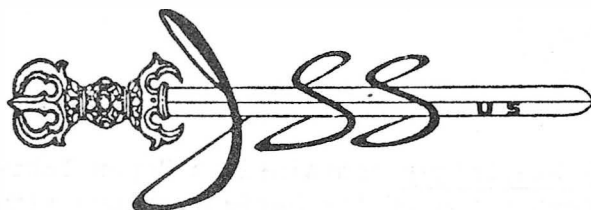


Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

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CONTENTS -

This issue of the NEWSLETTER contains a host of noteworthy material. A society meeting in Chicago, Chairman's Report, more on a St. Louis show, another fine polishing article by Bob Benson, plus an impressive 18 new members list.

JSS/US MEETING TO BE CALLED -

A brief society meeting will be called mid-afternoon on Saturday October 18th during the TOKEN STUDY GROUP show, O'Hare Inn, Chicago. An exact time and room will be announced (posted) well ahead of time at the table of Ron Hartmann.

This will be an informal meeting at which time several subjects must be discussed and voted upon. These subjects include topics such as: Society growth and direction; policies and dues; up-coming election of Directors; future projects; the possibilities and conditions for a St. Louis sword show in 1976. The meeting should not take any great length of time, but the topics are important ones which need to be discussed. Little response was received with reference to a dinner, so most likely it will be simply a group going out to a dinner and evening of visiting - no formal pre-arranged dinner.

So keep an eye open for the announcement and please try to attend this annual meeting. It will be a great time to put faces to names and simply get to know each other better. See you there!

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT -

The following report has been compiled by our Chairman, Arnold Frenzel. Hopefully Arnold will be able to attend the up-coming meeting and officiate at the proceedings. At this time he will answer any questions in reference to the report and no doubt elaborate on several areas of prime importance.

The report is as follows:



Chairman's Report:

The May-June, 1975 Newsletter contained an "open letter" expressing my evaluation of the current state of the Society, along with a discussion of a number of possible alternatives before us. The counsel of the membership was sought, and all members were asked to send me their reactions and suggestions. An additional communication was sent personally to all Directors and Officers, and it called their particular attention to the "open letter" and urged their feedback. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members who took to time to reply. While I wish that there had been more replies, it was very helpful to receive the number of carefully thought out and detailed letters that I did receive. We all realize that at the present time the JSS/US is essentially a corresponding organization, and for all of the benefits of membership to be attained, co-operation is essential for the best decisions to be made and the appropriate courses of action to be chosen.

Prior to the actual questions put to the membership, the question of regional branches was raised along with the issue of a centralized yearly meeting. There seems to be little support for regional or local branches, however there seems to be fairly strong support for both an annual general meeting, perhaps held in conjunction with some other event at which many members would normally be present, and for a show sponsored by the Society. In the July-August, 1975 Newsletter mention was made of a meeting to be held in conjunction with the Token Study Group's Chicago show, Oct. 18-19, 1975, with the prospect of a dinner as well, and I trust that particularly interest in the latter is being passed on to Ron Hartmann and me. That Newsletter also contained mention of a show sponsored by us in St. Louis in 1976. This current Newsletter contained a questionnaire about your interest in such a show, along with other activities, and I urge you to return it to Ron Hartmann as soon as possible. The return of the questionnaire is essential if Society planning is to continue along the lines of a St. Louis show in 1976.

The feedback received on the specific points raised in the "open letter" are summarized as follows:

1. Translation program: It was no surprise that very strong interest was expressed on this point. Fujishiro's Nihon Toko Jiten was overwhelmingly mentioned. The Society has been informed that at least a translation of the text of that set is in progress, and for that reason our own plans along that line will be held in abeyance. We hope to be able to keep you informed on the progress of that translation. This year's Bulletin will contain an original and previously unpublished translation of an article on Kaneiye tsuba.
2. Primer: The reaction to an instructive publication or publications of our own was mixed. One member suggested that the Society issue a guided reading list that could be more or less graded according to the experience of the reader. I think that is an excellent suggestion, and I think that could be done in the fairly near future.

