

# Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



## NEWSLETTER

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Volume 12 No. 2

March - April 1980

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### FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS -

DUES: There are still a few stragglers left with unpaid 1980 dues. Some form of notice will be included in with this mailing to remind late-payers. This notice will be a final reminder on dues.

Membership cards are a bit delayed this year because of the election and the dues increase, but everyone will be receiving an official Membership Card in due time. They are being mailed out direct from our Secretary, Bill Miller of Atlanta.

Again, if a dues notice is included in your mailing, please pay promptly. If you wish to drop out of the Society, a brief notice to the Treasurer would be appreciated.

### NEW MEMBERS -

We wish to welcome the following new members into the group. Their active participation in the Society is encouraged.

John R. Kalhagen,  
A. Zalanyi, Jack Greenberg,  
Alan Luck,  
Arn Slettebak,  
Robert Stokluska,  
Jack Landis,  
Charles A. Martin, Jr.  
Masashi Kawasaki,  
Phillip A. Abdy, Dow,  
Sam Okabe,  
Dale S. Kirby,  
David T. Stockwell,

NEW MEMBERS cont'd.

Allan McKelvy,  
William Shapland,  
Daniel P. McNair,  
Jon Jensen, 1631  
Klaus Leibnitz, Louis G. Mills, 1  
F. J. Lovret, Nippon-tō, Dyke K. Nagasaka,

Frederick Susukida,  
Stuart E. Broms,  
Edward F. Sones,  
Roger W. Davis,  
Herman A. Wallinga,

TSUKA EXHIBIT SLIDES -

The slides of the various different styles of tsuka (handle wrappings) as exhibited during Token Taikai '79 have become a very popular item for loan from our library. Thanks to our new member, Jim Spaw of Kansas City, Missouri, who is a professional photographer by trade, we now have another set of slides in our library. We owe Jim a word of thanks for taking the effort to supply us an extra set of slides for our library. The slides were supplied per gratus as a contribution to the Society.

BIRMINGHAM SWORD SHOW -

The Birmingham, Alabama sword show (Southeast Token Taikai) took place the weekend of February 15th. Although attendance was somewhat down, the efforts of Paul Couch to provide us with teach-ing activities greatly contributed to the value of the show.

Trading seemed a bit subdued as compared with times past but several fine items did change hands including a Juyo blade, which speaks well for "activity" at the show. For some reason the buyers seemed absent from this show which contributed to the subtle mood of the show but collector interest was as strong as ever.

BIRMINGHAM cont'd.

The highlight of the show was an afternoon polishing exhibit on that Saturday. Mr. Kiyoharu Omino was kind enough to demonstrate polishing techniques by opening a "window" on a zero-polish wakizashi. John Yumoto was on hand to provide his comments plus answer any questions from the audience as the polishing demonstration was presented. It was truly a learning experience for all in attendance! Speaking as a collector, it was my first experience to actually see the polishing process and to see just what goes into the polishing of a blade. It was amazing! After four hours of work, a six inch "window" was opened and the true beauty of the blade was exposed! Again, it was truly a learning experience and greatly increased one's appreciation of the art of polishing. We are greatly thankful to Paul, Kiyoharu, and John Yumoto for their contributions.

One other mention is due....for the first time, a table was provided per gratus for use by the JSS/US for promotional purposes. A table is always set up to promote the Society, but this is the first time that a show provided space free of charge for this purpose. Thanks Paul!

#### TOKEN STUDY GROUP SWORD SHOW -

The next TSG Sword Show is scheduled for the weekend of October 24th, at the Red Carpet Inn in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mark your calendars!

There has been some questioning as to why the "Chicago" show was moved to Milwaukee. This was done not as a whim of the organizers but rather because of exorbitant rental fees and/or lack of available facilities. The TSG show has always been most rewarding and this show promises to follow tradition! Plan to attend and help to contribute to the success of the show! More info to follow.

#### DALLAS FESTIVITIES/SWORD SHOW -

This issue of the Newsletter was intended to be out several weeks earlier in order to encourage attendance at the Dallas, Texas sword show, shinsa, and exhibition. Even without this pre-event publicity the weeklong event was very well attended and was an obvious success.

A complete report will be written on the various aspects of this undertaking, with particular attention paid to the fine items displayed in the Meibutsu Room, in the next issue of the Newsletter. Reports need to be compiled, statistics gathered, and photographs printed, which should make for a fine recapping of the event for all to enjoy.

Our thanks to the organizers of this event. Hopefully this type of "teaching" presentation will be the trend in shows in the future. With a little preshow planning and cooperation between the various local sword groups, we can all look forward to such educational experiences.

## WITH REGARDS TO OUR LAST ELECTION -

The following letter was received by the Newsletter following the editor's remarks on the election contained in the last issue of the paper. Mr. Siman has asked that his letter be included in this issue of the Newsletter so that he may explain his opinion of the issues discussed.

Sir,

This is in reply to an article appearing in the Jan-Feb. '80 issue concerning the recent election of Directors, and my objection to same, wherein you briefly touched on the subject and in doing so, gave an erroneous report in several areas.

First of all, as reported in the article, Ted Wysocky was not in fact an Officer in the JSS/US and had not held a position in the Society since 1977, at which time he was 2nd Vice-Chairman.

To continue, it was also reported that "The same situation existed in the last Election of Officers of which Mr. Siman was a member of the Nominating Committee". Let me point out that "the same situation" DID NOT IN FACT EXIST, when I was on the Nominating Committee.

I feel that you glossed over the objection, and in doing so, failed to bring out to the membership the substance of it. In order to clarify this matter, please permit me to explain.

It should be noted that there are in fact two separate elections held by the Society. One is for Officers and the other is for Directors. Each election is a separate one, held in alternating years, with separate nominations from the membership. It should be further noted that one does not have to be a Director in order to be nominated for one of the six Officers slots, and, all Officers and Directors have the same powers in so far as voting, etc., except those as would fall into the same category of respective Officers positions in any other organization.

My objection to this recent election was simply that the names of FOUR SERVING OFFICERS appeared on the same ballot along with FOURTEEN NOMINEES, and should any of the four Officers win, it would cause an equal number of the nominees from winning and a chance to serve as a Director in the Society.

