displayed. Many top smiths were represented, including blades by MASAHIRO, NAOTANE, NAOKATSU I and NAOKATSU II - a rather impressive line-up! Other names included KANEMOTO, HIZEN YUKIHIRO I, NOBUKUNE SHIGEKANE, KANEUJI and many other impressive blades. A super selection of 1st rate gendaito smiths were displayed by Roy Hashioka.

A JSS/US annual meeting was called during the last afternoon of the show (minutes following). An open meeting was intended since so many members were present, but time ran short and the meeting was called in haste with no specific announcement to the general membership. We did have the pleasure of Daniel Barc being present. Apologies to the other members - hopefully next year we can better prepare for this.

JSS/US ANNUAL OFFICER'S MEETING -

The annual meeting was called to order at 12:30 P.M. during the Token Study Group show at O'Hare Inn, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting was attended by Peter Bleed - 1st Vice Chairman, Arnold Frenzel - 2nd Vice Chairman, Ron Hartmann - Treasurer, Roy Hashioka - Director, and via proxies, Alan Harvie - Chairman, and Directors Richard Mantegani and Reginald Bretnor. Member Daniel Barc was also present.

Several topics were discussed, the first being a proposed book of oshigata as our next major project. This book would consist of at least 150 oshigata of various 1st rate blades which went through Mr. Nakajima's and/or society hands during our polishing days. This project has been set into motion on a preliminary basis with more info to be made available as it progresses.

The up-dating of the by-laws was discussed briefly and a proposal made and seconded to up-date the dues requirements to read simply, \$10 ANNUAL and \$100 LIFE memberships available. Another clarification of these papers was to specify a bi-monthly NEWSLETTER and an annual BULLETIN rather than what is presently stated. The exclusion of an annual convention/dinner requirement is also to be done. The purpose of these up-datings is to avoid confusion when the by-laws are given to new members - a practice avoided at present due to this problem.

The up-coming election of OFFICERS was discussed. Richard Mantegani will compile and verify this ballot in time for the November-December Newsletter. As a reminder, as the ammendment to term of office read several years ago, term of office will be for two years - 1975/1976.

The meeting was ended prematurely due to fast-approaching check-out and departure times. Due to this particular show being centrally located mid-states each year, it appears that this would be a good time to hold our annual (required) meeting. Hopefully next year, more plans can be made ahead of time thus allowing a longer and more open meeting. As it was, the show provided a wonderful chance to meet and talk with a good cross-section of our membership and to realize the apparent interest which is presently being shown throughout the society.



Minutes submitted by
Ron Hartmann in Mel Oka's
absence.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ron Hartmann". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ron Hartmann - Treasurer

As a sidelight of this meeting - it was my pleasure to have Mr. Alan Harvie stop at my home on way home to California. This was my first opportunity to meet Alan personally, a most enjoyable meeting it was! The general state of the society was discussed at length

with the Constitution and By-laws being looked into plus the future of the society. Alan agreed with the up-dating of the society documents and will contact the State of California concerning the legality of such ammendments or general up-dating changes to our legal papers.

A renewed association with the Northern California Club and with NBTHK was discussed. It is planned to see what can be done to reassociate ourselves with these two groups with a common goal of mutual interest in learning being the objective. This will be done via meetings and letters by which our society's functions, goals and sincerity in purpose will be discussed. Hopefully this will result in more recognition as a society and a sharing of knowledge.

The up-coming election was discussed with some potential names being kicked around for various offices which will be vacated this term. It is suggested that anyone with specific men in mind for any specific (or general) office should send these names to Rick Mantegani for the ballot. Each person nominated will of course be contacted in advance to verify their willingness to serve.

Several other general topics were also discussed including the society publications and future translations. From the looks of things, we can look forward to much good material coming out the next few years. All it takes is to shake loose some of this material which is presently hidden away in personal libraries and prospects for this looks good. Several of the members have ventured into fresh research and have done this with the Bulletin/NL in mind.

Alan's visit was most enjoyable and much too short but many things were able to be hit upon as far as society business is concerned. It looks like we have a bright future with some good leadership! Alan expressed a desire to step down from his Chairman ship, due to his being out of the country much of the time, but has agreed to serve in some major office in the future, to our advantage I might add.