3. Polisher: As expected almost everyone who replied had a position, and usually a fairly strong one, on this issue. Members were asked for their reactions on getting our own polisher as the Society once had, and about the desirability of establishing a pipeline with a Japanese polishing firm. The response was neutral on balance on the first alternative, and mildly positive on the second. It was clear from the content of the letters that a Society polisher would be most eagerly welcomed, however the problems likely to be encountered in managing such a program are thought to be very substantial. Since last fall I have been actively looking into the issue of a polisher, and I think that a solution might be at hand. I had hoped to make an announcement in this Newsletter about a program that would combine the best features of having our own polisher and of a pipeline, however things remain of such a tentative nature that it is not possible to mention it as a reality or relate further information at this time. Things will be resolved one way or another by the next Newsletter, and an announcement will be made at that time.

4. Oshigata booklet and/or tsuba and fittings catalog: The response was fairly neutral. The Society has several hundred oshigata by Mr. Nakajima in its possession, and some of those may eventually be issued depending on alternative uses for our scarce time and resources.

5. Shinsa and/or a study clinic: The response was strongly negative on the former, but strongly positive on the notion of a study clinic from all who replied on that point. What was meant by a study clinic is a session similar to that conducted by the Token Study Group on Mishina School blades and reported on by Robert M. Lewert in the 1974 Bulletin.

6. Book sales: The response was mildly negative, and most writers mentioned the availability of books through W. M. Hawley, Albert Yamanaka, and others.

7. Society sponsored auction: The response was mildly negative.

8. Study tour: On balance the replies were neutral. While the experience would be welcomed by most, the problems of cost, time, and duplication were thought to be substantial. If a North American tour was distinguished from one to Japan, the response was positive.

In summary then, we will hold an annual general meeting in Chicago in October, and the prospects for a Society sponsored show in St. Louis around mid-1976 are being seriously investigated. Future translations will be strongly supported, and a guided reading list will be issued. An attempt to find some optimal solution to the polisher problem is being actively pursued, as is the idea of a study clinic. An oshigata booklet, tsuba catalog, and domestic study tour have lower priority. The alternatives of a shinsa, book sales, and auction have been dropped. As progress is made on the above, you will be kept fully informed. People interested in the higher priority projects are invited to inform Ron Hartmann or me.

Arnold Frenzel.

SASHIKOMI POLISH

by Robert Benson

In reading through many of the back issues of the JSS/US NEWSLETTER I find that there have been many questions pertaining to polishing. Quite a few of them were only partially answered and some the answers were not correct. In this issue I shall attempt to answer a few of the questions at length so that they can be more fully understood.

WHAT IS SASHIKOMI POLISH? Sashikomi - this is a process of bringing out the hamon so that there is a good contrast between the jihada and yakiba. The ha buchi area should show up very clearly when done in this style, providing that it is a good tight hamon.

If it is in a kuzure style hamon then it will not stand out as strong. Sashikomi process is started while the ha is being done with the hazuya. The entire hamon should be made as white as possible and completely covered. The next step is to do the jizuya stage. This brings up the jihada. Normally during this stage you would completely cover the whole jihada through the ha buchi; but in doing Sashikomi, only up to the edge of the hamon is done. With a choji or midare hamon this is hard to accomplish and must be done slowly with care.

After the jizuya stage is completed the blade has to be heated and this is done by pouring boiling water over the sword. While the blade is hot the nugui stage is done. Normally Kanahada is used for the nugui stage but in Sashikomi polish, Jitteko is used. Jitteko is magnetized iron ore ground up to a power. Jitteko makes the jihada turn black much faster with less rubbing than Kanahada does. The heating of the blade also opens the pores and helps bring out the color faster. The blade is rubbed up to the ha buchi area being cautious not to go into the hamon. With the heat and Jitteko the color of the jihada will come up faster and there will be less chance of removing the white of the hamon. To get a very good contrast it might be necessary to repeat the steps from Hazuya through Nugui up to three (3) times.

Another question recently asked was why are the lines put on the blade at the habaki area and back from the tip on the mune?