The fact of the matter is that all four Officers were at this time properly elected and serving the Society, with one full year to go on their term of office, therefore there was no need for them to stand this election. The results of this election would seem to bear out my objection, as all four did in fact win, and now instead of (6) Officers and (12) Directors for a total of (18) people involved in guiding the Society, we have only (14).

This in itself seems to me to be defeating the purpose of the Society, because

we are suppose to be constantly looking for ways to get the membership involved in the various activities of this organization, and this would have been the perfect way to get (4) more people active, aside from the good they may have done in the areas in which they live.

Be that as it may, let me further point out (using your newsletters as reference) that when I was appointed to the Nominating Committee... "volunteered" is the word you used in NOV-DEC '77 issue, since all committee appointments must be approved by the Directors, THERE WERE IN FACT (6) SERVING OFFICERS.

My first function in this capacity was to run the Election for Directors, with Neil Keen also serving on the Nominations Committee, the results of which are reflected in the JAN-FEB '78 issue of the newsletter. As it can be noted, there are NO DUPLICATION OF NAMES, and at this time a full complement was serving, that is (6) Officers and (12) Directors.

The next function of the Nominations Committee on which I served was to compose a slate for the Officers Election of '79-'80, and this slate was published in the NOV-DEC '78 issue of the newsletter.

As reflected, there are two names of Directors appearing, and these people were properly elevated from the ranks of Directors (organizations normally draw on their Directors to serve as Officers) because of their desire to serve. As you may recall, the position of Chairman was held up, because we needed an outstanding individual to lead us in preparation for the forthcoming Token Taikal '79, and we were very fortunate to have Dr. Robert Lewert fill that position.

LETTER cont'd.

The remaining slate was composed for presentation with verbal nominations of A.Z. Freeman for 2nd Vice-Chairman and yourself as Treasurer, the nominations being made by you. I, with the consent of Mr. Keen, nominated Dr. Bleed, thus the slate was composed. This slate, as well as request for further nominations from the membership was published in the NOV-DEC '78 issue, and was announced, per your suggestion, by the Society as an Election by Acclamation in the JAN-FEB '79 issue of the newsletter.

In researching the newsletters, I believe you will find that at no time during my tenure on the Nominations Committee, did I knowingly have serving Officers run against nominees for positions of Directors, which was the basis of my objection.

I would also like to point out that at no time did I use the term "ROBBING"... as used in the article..."robbing them of votes". The phrase I used in my letter to Mr. Freeman was "splitting the votes". My feeling on this was that by having the names of the Officers, and their past accomplishments, on the ballot, coupled with the cumulative voting system used, would cause the members to split their votes and reduce the number of votes received by other nominees.

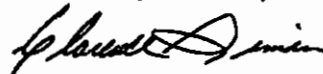
Let me also serve notice that there will be more problems as the result of this election, what with the Election of Officers due at the end of this year. Dr. Peter Bleed, as Executive Vice-Chairman, would be scheduled to run as Chairman should he choose to do so, however he was elected to a three-year term as a Director. John Fischmann, A.Z. Freeman and Bill Miller also will be running for their respective positions as Officers, and they too were just elected, to serve as Directors for a two-year term.

Should these names mentioned decide to run in the Officers Election, and should they win, this will leave FOUR (4) places open on the Board of Directors, unless of course it is decided at that time to again have dual-positions.

I would suggest that since those consulted felt this election should stand, the whole situation can be brought back to its proper perspective, that is, a well represented group drawn from the membership as well as more members taking an active part...simply by having the Board of Directors fulfill one of its primary functions and appoint members to the vacated positions, should they occur.

In closing, let me make it very clear that I believe CONFUSION, NOT COLLISION was the reason for this happening, however I believe too, that a more objective method of reporting would alleviate some of these conditions.

With the membership growing to over 400 people and the treasury standing around \$9,000, we are no longer just another "pretty little face" in the crowd of small collectors groups throughout the United States. We are constantly growing here and in several foreign countries and in fairness to the membership as a whole, it is time we put our house in order.



Editor's comments: Mr. Siman's correction with regards to Mr. Wysocky is correct. Apologies. As for the dual-office situation discussion, it seems this is a matter of interpretation. Whatever, the business of members holding dual-positions as Officers/Directors does seem to be against what membership wants and this situation should be corrected in future elections. Any further comments on the subject should be directed to your Officers/Directors so that they can act upon them well in advance of next year's election.

#### NEW SWORD SOCIETY FORMED -

The Newsletter has been informed of the formation of the Japanese Sword Society of Canada, Mr. Frederick A. Fimio, Chairman.

This new organization will give collectors in Canada the opportunity to meet locally and advance their study of the sword. On behalf of our Society, we wish them the best of luck in this important step towards sword appreciation in Canada.

NIHONTŌ THE UNDERPRICED MIGRANT?  
2nd Instalment - by A. Z. Freeman

When I last wrote (Newsletter Vol. 12 No.1) I cited figures from a current Japanese language kakaku, or book of prices. The figures cited were accurately taken from the book, but they do need some explanation. As you might expect, the prices given are for excellent examples of the smith's work, in good polish, and the optimum katana length. What about the swords we most often find in our searches? There are percentage reductions recommended for faults and differences we are likely to find. Here they are as given in the book:

KATANA: 2.1 shaku length - minus 30% of listed price.  
(except mid-Muromachi blade of 2.2 shaku)

WAKIZASHI: 1.8-2.0 shaku (shinogi-zukuri) - minus 30%  
to 60% of listed price.  
1.5-1.7 shaku (shinogi-zukuri) - minus 50%  
to 70% of listed price.  
1.0-1.4 shaku (hira-zukuri) - minus 40% to  
60% of listed price.

TANTŌ: 50% of listed price.

YARI/NAGINATA: minus 50%-80% of listed price.

"UNUSUAL ITEMS": minus 20%-50% of listed price.

FAMOUS/FAMILY SWORDS: much higher than listed price.

HORIMONO (ordinary): 10%-30% over listed price.

HORIMONO (detailed): up to 80% over listed price.

OVER-POLISHED SHINTŌ BLADES: minus 30% of listed price.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANT SWORDS: 10%-50% over listed price.

With that as a guide, here is the next list of swords and values, either taken from the price book or from offering prices in a monthly Japanese publication called "Rei".

