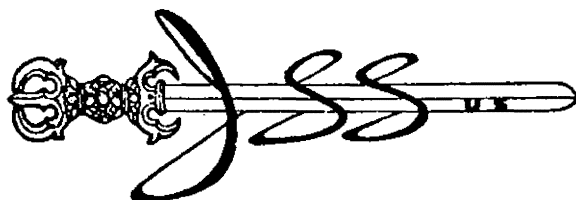


Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

Volume 11 No. 6

November — December • 1979

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Once again it is time for the membership to elect a new twelve member Board of Directors. Thanks to the efforts of the Nominating Committee, a fine slate has been worked up and is hereby presented to the membership on the Ballot which is enclosed with this Newsletter issue.

To aid the membership in their choices, a brief resume on each nominee is included in this Newsletter. It should be also noted that the "accumulative voting method" is to be used in voting for the Directors. This method is fully explained on the enclosed ballot.

Three motions are also included on the ballot which will require a simple "for" or "against" vote.

PLEASE.....TAKE THE TIME TO VOTE. Mailing instructions and voting deadline are clearly explained on the ballot. Give this important matter your attention....and do VOTE.

Our thanks to Al Freeman and Bill Miller, the Nominating Committee, for the effort they put forth in this election.

* * * * *

OUT-GOING DIRECTORS:

DIRECTORS (1978-79)

Thomas Buttweiler
Louis Chappellear
Paul Couch
Edward Dobrzanski
Allen Feldman
Arnold Frenzel

Richard Hayashi
Billy Johnson
William Miller
John Nettles
Clarence Siman
John Tischmann

The Official Bi-Monthly Publication of the Japanese Sword Society of the U.S./Inc.
Annual Membership \$10 U.S./Canada and \$14 Foreign
For Information Write:

WITH REGARDS TO DUES -

To assist the membership in reaching a conclusion with regards to the proposed dues raise, the following estimate of expenses has been compiled. The figures are based on 1979 expenses plus added costs for 1980 period.

Newsletter (including printing, postage, etc.).....	\$1,424
Bulletin (gross).....	783
General Society expenses (clerical, postage, misc.)...	697
sub total per 1979 figures...	\$2,904
Publication improvements, inflation (10%/-).....	290/-
Newsletter Editor's allowance (if approved).....	250
Bulletin Editor's allowance (if approved).....	250
Newsletter article fee (if approved).....	300/-
Bulletin article fee (if approved).....	150/-
Basic 1980 Society expenses..	\$4,144

Using an average membership of 375, cost-per-member will be around \$11.05 in 1980. (less than this if the various proposals do not receive membership approval.). True cost per member will vary between U.S./Canadian members and foreign members (foreign members cost the Society about an additional \$5 in postage per member annually - the larger foreign dues charged make up for this difference).

The above figures show dues income v/s basic expenses for running the Society, represented by an annual cost-per-member figure. Other Society income generated through books and sword supply sales has not been included. To date, these sales have not only been self-supporting, but profitable for us. These profits plus the profit from Token Taikai '79 are responsible for the status of our Treasury at this time. Our treasury is in good condition as we close down 1979 (approximately \$12,000) but this capital will be needed if we are to venture into the several publication projects in mind during 1980. Generally speaking, membership dues should pay for basic Society expenses with other income going for extracurricular projects. We have stayed within these guidelines to date, but 1980 will be another story.

Ron Hartmann-Treasurer

PLANS FOR A SWORD AUCTION AT TSG 1980 CHICAGO SHOW - (by Peter Bleed -Executive Vice Chairman JSS/US)

For some time there has been discussion of the problem of "room" or private sales at the various large sword shows. It has appeared to many that lots of sword owners have preferred to sell their blades and fittings to dealers in their rooms rather than in the public view on the show floor. They appear to feel that this method gets them their price and helps them move groups of swords with a minimum of hassle. The decision is the individual's, of course, and there seems to be nothing that our Society or any could do to prevent these kinds of sales. Still, if most sales are carried out in private rooms, individual collectors, and maybe

SHOW AUCTION cont'd.

even the dealers, are hurt. Buyers don't get a chance to see all of the pieces available at the show (that is why they come) and therefore may miss swords they might really want. Sellers can't be sure that they are getting top dollar for the pieces they are offering. Everyone is deprived of the "market information" that the transactions reflect. For these reasons there is serious concern that unless something happens to encourage open dealing, the major sword shows will collapse.