When we look at swords we see many different lines, shapes, dates, names and etc., at these areas. It gives the polisher a chance at some sort of indentivity I guess, and lets him put his own little flair or personallity into the polish. All of the different things you see in these areas are really not necessary and not holding with the traditional polishing procedures. According to Ono sensei, there should never be anything other than three (3) lines on each side of the mune and it should be squared off at the end. At the habaki dai there should never be anything but 7, 9 or 11 lines on each side and they should be squared off at the end. Having never questioned Ono sensei's teaching I am not sure of the significance of the numbers of lines. Possibly some one more knowledgeable of what these add numbers mean and can shed some more light on the subject.

MULTIPLE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS -

Recently, letters were sent out by our Chairman on behalf of the society to the various other sword societies in the states and in England. These letters spoke of the healthy practice of maintaining memberships in more than one society in order to grow in ones chosen field of study. It was requested that these other groups give notice to their membership that the JSS/US does exist and that multiple membership is encouraged. Our requests were honored and the results are obvious judging from the surge of new members we have received.

We would at this time like to return these considerations by also encouraging membership in several sword groups. Each group does its specific thing and cooperation between the different societies brings about little duplication of effort resulting in fresh material distributed by each specific group by which we all benefit. The various sword groups offering publications and regular material are as follows:

TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITIAN - dues \$7.00 annually - write c/o
Secretary H.M. Hutchinson,

JAPANESE SWORD CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA - dues \$15.00 upon joining, \$10.00 annually thereafter. write c/o Secretary-Treasurer Willis Hawley,

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA JAPANESE SWORD CLUB - dues (verify). Write John M. Yumoto,

NIPPON BIJUTSU TOKEN HOZON KYOKAI (Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword). dues ¥7,000 (about \$30US) write c/o NBTHK,

TOKEN STUDY GROUP - dues \$5.00 annually. write c/o Ted Wysocky,

A trial membership for one year will give you a sampling of what each has to offer and will prove to you which is best suited to your specific needs. They are all worthwhile and we all have a common goal.

NEW MEMBERS -

John W. Endres,
Gary P. Sullivan,
Frank E. Butler,

Gary Kawabata,
Jon H. Straub,
Mitch Hobler,
Ray Deadman,
David C. Squier,
Richard J. Clayton,
Ray Macey,
James R. Wiest,

NEW MEMBERS (cont'd.) -

Dorothy C. Korn,
Roger A.
Ronald L. Lindsey,
Robert J. Farrell,
Gary E. Haulman,
Jim H. Ishimaru,
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco,

ALONG THIS LINE OF THINKING.....

Various smaller groups of interested collectors are starting to get together and form local groups by which to study from and by which to advance their local activity/learning activities. One such group is as follows (submitted by JSS member Paul Couch).

"The newly formed SOUTHEASTERN TOKEN KAI held it's first meeting at the home of Billy Johnson in Birmingham, Alabama. Those attending were Billy, Ray Deadman, Alex Marshall, Joe Staples and Paul Couch from Birmingham; Bill Miller from Atlanta; Doc Guthrie from Mobile; and Dean Hartley from Monroe, Louisiana. The day was spent looking at and enjoying swords and fittings brought by the people attending. The chance to talk with other collectors and share ideas was the highlight and just getting acquainted mostly. Dean held kantei on many blades for the group.

We hope to have regular meetings in the future with a planned agenda. The next meeting will be announced in plenty of time, and of course, all interested collectors are invited as of now for all the meetings. We have no dues or other membership requirements, only an interest in the study of the Samurai Sword.

We are planning a sword show that will be a sell, swap and buy affair. The date will be announced later in this NEWSLETTER."

BOOKS AVAILABLE -

The very useful PRIMER OF JAPANESE SWORD BLADES by Robinson is now available as a reprint. This is a most useful book both to the new collector and the advanced alike. There are only a limited number available, so write c/o Colin Nunn, Price to TSGB members was quoted at £2.65, but verify availability and U.S. price prior to ordering.