Tantō; Kanemichi saku. Sue-kotō, Mino, 13" length, good polish/shirazaya, similar to one in "Rei"....\$1,533.

Katana; Mutsu Daijō Miyoshi Nagamichi, shodai. 25 7/8", good polish, shirazaya. Japan price: ¥6,000,000 but 2.1 shaku, so minum 70% of this listed figure or...\$18,200.

Katana; Yamato no Kami Yoshimichi, Nidai, 28 7/8".  
Japan price: ¥4,000,000 or.....\$17,400.

Katana; Kanenobu saku (Naoe Shizu), shirazaya, 26 3/4".  
Japan price: ¥3,000,000. Recently sold at U.S. auction for \$2,500.

Katana; Inaba kuni ju Hyoemonjo Kanesaki, 3rd, 27 3/4", koshirae. Japan price: ¥1,400,000 (\$6,100). This sword sold at a recent U.S. auction for \$3,400.

Tantō; Rai Kunimitsu, 10", shirazaya, Japan price: ¥18,000,000 (\$72,000) minus 50% equals \$36,000. This blade recently sold in a U.S. auction for \$11,000.

Katana; Tamba no kami Fujiwara Terukado, 24 5/8", shirazaya. Japan price: ¥2,800,000 minus 40% (short katana) equals \$7,305. This recently sold at a U.S. auction for \$1,600.

Katana; Tamba no kami Yoshimichi, 4th, Yamashiro, advertised in "Rei" latest issue for \$6,660.

How do these prices strike you? If the great difference between Japan prices and U.S. prices are valid, we are the ones to do something about it.

(correction: in last month's article Mr. Freeman mistakenly wrote "Echizen Taro Yasukuni" when he ment "Musashi Taro...")

\* \* \* \* \*

Editor's note: The following letter rebuttal has been offered in response to last issue's instalment of this article. Mr. Bleed makes frequent visits to Japan and his comments are noteworthy. The letter is directed to Mr. Freeman:

I am writing to you about your article that appeared in the last JSS/US Newsletter. I agree with much of what you say and suggest. Clearly the pool of good swords in this country is getting smaller and smaller. I also agree our society should take the initiative in helping American collectors retain their good swords and the ability to collect good pieces. Clearly if we collectors sell we should try to get true value but we must also understand that as we sell, good swords will get rarer and dearer over here. We can't have it both ways. I think most collectors know that. I still like the idea of an auction and I hope that the JSS/US can and will take the lead in that type of activity. A system of personal and available auctions would make sword dealing more understandable. I frankly think that the overwhelming majority of American sword collectors have no idea what swords are worth. Some people can predict what they might get but for most we have to try a price to see if it "works". There is no method to our madness!

In that regard I believe that some parts of your article may have a negative result. With all the confusion that exists about sword prices I think it is most unwise to introduce as a standard for Americans the published "values" offered by downtown Tokyo sword merchants. I say this for two reasons.

First, we are not playing in their league. Let me use an analogy that will, I think, be familiar to the membership - many of whom started out as gun show goers. If I walked in to a small gun show in say Red Oak, Iowa, and found a re-blued 1860 Army Colt with mismatched numbers and replaced grips I could predict

PRICES cont'd.

a price of say "X". If the owners were asking 10 times "X" because, "that's what Norm Flayderman says they're worth" I would feel justified in pointing out several things. Red Oak, Iowa is not a market center; the owner is not Norm Flayderman; the piece is not in the condition it should be; I am not a collector of 1860 Colts; I have come to the owner - he didn't come to me, etc., etc. Now, that conversation would be diverted at a dull gun show, but the situation is comparable to our own. I do not believe we can hope to approach the Japanese price of swords. If we want to return to that Red Oak, Iowa gun show for a moment, I can foresee another result of your letter. Let's say that a couple of tables down I came across an out-of-polish Shintō wakizashi. How would I feel if the owner had it marked \$3,000 "because Japanese swords are worth \$6,000-\$7,000 in Chicago". To the uninformed Japanese swords are confusing enough. I strongly believe that bantying about big prices will only serve to increase the confusion and the difficulties of collecting.

Second, I don't think we understand what those big Tokyo prices really mean. I've been in the Ginza shops and in the homes of Japanese collectors. I don't know what the published prices do mean, but they quite clearly do not reflect prices that Japanese collectors pay between themselves. In conversation Japanese collectors are as mystified by those big figures as we are. It has even been suggested that those big prices are part of a scam. By advertising huge prices it is possible to sell "bargains" at only "high" prices (don't forget that there are naive collectors in Japan too). Then too, high priced items can be useful in trade situations, ("Well, I'll give you this \$10,000 sword for those 4 beaters over there"). Finally, Japanese collectors point out that the major list publishers make their money selling books and catalogues. Could it be that big prices on the merchandise helps to sell the real money makers? All this to say, I do not believe that the list "values" reflect real prices. This is not to suggest that we should accept low prices for swords we might sell. I simply don't think the Tokyo prices are a useful standard. Publishing them will do more harm than good. We should try to develop an open local market. One in which American collectors can fairly and openly compete and deal with Japanese or American dealers for swords that are available. Certainly we should become more than low level pickers for Japanese dealers or the Americans who service them. We should learn that dealers don't always pay more and that swords don't have to go to Japan to realize a fair price. (signed: Peter Bleed)

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Editor's note: The following is in answer to Mr. Bleed's comments (Mr. Freeman was given a copy of this letter prior to publication) and is supplied by Mr. Freeman.

## PRICES cont'd.

First, to reiterate the purpose of my article: slow the flow of Japanese swords from the U.S. to Japan. This loss can only be stopped by having U.S. prices equal Japanese prices for the swords. At the present time, Japanese prices are higher. Peter's objection is that the wrong Japanese prices are being quoted. That may be correct....the TOKO TAIKAN has weirdly high figures in it; perhaps it should be used the way we use Hawley's numbers....simply as a basis for comparison amongst swords. But there are valid prices....in the January issue of "Rei", for example, a mumei Ichimonji tachi (Jutō) is offered for ¥10,000,000, a bargain table tantō by Bishu Osafune Kiyomitsu dated Eiroku 12, for ¥380,000. Unless I am much mistaken, those are true and valid prices in Tokyo. While we do not know the condition of these blades, now we know a rough value where we might formerly have had to rely only on the offer of a collector or a dealer. Wouldn't you rather know?