With this background, plans were made at the 1979 Token Study Group Chicago show to have an auction at the 1980 gathering. It was agreed to try to develop a workable plan through the JSS/US Newsletter which the Token Study Group could implement with JSS/US help. This note will describe the ideas which were kicked around. Please respond to them if you have any ideas on this subject.

For the auction, the organizers (presumably the TSG) would provide the following:

1. A display table area where items for sale could be set out.
2. Numbered tags which could be sold to members or visitors for a nominal fee (\$2 was suggested). The consignor would describe the item on the tag and items would be sold in the order in which they were tagged.
3. An auctioneer- presumably a professional working on a flat fee who would conduct the sale.
4. An assistant for the auctioneer who would handle technical explanation and description of the items offered for sale. The assistant could also start the bidding.
5. A clerk to issue the tags and handle the items until they are settle for.

Any sword related item or pieces of fine Japanese art could be offered. The display area would be available to the sellers. It would be up to them to see that their items were available for inspection. A reserve could be set or the consignor could bid on his own stuff so that a reserve would not be necessary.

After the sale, the items sold would be brought to the clerk who would hold them until the high bidders settle directly with the consignors. Again, it would be up to the individuals involved to do the leg work involved in the payment. Only after payment would the clerk release an item. By leaving responsibility for description, exhibition, inspection, and payment up to the membership, the organizer's task should be managable.

To pay for the auction it would probably be necessary to charge something more than the cost of the tags. I'd suggest that for items costing less than \$50, the cost of the tag should be enough. I would suggest the following additional costs for

SHOW AUCTION cont'd.

higher priced pieces: \$50-\$100 an additional \$2 beyond the tag cost; \$100-\$500 an additional \$5 beyond the tag cost; \$500-\$1,000 and additional \$10 beyond tag cost.

If the auctions are to work, members will have to be willing to consign items for sale. What do you think? Will the system described work? Would you be willing to offer items for sale?

(Members and interested non-members who wish to comment on this proposal should send their comments and ideas directly to Peter Bleed)

NEW MEMBERS -

Let us extend a welcome to the following new members of our sword Society:

Roger S. Estey,
John R. Brzostowicz, Gary J. Nishioka,
Chuck D. Low, Gary J. Wilson,
Fred W. DeBoer,
William C. Shing,
H. J. Eschbaum, Bruhler Weg 13,
Steven A. Frankfort,
Douglas Ring,
Stephen Michalovic, Rocco J. Russo, Seven Hills,
John Carey Kurylo,

MEIBUTSU • TTK'79

THE 2ND PRINTING OF THE TTK'79 MEIBUTSU ROOM EXHIBIT CATALOGUE IS NOW AVAILABLE. CORRECTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AND ANOTHER FULL-LENGTH OSHIGATA (#32) HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE PUBLICATION. PLACE YOUR ORDER TODAY!
U.S./Canada \$11.00 - Foreign \$12 (\$14 via air). All orders in U.S. Dollars please.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM DALLAS -

The following message has been sent to the Newsletter, formally announcing plans for a scholarly sword and Japanese cultural event to be held in Dallas, Texas this coming spring.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN THE
JAPANESE SWORD.

During the month of April, 1980, at the University of Dallas an important cultural exchange will be held. The core of this cultural exchange will be built around two Japanese swordsmiths who will construct up to 15 swords in facilities that everyone may observe their craftsmanship. At the completion of the blades they will be turned over to other Japanese craftsmen who will polish, make habaki, and make shirazaya, and deliver the blades to those who have contracted for them. These swords will be constructed from new Tatara iron that, for the first time, is being used in the construction of Japanese swords. This project will mark the first time that Japanese swordsmiths have pursued their craft outside of Japan in their traditional manner so that we may, here in the United States, at first-hand observe their methods and procedures. It will indeed be an historical and important event.