RH

NBTHK TRANSLATIONS (Papers) -

Recently, Albert Yamanaka was contacted in reference to a possible service. Since many of us have received NBTHK papers on our swords and fittings since the 1972 & 1974 shinsa, the cost of translating these papers into english was discussed. Albert has agreed to do this at the nominal fee of \$4 per paper. It was suggested that a xerox of the paper be sent to Albert (note: do not send original paper) along with \$4 (U.S.) per paper to him. The cost is to cover his time and return air mail reply. Be sure to include a letter in reference to this NL as a clarification, and I am sure Albert will give you a most informative answer in his usual prompt manner. Again - send only a xerox of each paper to be translated, along with \$4 per paper. (A future NL article is promised pertaining to these papers which will further aid in understanding the worth of such shinsa issues.).

NOBUTSUGU Katana

Oshigata by Richard Mantegani

SHAPE AND CONSTRUCTION -

Shinogi-zukuri katana blade. Length 70.4cm (2.32 Shaku). Koshi-zori curvature of 2.4cm. Ithore-mune medium. Chu-gissaki curved edge.

STEEL, JITETSU-HADA -

Nagari itame (flowing stream) with many chikei bright and active. Profuse ji-nie and large chikei in the monouchi.

HAMON - YAKIBA -

Suguha of ko-midare in nioi, much ko-nie and sunagashi. Many kinsugi especially prominent in the habaki-moto. Utsuri evident.

BOSHI -

Kaen-hakkakeru (swept-nie) kinsugi, turning back into the mune.

NAKAGO -

Ubu, one mekugi-ana, tapered with Seki-den style hawk-feather file marks (Taka-no-ha). The tip is uneven U-shaped (Ha-Agari Kuri-Jiri). It is signed katana-mei in small characters on the shingo-ji above the mekugi-ana.

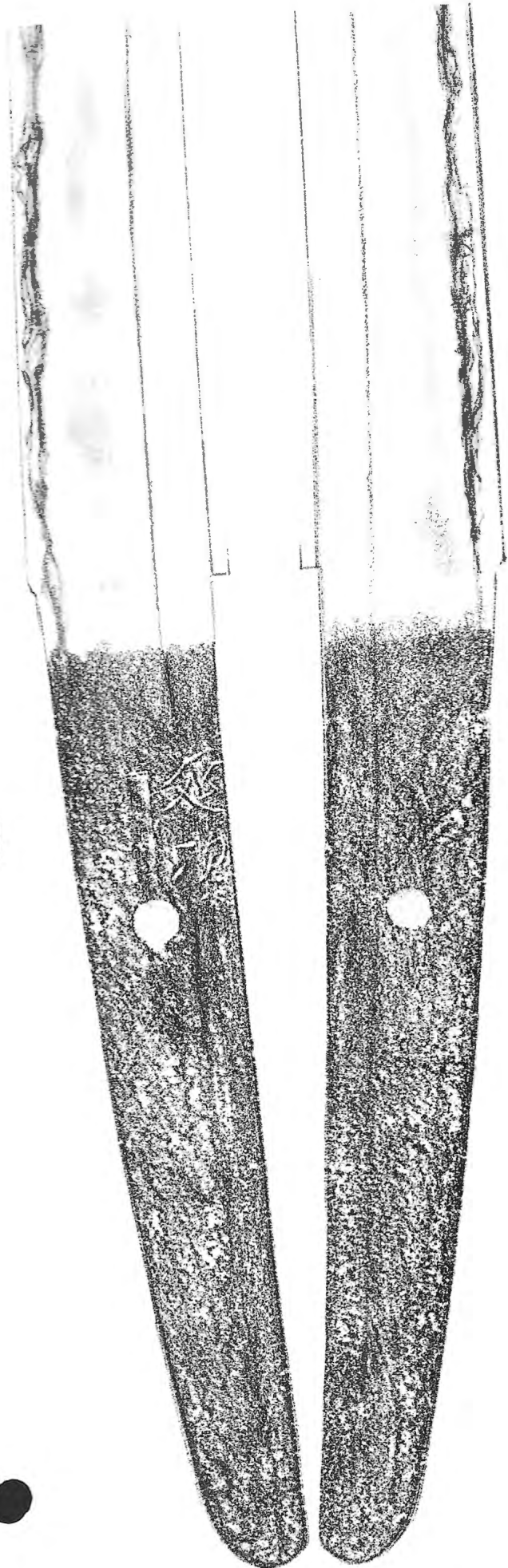
SIGNITURE - NOBUTSUGU

REMARKS:

A slim elegant katana with a graceful shape. The smith is HAWLEY REF. NO. NO-51. It can also be found in FUJISHIRO's book of oshigata on KOTO blades, K-293.