I do not suggest matching prices out of the air. I propose that we all become familiar with prices on the market to which our swords eventually fly. Let's get valid prices. For don't be misled....we can trade with each other as bon fide collectors, but what will always interrupt that happy cycle of swords moving from American collector to American collector is the lure of a higher price outside the country. We can squirm about it, but until our prices match foreign prices, we shall continue to lose swords.

If the two markets equalize, what I want to see happen will happen....the chance to buy and trade swords with Japanese collectors just as I can now buy and trade with American collectors. If that happens, then the Japanese dealers will no longer be villains, they will be the agents to make such international trade possible. Instead of resenting suspected high profits, we will welcome their help.

It all hinges upon information, Peter. Help save our swords by getting the information and by publishing it for all to see.

### Editor's comments -

During the Dallas activities, the topic of sword pricing and the future of sword collecting, and the article by Mr. Freeman as presented in the last Newsletter, was certainly a popular topic of conversation. A number of people expressed their backing and interest for further "pricing education" via the JSS/US Newsletter. Negative feelings against this venture seemed in the minority.

Some interesting comments along these lines have been sent to the Newsletter, from Mr. Jon Bowhay. Jon is a polisher in Tokyo and as such, sees first hand the "flow of swords" back into Japan from all parts of the world. His comments follow.

## PRICES cont'd.

As mentioned in your Newsletter there are many swords returning to Japan monthly. As I do not do this sort of business I can't give exact figures, but, Tokyo is about 1,000 swords per month and Osaka is about the same or a little more. I cannot speak for the rest of Japan, but your Newsletter figure is decidedly conservative in the extreme. The biggest individual importer of swords to Japan is Americans. And I agree that if you (JSS/US, etc.) cannot curb this trend, Nihon-to will no longer be available in the U.S. You should consider how to stop this. You have an effective tool in the Newsletter itself. You simply must let everyone know that if this trend continues, the appreciation of Nihon-to in the U.S. will simply die. If you can curb the U.S. dealers, you will have probably cut the flow by more than 50% I would guess.

(signed: Jon Bowhay)

## Editor's comments -

Interestingly enough, comments from a Tokyo dealer were that he is having difficulty buying in the U.S. because "sword prices seem to be higher in the states than in Japan!"...it is assumed that this is in reference to average quality items and possibly not high quality, first rate items. An interesting thought. As Mr. Freeman pointed out, when prices being paid are high enough (in the U.S. by U.S. collectors), the flow of export swords will slow down and even reverse itself, thus being a regulating factor in controlling both prices and the loss of swords from our market.

Another interesting comment was made during Dallas, this time by a U.S. collector. After advertising the availability of several rather fine swords in the Newsletter (thereby reaching most of the serious collectors in the U.S.), only two or three people inquired and these were dealers. It seems that most of us are still conditioned to search out the basement specials, a carry-over from days past, and we miss worthy values because we ourselves are reluctant to pay a fair price for a sword.

The Newsletter will continue to carry material on this subject as long as the interest is there. One thing we must watch out for is that we do not lose our direction. We are not interested in making the dealer out as a bad guy....it is a dull show without them....but we should become aware of what sword values are and to think about the future of collecting in the states. Like it or not, all of our "collections" are investments. Realizing "true values" will firm up our investments and at the same time make it more costly to collect, but it is to our advantage in the long run to face facts and to start thinking beyond the "bargain basement prices of the 1960s". If you have further comments on this subject, feel free to send your comments to the authors of these articles and/or the Newsletter.

ISE DAIJO YOSHIHIRO

by Ron Hartmann

- SHAPE - Tachi, shinogi-zukuri form (made with ridgeline), medium toriizori (even curvature), medium degree of taper with medium long kissaki (tip). Shinogi-ji is medium narrow and the shinogi is raised. Ithore mune (two sided).
- HAMON - Medium wide notare suguha (undulating straight) hamon. Made in fairly wide nioi with abundant konie.
- BOSHI - Rounded boshi with slightly deep kaeri (turn-back).
- JIHADA - Although difficult to see it appears to be a tightly forged itame in the Hizen fashion.
- NAKAGO - The nakago is tapered with some sori. Nakago mune is almost flat but with slight roundness with kiri yasuri mei. The nakago has kiri yasurime (file marks made horizontally across nakago). There are two holes, one the result of moving the notches up 2.5cm. Otherwise, the nakago is ubu.

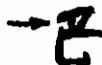
SIGNATURE - HIZEN KUNI JU ISE DAIJO FUJIWARA YOSHIHIRO

MEASUREMENTS - Blade: 2.2 shaku (66.8cm) Nakago: 7.3 sun (7.34cm)

REMARKS -

This smith was a student of 1st generation Hizen Tadayoshi who worked around the Sho-ō era (ca 1652). Not much has been found on this smith other than that he was a shodai Tadayoshi student and not one of the Tadayoshi genealogy being only a student/teacher relationship. He was given the title "Ise Daijo", as appears in this oshigata. According to Fujishiro Shinto-hen, his swords have been rated "Yoki Wazamono" attest-into to their cutting ability (this is third rating down on a rating of four).

This blade is by shodai Yoshihiro (1st generation). This is determined by a characteristic of strokes used in the first character "Hi" in Hizen. This is clearly shown in "Nihonto Zuikan" on page 910.