There will be an exhibition of 25 fine Japanese swords loaned to us by the NBTHK and placed on display at the University of Dallas. This selection will include Kokoro to Juyo blades. There will also be blades and fittings from some of the major museums and collections in the United States.

During the second week in April, the NBTHK will conduct a Shinsa, also to be held at the University of Dallas. This will be the first Shinsa (NBTHK) held in the United States since 1974 and it will give all collectors a chance to gain authentication for the prized pieces in their collections. In addition, there are other events being scheduled throughout the Dallas metroplex area in keeping and complimenting the sword activities.

If you are interested in participating in or contributing to any of these worthwhile activities please, at your earliest convenience, communicate with the University of Dallas, attention Dr. James Patrick, at the University of Dallas, Irving, Texas 75061. You will be placed on the mailing list for all information and releases concerning the events to be held next April.

R. B. Caldwell

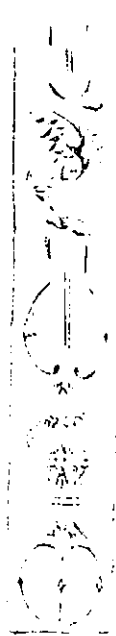
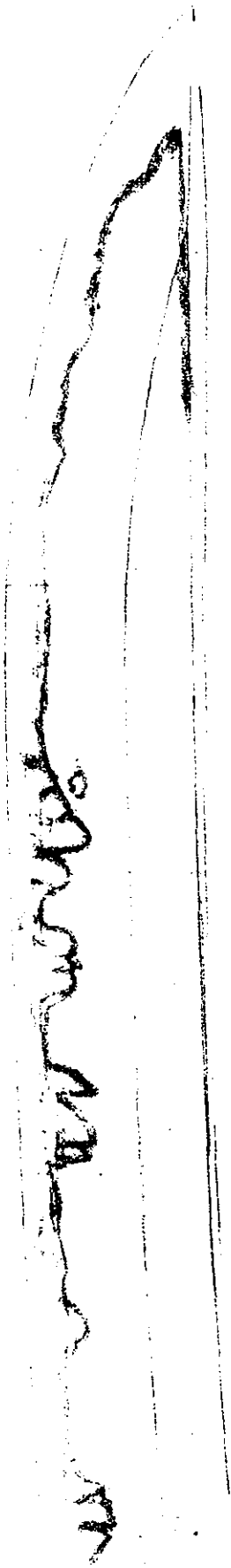
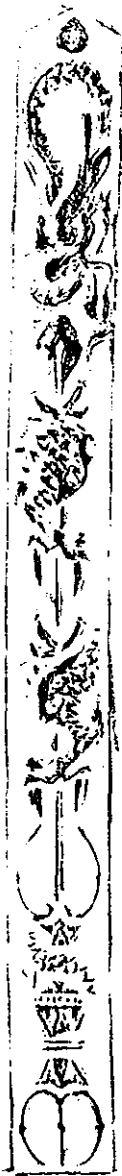
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Editor's note: This cultural event was born during the summer of 1977 during a visit to the area by Mr. Yoshindo Yoshihara and Mr. Okisato Fujishiro. An interview at that time was presented in the JSS/US Newsletter, Vol.9 No.4 - July/August 1977. Remember...to be placed on the informational mailing list you must write the University of Dallas and request this inclusion for information.