The blade is of the Yamada-seki group in Owari Province circa 1528. It is very good work and is mounted in excellent WWII officers mounting bearing the silver mon of the Diamyo HIKONE of Omi Province. The mon is set into the kashira as is most often the case.

The sword was given a GREEN PAPER at the TKK shinsa in Dallas, Texas - 1972.



NOBUTSUGU Katana
OWARI PROVINCE c.1528

IYETADA (KICHIBEIJO) - Kaga

Oshigata by Ron Hartmann

SHAPE - Katana of Shinogi-zukuri form, very strong shape, raised shinogi, ihore mune, medium shallow torii-zori.

HAMON - Medium suguha with slight notare. Yakiba is medium wide nioi with good nie into ji and hakikaki along edge.

BOSHI - Much good nie in hakikaki sweeping down in beautiful style.

HADA - Very beautiful itame hada of "moist" appearance with masame showing in shinogi-ji.

BLADE LENGTH - 69.6cm (2.30 Shaku) NAKAGO LENGTH - 19.0cm (Ubu)

SIGNATURE - KASHU JU FUJIWARA IYETADA Green Papers Dallas 1972

REMARKS:

The Maeda Clan controlled the general area of Kaga Province, Noto and Echizen Provinces, with a fief of 1,000,000 Koku and therefore with a Daimyo of this large fief, it was only natural that many swordsmiths were under the control of the Maeda.

The Shinto Kaga smiths are all rated rather low and therefore there are very few written works on these smiths. The group stems from the TADANI KATSUKUNI of Kaga during the Koto Period.

There were (4) IYETADA in Kaga during the Shinto Period:

- 1) 2nd son of IYESHIGE, active during Keicho (1596).
- 2) Son of the above man, active in early Shinto (1624).
- 3) Son of the above man, active in Kambun (1661)
- 4) One man active during Genroku (1688).

This man (oshigata) appears to be IYETADA KICHIBEIJO, active around 1624. His last name was Suzaki and was changed to Kichibeijo. Jitetsu is worked in koitame - clear and strong. Died Meireki I or 1655. Hamon is similar to KASHU JU KANEWAKA, one of the top Kaga men.

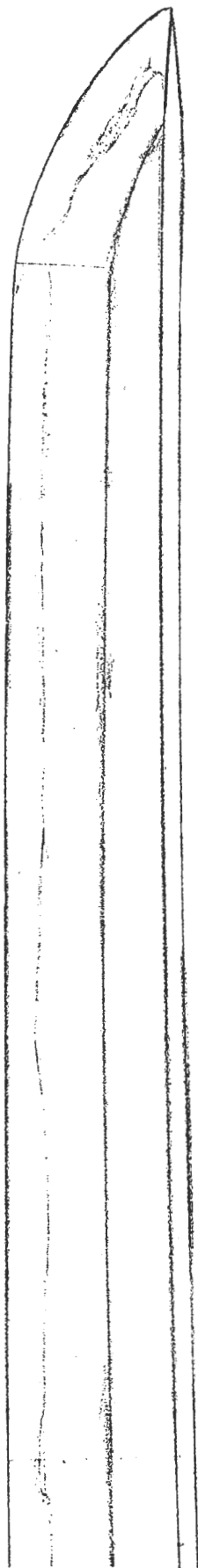
IYETADA swords are rated OWAZAMON in lists of smiths with blades rated according to cutting tests, this meaning VERY KEEN BLADE. (ref: JSS/US Bulletin Vol. 3 No. 2).

The above information was compiled from the following references:

NIHONTO NEWSLETTER Vol. 4 No. 11 and by letter from Albert Yamanaka.
FUJISHIRO SHINTOHEN p.3 (translated by Akio Katsunuma).
JSS/US Papers referenced above.
HAWLEY REF. NO. 1Y-162



賀州住藤原家忠



IYETADA (KICHIBEIJO) - KAGA PROVINCE - Early Shinto

SWORD THIEFS (from the HOKUPEI MAINICHI paper forwarded as a general word of caution by Richard Hāyashi.)