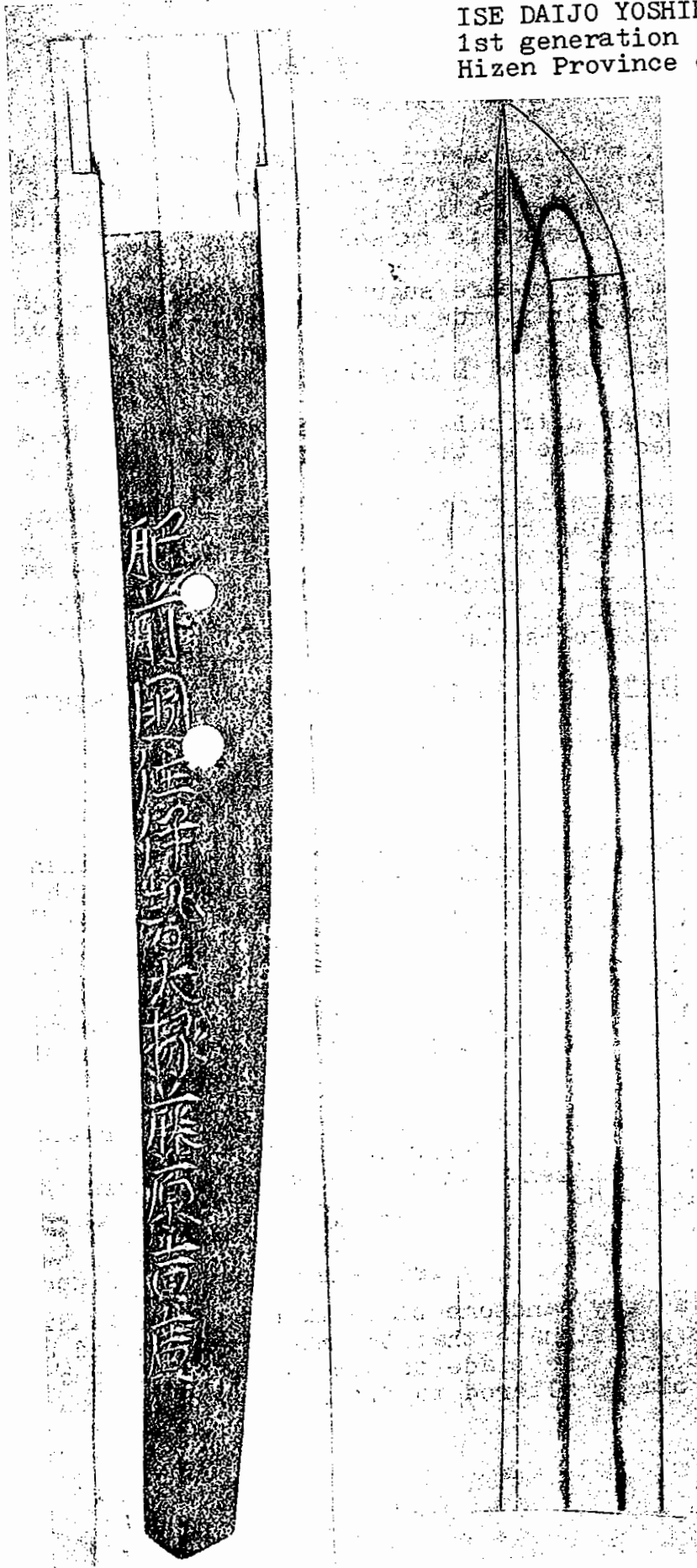
1st generation



2nd generation

This is a very handsome blade made in typical Hizen Tadayoshi style. It is unfortunate that the machi were moved up as this does distract from the blade to some degree, but such was the fate of many blades altered to fit into military mountings.

ISE DAIJO YOSHIHIRO  
1st generation  
Hizen Province ca.1652 era.



THE FIRST INSCRIBED SIGNATURE OF IZUMI(NO)KAMI  
KANESADA (NO-SADA), AND THE FIRST GENERATION  
IZUMI(NO)KAMI KANESADA.

by Mr. Takuo Suzuki

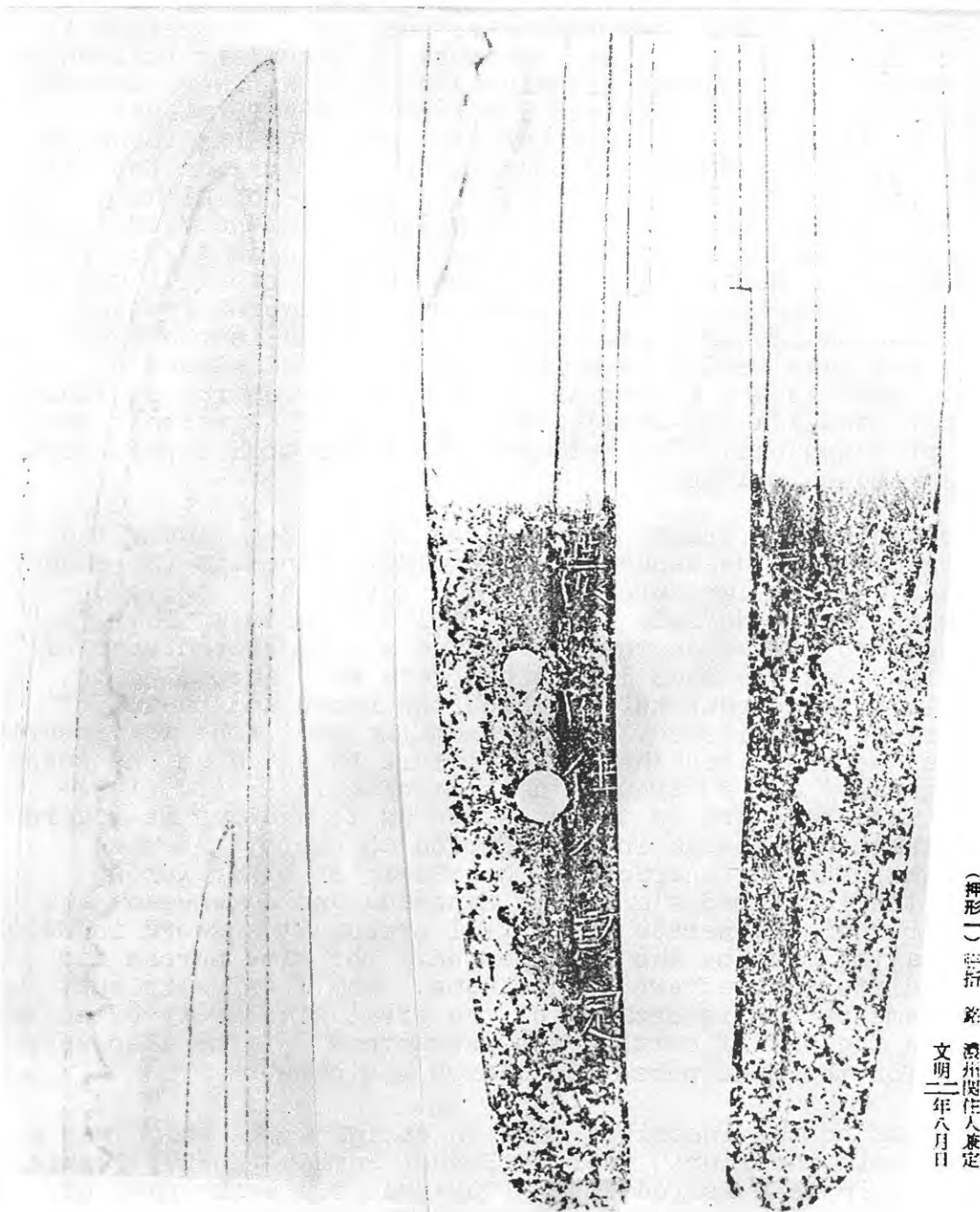
The following is a translation of an article which appeared in the NBTHK "Token Bijutsu", November 1977 issue, number 250. The translation was supplied by Mr. Robert Farrell of Manlius, New York.