NAGASCNE KOTETSU NYUDO

- WAKIZASHI: DOSAKU KORE WO HORU NAGASONE OKISATO KOTETSU NIUDO (signature)(Another reading for this is "Nagasone Okisato Furu Tetsu Niudo"). FUTATSU DO KIRI OTOSHI MANJI GAN NEN (1st year of Manji) INU (zodiacal sign) First day of September YAMA-NO-KAUEMON NO JO NAGAHISA., and Kao-in in gold inlay.
- MEASUREMENT: 1.52 shaku. Sori 4.2 bu. Motohaba 1.16 sun. Sakihaba 1.04 sun. Kissaki 3.2 sun. Nakago 5.3 sun.
- STYLE: Hirazukuri (no ridge line) in kammuri otoshi zukuri form. Mitsumune (three sided mune), wide mihaba (width), sakizori (curvature deepest down towards tip of sword), O-gissaki (large kissaki), kitae (steel) is very fine ko-itame (small pattern wood grain), has abundant jinie (nie crystals in the ji or surface area of the blade). Has O-hada (large pattern hada) in the middle area of the blade.
- HAMON: Lower half is notare (undulating), upper half is in gunome (mounded forms). Has sunagashi (sweeping strings of nie), ashi (wisps of nioi between the gunome, wide nioi (nioi line is made wide), has slightly course nie (larger nie appearing within).
- BOSHI: Slightly midare komi (boshi is irregular form). It is komaru (small rounded turnback) on omote side and is togari (pointed) on ura side, with hakikake (sweeping lines similar to sunagashi). The kaeri (turn back down back of blade) is made long.
- HORIMONO: Kurikata done in hitsu (frame), Dragon done in a frame in openwork (sukashi-bori). *
- NAKAGO: Ubu (original), shinogi in nakago area (upper portion of nakago) is hirazukuri (flat). Yasurime (file marks) are Osujichigai (greatly slanting). There is one mekugi ana (mekugi hole). On omote side it states: DO SAKU KORE WO HORU NAGASONE OKISATO KOTETSU NYUDO. On ura side it states: "First year of Manji (1658)." Gold inlaid record of cutting test by Yamano Kauemon no jo Nagahisa.
- EXPLANATION: This blade was done early in Kotetsu's carrer as a sword maker. This blade indicates that his experience as an armor maker contributed to his superb ability as a sword maker. The blade also demonstrates his ability as a carver of steel. The sharpness of the blade was certified by the expert tester of that time. These three factors made Kotetsu the master sword smith of his time. This blade amply demonstrates his superb skill. The signature is important in as much as there are few inscribed "Kotetsu", meaning "old iron".

* Similar to work done in tsuba, openwork with background perforated.



JUYO TOKEN NADO ZUFU - text, plate #25, Volume 1
(reprinted with the permission of NBTHK)

NAGASONE OKISATO NYUDO KOTETSU

KATANA: NAGASONE OKISATO NYUDO KOTETSU (signed).

MEASUREMENTS: length 2.44 shaku, Sori 5 bu, Motohaba 1.02 sun,
Sakihaba 7.2 bu, Kissaki 1.16 sun, Nakago 7.15
sun, with slight curvature.

STYLE: Shinogi-zukuri (with ridgeline), ihore-mune (two-sided
mune), shallow sori (curvature), chu-kissaki (medium
long kissaki or point).

KITAE: Ko-itame (small pattern wood grain), with ji-nie (nie
formations in the ji or body of the blade).

HAMON: Wide suguha (straight) or hiro-suguha mixed with ko-
notare (straight hamon with undulations). Has many
gunome ashi (wisps of nioi from gunome mounds within
the hamon), juzuba*. Nioi is wide (wide nioi line
along hamon). Abundant ko-nie (small nie crystals)
and habuchi (border of hamon border between yakiba
and ji area of blade).

BOSHI: Komaru (small rounded turnback).