Tokyo Man Nabbed In Alameda Accused Of Stealing Swords

ALAMEDA — Shigenori Hirano, 25, Tokyo, was arrested on Aug. 9 by Alameda police when stolen swords and daggers were found in his possession.

Hirano was known as a "buyer of Japanese swords," but three Japanese swords and two daggers were found in his car, reported missing from the home of Jack Paras of Alameda. Two members of Paras household spotted a burglar Aug. 9 night, but the man escaped in a car.

The police were notified that the suspect fled towards the Oakland International Airport. Sometime later, Hirano was arrested.

Reports of a half a dozen Japanese sword burglaries in San Mateo and Richmond have led authorities to search for any connections between Hirano and the other robberies.

John Yumoto, of 311 No. Delaware St., San Mateo, author of a book on Japanese swords and founder of the Northern Calif. Japanese Sword Club, said that Hirano has been known as being interested in buying Japanese swords.

Yumoto also stated that an attempt to burglarize his own home had been made last week, but neighbors chased off someone trying to use a glasscutter. He also said that he had heard of another theft where many Japanese swords were taken.

More Information From Japan About Sword Thief Hirano

TOKYO (Mainichi) — A 26-year-old Japanese is being held by police in the U.S. on suspicion of having stolen 10 ancient Japanese swords, currently valued at some 50 million yen, from the home of a wealthy American in Richmond, Calif.

The National Police Agency was notified through Interpol (ICPO) recently that Shigenori Hirano of Oiso, Kanagawa Prefecture, was arrested by police in Richmond on suspicion of having stolen the swords from a collection of Japanese antique art objects on April 25.

According to NPA, one of the swords, made in the Muromachi Era (1393-1572) is valued at some 8,400,000 yen.

The report received from the American police authorities said that the swords were among Japanese antique art objects kept in the home of the American in Richmond.

It said that investigations showed that Hirano had arrived in the U.S. on April 19 and returned to Japan on April 29, shortly after he stole the swords.

He went to the U.S. again late in July when he was arrested by police.

Hirano reportedly told police

that he sent the swords to Japan through a certain channel and sold them.

Sword Thief, Shigenori Hirano, Deported to Japan

OAKLAND — Shigenori Hirano, 25, the Japanese sword dealer from Oiso, who pleaded guilty last month for stealing some Japanese swords and daggers from an Alameda home, was deported back to Japan Friday.

Hirano, who had been in the Bay Area several times in the past year, last entered this country on July 27 and was arrested Aug. 9, after he had taken three swords and two daggers that day.

Two members of the Jack Paras family saw Hirano get into his car after carrying out his loot from their home at 1330 Broadway in Alameda.

They notified the police that he was heading for the Oakland International airport and when his car was stopped by an officer he had the missing weapons with him.

On Aug. 16 he pleaded guilty on a felony charge of second degree burglary at an arraignment in an Alameda municipal court and he had been held at the Santa Rita prison farm since then.

Last Wednesday he appeared before Alameda county Superior Court Judge Harold B. Hove in Oakland who agreed to suspend judgement for three years and granted probation on consideration that he would submit to deportation.

A deportation hearing was then held Thursday in San Francisco before a U.S. immigration and naturalization service officer and deportation orders were issued on grounds that he was an alien convicted of a felony.

And so on Friday, the 13th, the Japanese six-footer boarded a Pan American flight as a deportee.

Had he not been deported, he could have been sentenced from one to 15 years in the state penitentiary for the felony charge.

NEW BOOK ON MODERN SMITHS

A most worthwhile and well illustrated book, GENDAI TOKO MEIKAN (Hawley 8200 Gould Ave., Hollywood, CA. 90046 @ \$12.26 ppU.S.) with an english index available (L.Rosier, PO Box 829, Glendale, CA.91209 @ \$5 pp) is suggested as a most worthy purchase for your library.

TSUKAMAKI AND SHIRAZAYA

Hand made work available with noteworthy past approvals - contact:

Bob Shinoda regarding prices and information.

NEXT ISSUE OF NEWSLETTER -

Next issue will be out around the 1st of December. Have all items in no later than the end of November. Articles are still needed for the ANNUAL BULLETIN....if anything is coming in, please for this issue let the editor know as soon as possible. Next NL will contain the ballot for election of officers.

RON HARTMANN