Sword makers in Nino area became very popular around the end of the Muromachi Period (which is around the middle of the 15th century) and they must have been very prosperous to meet the demand of that time. Because of the great influence sword makers in Matsuzeki district gave to Mino sword makers, the existence of Matsuzeki sword makers is highly valued. Studies on individual makers, however, have not been done to a great extent but only very roughly so. The reason for this lack of studies on individual smiths is because originally Mino sword makers have been highly valued from the view point of practical use of swords as arms, not as swords to be appreciated as art. Because they made swords for practical use as arms, most of their inscribed signatures on swords are simply two Chinese character signatures, one of which is the character "Kane", and they seldom inscribed the dates and places of the makers. That is why I have tried to make a research on Izumi (no) Kami Kanesada (No-sada), who is one of the greatest sword makers at Matsuzeki. The following is a research paper about his inscribed signature.

According to reports handed down from olden times, the second generation descendent Izumi(no)Kami Kanesada (No-sada), inscribed as his signature SADA (足) before he inscribed a different form "No"sada (芝) at a later period. This "No"sada began to appear on the sword made at the second year of Bunki (1502) as one sees in the oshigata #4. According to the book "Koto Meishuroku" in which the names and photos of famous swords are listed, before Izumi(no)Kami Kanesada inscribed "No"sada, he inscribed the the signature Kanesada as one sees in oshigata #2 and #3 around the time of Meio Period (1492-1500). Then here arises the question as to whether we regard this signature Kanesada in Meio Period as one by the same person who used the characters "No"sada; in other words, whether the inscribed signatures Kanesada and Kanenosada are meant for the same person or not. I presume the sword in Meio Period may be made by the same person. The same person did use the different letters in his name. Why I think it must be the same person is because of the great similarity of engraving, and the way of cutting the characters. It is also very natural for the same person to change his name.

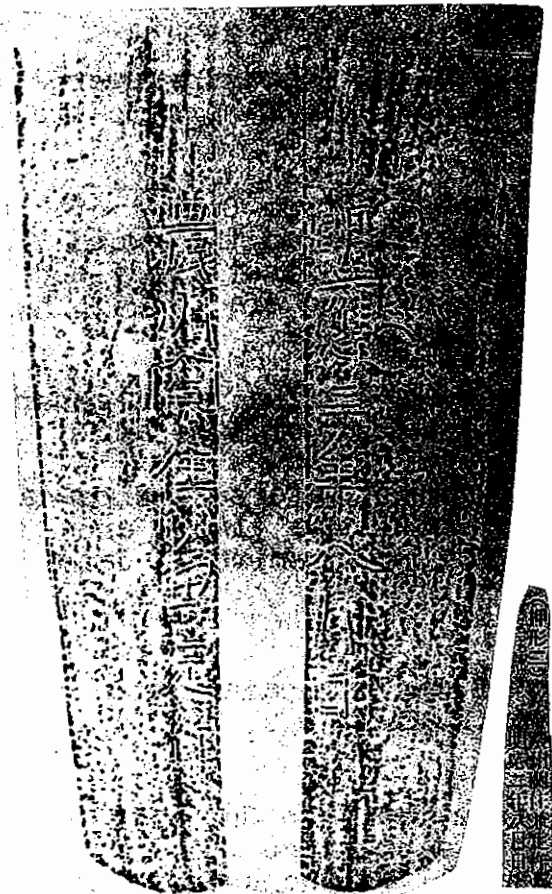
Now as to the inscribed name in oshigata #1, which was a sword made in the fourth year of Bunmei Period (1472), I said the sword made in Meio Period (1492-1500) which has the name of Kanesada was another name for Kanenosada, but the question is

whether I should also include the sword of Bunmei as made by the same person who used the letters Kanenosada or if I should separate these as being made by two different persons. When I saw this sword of Bunmei, I thought the person who made this and the person who made the sword of Meio were not the same person, because the way the letter Kane was inscribed as it was a little different. But I found later that the difference was also found in the sword made later on which the character "No" sada was inscribed. Therefore, I reconsider that Kanesada and Kanenosada may be the same person. According to the book called "Shinkan Hidensho", the characters Kanesada inscribed on swords are not neat and the way he inscribed is not consistent.