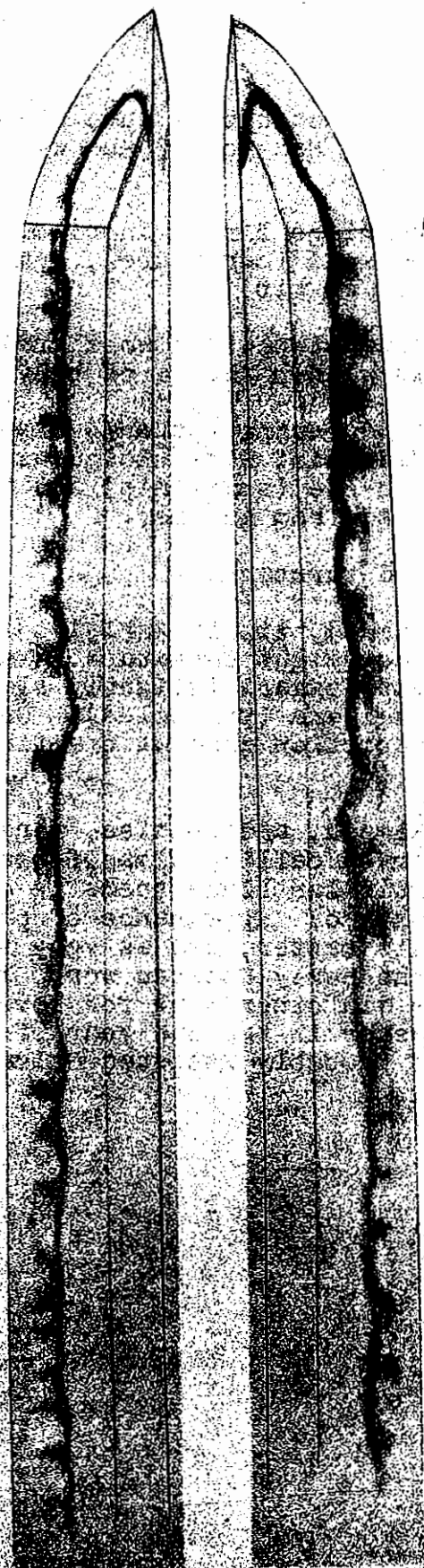
NAKAGO: Ubu (original), tip in kurijiri (evenly rounded),
almost no curvature. Yasuri-me (file marks) are in
katte sagari (slightly slanting leftward). One hole.
Omote side bears Igoki Nyudo Hakotora signature**.

EXPLANATION: This blade was made around the 8th year of Kwanbun
(1668). Kotetsu exhibited his genius between the
10th year of Kwanbun (1670) and the 2nd or 3rd year
of Empo (1675-76). He also did excellent work during
the 8th year of Kwanbun (1668). Work prior to this
period was more conservative in style. This particular
blade is representative of this era. It is an
excellent piece of work in perfect condition.

HISTORY: This blade was handed down in the family of Nabeshima
of Hizen Province. This type of blade probably
exercised a strong influence on the third Tadayoshi.

* Juzuba is one of the characteristics of Kotetsu, and, having many
gunome ashi, juzu yakiba appears like a string of beads; this is
called juzuba.

** Since Kotetsu changed his type of inscription to permit ident-
ification by style, one of them is called furutetsu. This one
is called Igoki Nyudo Hakotora (box Kotetsu). This is distinct
from later work when he changed to the kanji for tiger with a
curly tail (hanetora).



長曾祢里入道卿徽

NAGASONE OKINAO

KATANA: NAGASONE OKINAO (signed).

MEASUREMENTS: 2.33 shaku, Sori 6 bu, Motohaba 1 sun, Sakihaba
7 bu, Kissaki 1.16 sun, Nakago 6.3 sun with sori
of 1 bu.

STYLE: Shinogi-zukuri (with ridge line), ihori-mune (two-
sided back), shallow sori (curvature), chu-gissaki
(medium sized kissaki or tip).