MOMOYAMA - JAPANESE ART IN THE AGE OF GRANDEUR - A very fine book with excellent illustrations! This book, published in conjunction with a remarkable loan exhibition from Japan, is illustrated with 16 color plates and over 100 monochrome plates. This is available direct from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, @ \$6.95 + \$1.25 post/handling charges. Very worthwhile!

NBTHK 24TH ANNUAL MEETING -

Reports are starting to come in with regards to the 24th annual meeting of the NBTHK which was held in Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan during the three days of September 28, 29, and 30th. Obviously it was again a most memorable experience what with some 650 attending and untold treasures available for viewing and in some cases, actual handling! Rather than present a detailed report in a piecemeal manner at this time, a report in total will be presented in the next issue of the paper. At that time all reports will be in hand and edited for publication.

One important note of interest though - food for thought - and that is to mention that the next annual meeting of the NBTHK will be their 25th and will be the biggest and best ever in celebration of this anniversary. It will be held probably the 1st of November next year and will be held at the Akasaka Prince Hotel in the heart of Tokyo. There will be (already taking place) an all out drive to encourage foreign memberships in NBTHK in hopes of attracting at least some 50 U.S./English/etc. visitors at this next event. As is obvious from the NBTHK Bulletin, more and more material is being presented in english and as we all know, this is a godsend for all of us. So keep this in mind - a wonderful vacation and sword trip - again, food for thought!

Another item of interest - our long time member Peter Bleed is now residing in Japan on a fellowship. Pete is one which we hope to get a full report from regarding this meeting. Furthermore, if time and opportunity permits, Pete will be a valuable connection/ambassador for our society while in Japan. For those who would like to write Pete this next year or so, his address is: . Our best wishes to Pete and his family during their adventures!

SWORD HINT -

During the transfer of Peter Bleed and family, the problem came up on how to safely package a very long sword. Pete came up with the novel idea of building a case using 6" PVC plastic pipe. A pipe cap was easily sealed permanetly onto one end with a screwed fitting on the open end - results - a fast and fairly economical super-safe sword case! This PVC plastic pipe is available in most hardware stores.

WANTED ITEMS - (A free service to our members)

Wanted, the following books: 1) Kanichi Sato. GYOBUTSU TOHAKU

MEI TO OSHIGATA SHU; 2) Kanichi Sato. TOKEN KANTEI TECHU.
(These two books were sold by the JSS/US in the early years).
3) Kasutaro Torigoye. TSUBA GEIJUTSU KO, 2 volumes.
If available, contact: Arnold Frenzel

WANTED ITEMS (cont'd.) -

Wanted: a fine old Katana KAKE (sword stand) in fine lacquer, for three or more swords. Most any description or motif as long as it is in good repair. Contact:
Allen E. Feldman

Wanted: one pair of ABUMI in fine condition. Contact:

Ray Deadman

Wanted: 1) Katana or tanto by MASANORI, Echizen, Hawley #MA-367 or MA-368.
2) Katana or tanto by HIDEKUNI, Rikuoku, Hawley #HI-31 or HI-32.
3) Katana or tanto by UJISHIGE, Harima, #UJ-81.
4) Katana by MORIMICHI, Owari, #MO-369 or MO-366.
5) All types of fittings of JAKUSHI SCHOOL, signed or unsigned. Contact: Mike Quigley

(phone:)

A MEMBERSHIP IDEA -

The new membership for the Asian Art Museum has been given to the museum by Alan Harvie as a gesture of thanks for their help and kindness during years past. Since many of us have looked for help during our research, from libraries and museums, perhaps this is a good "civic minded" idea - a way to say thanks and to help other new collectors by placing our society publications into the libraries of these institutions.

SUPPLIES NOTICE -

The last UCHIKO KIT has been purchased and our supply is now depleted until further notice. Please do not order Uchiko Kits until a new supply is acquired.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - NEW ADDRESS LABELS HAVE BEEN PRINTED AT THIS TIME. PLEASE CHECK YOUR ENVELOPE AND SEND ANY ADDRESS CORRECTIONS TO THE NL EDITOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE -

The next issue of the NL is due out around the 1st week of December. Please have any material intended for that issue to the editor no later than the end of November. Thank You.



RON HARTMANN