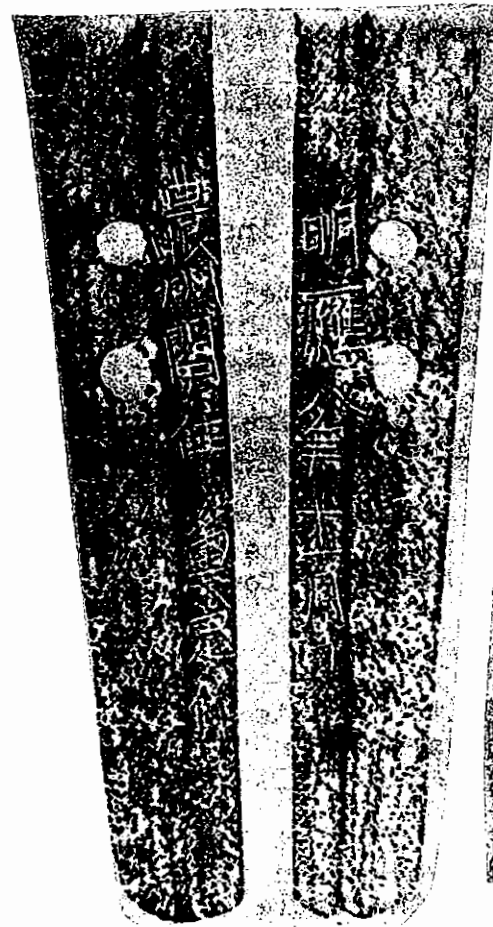


(押形一) 世良 勘左  
 澁州関住人康定  
 文明二年八月日

OSHIGATA #1

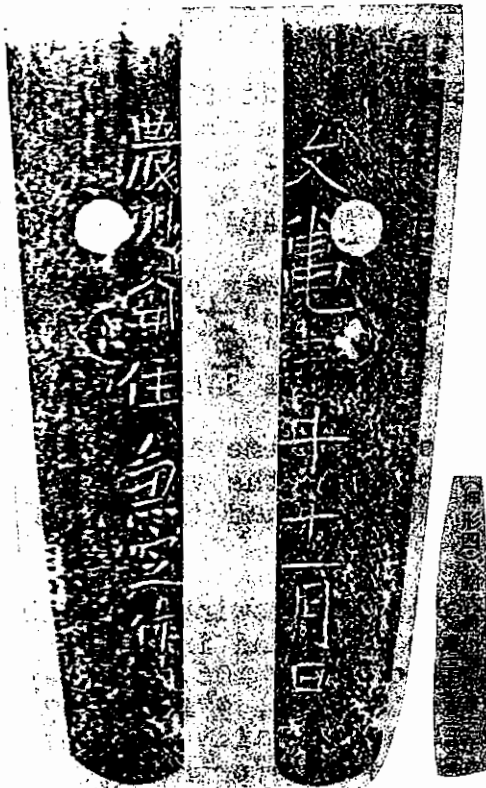


OSHIGATA #2



OSHIGATA #3

(押形三) 銘  
豊州國作並定作  
明應六年十一月日



OSHIGATA #4



OSHIGATA #5

(押形五) 銘(菊形)  
和泉守藤原兼光  
伊勢於山田定作

## Summary -

1. Izumi(no)Kami Kanenosada was engaged in making swords for 55 years, from the fourth year of Bunmei (1472) era to the sixth year of Taiei (1526) era.

2. He inscribed his signature, Kanesada from Bunmei era to Meio era. The characters Kanesada inscribed on the sword made in Bunmei era (1460-1500) was used as the first inscribed signature of him. After the eighth year of Meio era (1499), he changed his signature from Kanesada to Kanenosada.

3. Therefore, Izumi(no)Kami Kanenosada is the first generation descendent who made swrods under the name of Kanesada.

4. If I think there were another person before Kanenosada, he must be the person who lived before Bunmei era (1469) and we have not found any swords made by that other smith to date.

Editor's note: A further discussion of the Kanesada school is presented in "Nihonto Newsletter", Vol.2 No.10 p.8, by Albert Yamanaka. It reads in part:

The 1st Kanesada is said to be from the late Shizu School. He worked in the Akasaka district of this province (Mino) and had the title of SHINANO (no) KAMI as well as the use of the chrysanthemum seal and the chrysanthemum with a branch. However, such works are only recorded in old books and are not seen today. The 1st Kanesada is reported to have been active around the Bunmei Era (1469-1486) and he is commonly referred to as OYA KANESADA..

The 2nd Kanesada is the famous NO SADA. He at first inscribed his signature the same as the 1st, however from about the Eisho Era (1504-1520), he changed the character of the "sada" from 定 to 定. Since the radical is read "no" by itself, the 2nd Kanesada is commonly regarded to as "NO SADA".

The 3rd Kanesada also had his own perculiar way of inscribing the same character "sada". Instead of the "no" 之 like the 2nd, he inscribed it with the character "hiki" 疋 and therefore the 3rd Kanesada is referred to as "HIKI SADA".

NO SADA is regared to as the master of his time and along with Magoroku Kanemoto, his works are counted in the very top for their cutting quality (O WAZAMONO). NO SADA had the title IZUMI(no)KAMI.

Editor's note: A good clear series of oshigata showing signatures of the first three Kanesada generations can be found in "Nihon Tōko Jiten-Kotōhen" by Fujishiro, starting on page 106. Hawley reference numbers for these generations are KA-970, 971 and 972. The translation of Mr. Suzuki's article is not totally complete and therefore oshigata #5 is not explained in this printing.

#### BIRMINGHAM SWORD SHOW COMING -

The summer Southeast Tokenkai Sword Show is scheduled to be held in Birmingham, Alabama from August 29th (opens 1pm) through Sunday August 31st. Tables will be \$25 for the show. A \$10 fee will be charged none-tableholders. The show will be held at the Airport Ramada Inn (same as last February). Special room rates are \$28 single and \$32 double. For table and room reservations contact: PAUL COUCH,

Plan to attend this fine show if at all possible. Paul tries very hard to attend to the needs of collectors by presenting a good sword show twice a year on a regular basis.

It is a wonderful opportunity to get together with new and old friends and not only enjoy good company, but perhaps do a bit of wheeling and dealing too. Why not....bargains and discoveries are found at every show! Bring the wife and give her a mini-vacation too (she can watch your table for you). Shared trips are often "good politics" on the home front guys! Paul has set the stage.....make it a fine "sword weekend" by attending the show. The more the merrier!

#### SWORD TOUR SCHEDULED -

The sixth annual "Samurai Sword Tour of Japan" is scheduled for departure on October 9th, 1980. The tour is sponsored by the Northern California Sword Club, Inc. under leadership of our sensei John Yumoto. Travel arrangements by Sakura Travel Bureau.

The itinerary reads like another exciting and rewarding experience for the sword collector. Museum tours, private collection visits, castles, a trip back in time....it all is most inviting. The repeat bookings of past tour members attest to the enjoyment of this tour. For information, contact: Mr. John Yumoto,

#### EXHIBITION BY TOSHIO ODATE -

An exhibition of the work of Toshio Odate, including some of the Japanese born artists remarkable "melted wood" carvings, will be shown in the Lions Gallery of the Senses at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, from April 15 through June 22, 1980.