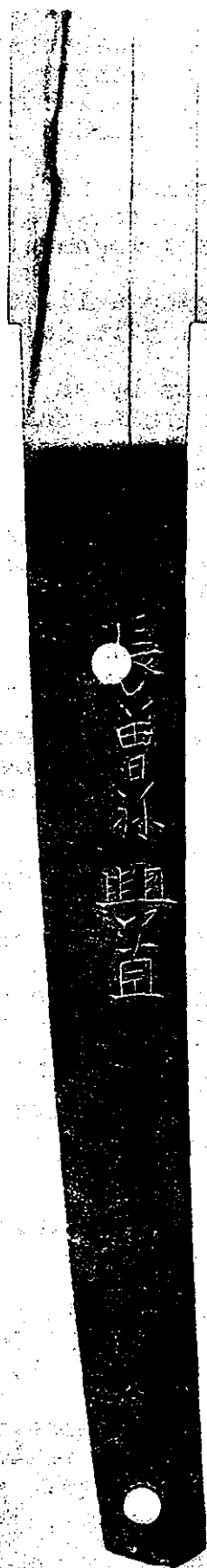
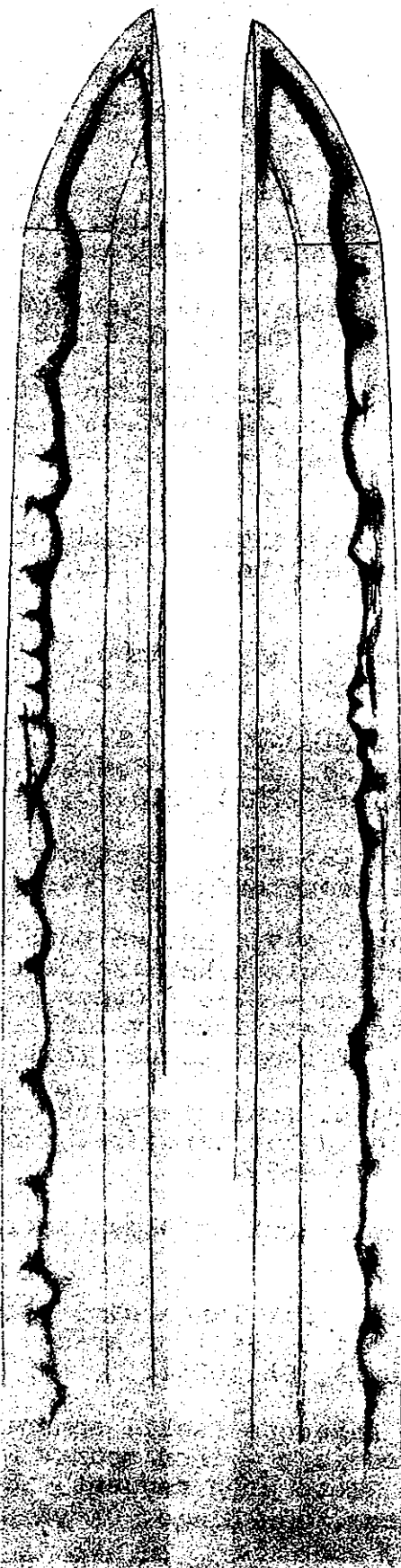
KITAE: Very fine ko-itame (small pattern wood grain) with
ji-nie (nie crystals within the ji or body of blade).

HAMON: Ko-notare (shallow undulating pattern) mixed with
gunome (mounds). Wide nioi with nioiguchi (edge)
sharp (distinct). ko-nie (small nie) and ko-ashi
(small ashi "rat legs" from gunome).

BOSHI: Komaru (small rounded turnback).

NAKAGO: Ubu (original and uncut), tip is kurijiri (evenly
rounded). Nakago has slight curvature. Yasurime
(file marks) are katte-sagari (slightly slanting
leftward). Two mekugi-ana (peg holes). On omote
side five kanji inscription done with a fine
chisel.

EXPLANATION: Nagasone Okinao, Okimasa, and Okinisa, were Kotetsu's
only students. Okimasa calling himself the 2nd.
Aside from this particular blade there is only one
wakizashi done by Okinao. Appearance of the blade
is very much like his master, and is very skillfully
executed and like the early Kotetsu work, is conserv-
ative. Probably he did other work for Kotetsu until
the death of his master in the 6th year of Empo (1678)
after which he most probably assisted Okimasa
(Kotetsu II).



BUY-SELL-TRADE COLUMN -

This section of the Newsletter is offered as a free service to the membership, providing an opportunity to buy, sell, or trade specific items. Please keep all ads short and to the point. Ads should be mailed direct to the Newsletter for publication.

● WANTED - Matchlock rifle or pistol, any price or condition considered. Send photo w/full description to: Nigel Willey,

● WANTED - Hartman Collection Catalogue. Will pay \$60.00US. Contact: Don Hill,

● WANTED - Blades by any of the Sendai KUNIKANE or related smiths such as KANEKURA, KANEYOSHI. Also YASUTOMO OR SADATOSHI blades. Call or write: Peter Bleed,

● WANTED - Kodogu with WHALE (Kujira) motif, including dolphins and porpoises. Contact: Larry Richards,

● WANTED - Matchlock guns. Contact: Ray Deadman,

● WANTED - Copy Albert Yamanaka's NIHONTO NEWSLETTER, original or copy. Will pay premium over original price. Contact: L. R. Olsson,

● WANTED - Blades by Dohi SHINRYO (Sh-474). Contact: Bob Luchini,

● FOR SALE - BOOKS: Nihontō Koza - \$375; Shintō Kotō Taikan - \$250; Nihon tō Zuikan - \$350 (Nihontō Zuikan Kataika Ginsaku for sale this month only); Toso Kodogu Koza - \$290. Other major texts upon request. Translations and interpretations available. Contact: Steven Winkley,

● FOR SALE - Phoenix Bird Head Tachi (tail feathers cover most of handle), old silver mnts., blade signed but tarnished, good hamon. \$2,500 - contact:

● WANTED - Soft metal tsuba w/Shoki, Oni or Demon motif. Contact: Mike Cobb,

● FOR SALE - High quality kimonos. Fit large man. Also made-to-order Bowie knife by TOSHIHIRO (signed). Sell or trade. Contact: Phil Davis,

● FOR SALE - Yoroi-toshi tanto, Kanemoto (seki) school. Shintō mumei, ubu. Fairly good polish. Red saya w/iron mounts w/silver inlay, signed silver kogai. \$600. Photo upon request. Contact: Roger Dunn, .

BUY-SELL-TRADE cont'd.

● WANTED - A copy of the Compton Collection catalogue. Contact: Ed Hicks,

● WANTED - Would like to locate attractive suit of armor. Also interested in locating a single kabuto w/mempo. Armor box also desired. Contact: Gil Novak,

● WANTED - matching pair kodzuka/kogai, iron, dragon/wave or cloud design. Matching copper set w/mushrooms or what have you available? Also need kodzuka in silver of mokume work and/or "checkered" design. Must be high quality work. Contact: Ron Hartmann - Newsletter Editor.

* * * * *

BOOK REVIEW by Peter Bleed

With the wealth of fine books currently available on swords and sword fittings, it is very hard to point to one and call it a "must". I have just received a book in the mail, though, that I think falls into that category. The book, which is published in English and Japanese, is the "Sword Guard" volume of the series entitled, "Illustrated Catalogues of the Tokyo National Museum". It was published in March of this year and is priced at only ¥2500. The price alone makes it one of the great bargains available in our field of interest.

The book starts out with a two page English preface. This has as much useful information as can be fitted into that small a space. There is a twenty-five page Japanese text at the other end of the volume which has some useful genealogies and dates. I think any American collector could use this section with only a little bit of study. The heart of the book, though, is the 169 pages of black and white photos of fine sword guards. A total of 542 items are shown, four to a page. About one third of the tsuba have both faces shown. Each tsuba has both English and Japanese captions so that the book is very easy to use. It can also serve as a text for those who wish to learn the basic vocabulary needed to use other, purely Japanese, works.

The pieces shown in the catalogue are of high quality. They are arranged chronologically and by school or type. It seems to me that the mixture of pieces shown in the book is somewhat unusual. Perhaps this is because guards from fine koshirae in the museum's collection were also included. For that reason some rarely seen types are well-represented. These include some very early Kamakura period pieces and a nice selection of fine Monzukuri tachi guards. At this bargain price, I am sure this book will find a large audience on this side of the Pacific.

(Ed.Note - Perhaps this book can be added to the supply list offered through our Society. No arrangements have been made at this time but this possibility is being looked into. If a supply can be purchased by us, availability will be announced in the Newsletter.)

A LETTER FROM MASAYUKI SASANO -

In a letter, recently received from Mr. Sasano, he asked that several items be passed on to the membership. They are as follows:

His first request was to express his apology to those attending Token Taikai '79, for his being "irresponsible" to us by not providing as much shinsa time as was expected from him. A personal conflict on the shinsa team was the cause of this and Mr. Sasano wishes to us for not putting aside these problems and in retrospect, is sorry that he did not give us more time. For this he apologizes to those in attendance.

Mr. Sasano also mentioned that he has heard that many collectors are using wax on their iron tsuba. His suggestion is to stop this practice many waxes have a strong acid content and waxing an iron tsuba will damage it in the long run of time. If a tsuba is in need of polishing, he suggests using a piece of cotton cloth and rubbing the tsuba onto the cloth.

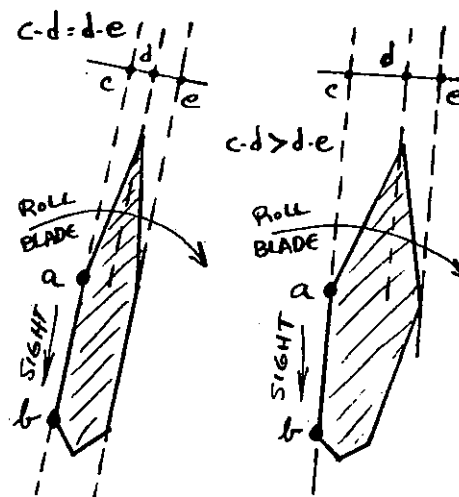
He also mentioned that he was surprised to find so many old fittings and few kinko fittings here. He complimented on the Meibutsu Room display but mentioned that there were many false mei tsuba displayed and perhaps next time a more a better selection (as to valid signatures) can be made. (This is in reference to the museum selection. Display items were picked by appearance and no attempt was made to confirm signatures).

Hopefully, we can eventually print an occasional article from Mr. Sasano in our Newsletter.

HOW TO DETERMINE A "RAISED SHINOGI" -

One characteristic one looks for when examining a blade is to determine if the shinogi (ridge line) is made "high" or "flat". This is a simple task if the following routine is taken.

Looking down upon the cutting edge of the blade, slowly roll the blade until the shinogi-jl surface appears as a line. Points a-b on sketch. Do this with one eye closed. If the cutting edge then appears in the "middle of the blade", this indicates the shinogi is made flat. If the cutting edge appears to one side of the blade, it tells you that the shinogi is "raised". A simple geometric exercise. One can continue to roll the blade and check this from the opposite side too, to confirm what he sees. This is an important "detail" which should assist in kantei of the blade.



AT RANDOM -

► Books: Our initial supply of Fujishiro's NIHON TOKO JITEN has been expired, but a new supply is on the way. It is expected that orders will be able to be filled by mid-January. \$90.00/set. Remember our other books which are available; TOSO-SORAN by Dr. Kazutaro Torigoye @ \$65 US/Canada, \$70 Foreign; EARLY JAPANESE SWORD GUARDS, SUKASHI TSUBA by Mr. Sasano @ \$15.50US/Canada, \$16 Foreign; THE SAMURAI SWORD by John Yumoto @ \$8.50US/Canada, \$9.00 Foreign; and of course our catalogue MEIBUTSU (see ad this issue).

► Supplies: A new supply of UCHIKO KITS and single UCHIKO and brass hammer MEKUGI REMOVERS has just been received. Although the total bill is not in at this time, it appears we can hold our prices to what they have most recently been: Boxed kits @ \$12; Hammers @ \$5; Uchiko pompoms @ \$4 each. Our cost per item has gone up but the Dollar/Yen exchange has helped us. A COMPLETE SUPPLY LISTING WILL BE ISSUED EARLY IN 1980.

► DUES: Individual notices will be mailed to all members whose dues come payable as of 1/1/80. These notices will be mailed soon after the results of the election are known.

► 1979 BULLETIN: It was intended that this be completed and mailed before Christmas, but the end-of-year crunch did not allow this. Most material is in hand (although we could use one or two articles) and the annual should be completed and mailed by end of January.

► 1980 Projects: Several ideas have been tossed around as to how to use our capital in our treasury. The publication of several english translations are in mind. They are: HIGO (fittings of Higo) by Jacoby; TANTO by Suzuki. Another printing of Yamanaka's NIHONTO NEWSLETTER will be done as will a booklet on metallurgy studies of swords and tsuba techniques by C. R. Smith.

► TTK'79 Shinsa papers: An explanation of the papers issued by Mr. Yoshikawa during our May shinsa will be included in a near-future Newsletter issue. An explanation as to why the rating seals were omitted will also be included in that writing, if such an explanation can be gotten from the Token Study Group shinsa committee.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE -

The next issue of the Newsletter will be out around the first of February. Please have all material for that issue into the NL well ahead of the last of January.

During the Holiday Season more than ever, our thoughts turn gratefully to those who have made our progress possible.

And in this spirit we say, simply but sincerely

Thank You and Best Wishes
for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



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**Revised
EDITION**

August 1979

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