Odate, who lives near Woodbury, Connecticut, and teaches sculpture, drawing and wood working at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, has picked four samples of his "melted wood" carvings for inclusion in this show. Several free events have been scheduled to accompany the exhibition including a demonstration of the use of Japanese wood tools on June 8th. If you are in the area during this fine exhibit, plan to visit as it will certainly be an enjoyable one.

### SHINTO-SHU TRANSLATION AVAILABLE -

A long awaited translation is now available. Steve Winkley of Provo, Utah, a student of the Japanese language, has announced the availability of a complete translation of "Shinto-shu", the book of oshigata which many of us have in our libraries. This is a 58 page typed copy on 8½" x 11" high quality paper and will no doubt prove of great value to all of us. Steven received the authorization of the author, Mitsuo Shibata to make this publication a reality. Copies are available at \$17.50 (post paid) unbound, or \$20 pp for bound (spiral bound) copies. This is a fine contribution by Steven but he needs your support. To place your order contact: Steven Winkley,

### BUY-SELL-TRADE COLUMN -

This section of the "Newsletter" is offered as a free service to the membership, providing an opportunity to advertise for specific needs. Please keep ads short and to-the-point. Send ads direct to the "Newsletter" editor, well ahead of deadline.

- WANTED - Katana by Bungo (no) Kami Minamoto Masatomo (sometimes read Masayasu), Hawley MA-657; Waki-zashi or tanto by Chikuzen Nobukuni Yoshimasa, Hawley YO-913. Contact: Arnold Frenzel,
- FOR SALE - Various sword books. Contact: Mel Oka,
- WANTED - Book: "Japanese Orders and Medals", by the Orders and Medals Society/US, copyright 1967. Contact: John Kurylo,
- FOR TRADE - Naginata, Shinto, ubu, 55cm blade, 46cm nakago, Trade for Wakizashi by MUNEYOSHI (MU318), or SUKESADA (SU465). Naginata 80% polish, new shirazaya, no kizu. Contact: Gary Murtha,
- WANTED - Blades or tsuba by Shinshinto NAOKATSU (1st or 2nd). If not for sale, oshigata appreciated. Also wish 1st rate YOSHIRO tsuba and shakudo menuki. Contact: "Newsletter" editor.
- WANTED - Wakizashi signed: NAOMICHI or MISHINA TANGO (no) KAMI NAOMICHI, or unsigned of Mishina school with sudareba hamon. Cash or trade sword. Contact: Howard Sloan,
- WANTED - "Arts of Asia" issues 1971 #2,4,5; 1972 #2,3,5,6; 1973 #1,2,4. Contact: Alan Harvie,

## HONORARIUM POLICY -

As of the first of this year the Society has begun the newly adopted practice of presenting an honorarium of \$25 to authors of articles which are used in the Society publications. The intent of this new policy was to stimulate the membership into sharing their knowledge and research findings with the membership through published articles, thereby improving the value of membership in the Society. When this policy was initially proposed (during a board meeting in 1979) the "Newsletter" editor was asked to draw up guidelines for article acceptance and payment of the honorarium. It was also suggested that the editor be the one to be responsible for acceptance or rejection of an article. These guidelines have been drawn up and are hereby presented to the membership.

Articles to be considered for publication under this new policy must be original in content and be research papers, reports on an exhibit or seminar, or any such creditable piece of material which serves a teaching and/or informative purpose. Articles should be well thought out, organized, and of a reasonable length. They should be presented in typed form although not necessarily finish-typed. (It is no problem to retype an article but trying to read hand written material can be a task at times).

All articles published in the annual "Bulletin" will fall under this honorarium policy. On the other hand, not all the material used in the bimonthly "Newsletter" will. Items which, because of their nature, not be awarded this honorarium are items such as oshigata, book reviews, reprinted material, translations of previously published articles, letters and discussion-type topics, etc. Some exceptions will be taken on occasion and these will be at the discretion of the editor.

Articles and photographs are submitted at Owner's risk. Although reasonable care is taken in their handling, the Society can not accept responsibility for loss or damage. All material will be retained in the Society files unless the author specifically request its return.

The "Newsletter" and "Bulletin" editor(s) will not be eligible for receipt of any honorarium.

Payment will be mailed to U.S. authors in the form of a Society check. Because of the problem in currency exchanges, none U.S. authors will be given several choices of payment. These will be: A Society check in U.S. dollars; a credit on their future dues; a credit on a supply order. These authors will be advised of their choices and asked for their pick of them.

HONORARIUM con't.

These guidelines are presented for membership information in hopes of making the Society honorarium policy work. It is sincerely hoped that the none payment with regards to the normal "Newsletter" material such as mentioned will not work against us and serve to "discourage" contributors. Such general "news items", etc., will continue to be greatly needed if the "Newsletter" is to serve it's intended purpose. In conclusion, membership comments and suggestions on this policy are always welcomed and should be directed to the "Newsletter" editor.

NEW MEMBERS -

We proudly welcome the following "new members" into the Society:

Gordon Holm,  
Stanley J. Bourgeois,  
John M. Fenwick,  
\* Jose M. Gueco,  
Robert M. Sherman,  
Mathew J. Zabinski,  
Peter Young,

\*

ADDRESS CHANGES -

DROPPED MEMBERSHIPS -

We still have around 66 members who have not paid their 1980 dues to date. Of this number, at least a dozen are just "late" although the remainder apparently wish to be dropped. They will not be receiving this issue of the "Newsletter", so if anyone hears of some complaints on this please mention that this is most likely the reason this issue was not received. All members including those dropped (since they were on the 1979 Roster) will receive the 1979 "Bulletin", since this is due them.

1979 "BULLETIN" STATUS -

The "Bulletin" is in the process of being printed at this writing. An injury to our usual printer has contributed to the delay of this issue, but hopefully the finished product will be worth the wait. Most likely it will be mailed out about the same time as this issue of the "Newsletter". Patience is a virtue!

## SOME DISCUSSION ON "UTSURI" -

(Token Kantei Techo by Kanzan Sato, trans. by John Yumoto as appeared in JSS/US Bulletin Vol.3 No.3 - Autumn 1962)

UTSURI or "reflection" - The nature of the steel and the method of forging or final tempering, you will find a misty reflection like phenomena on the surface between the yakiba (edge of hamon) and the shinogi of the blade. This was made more or less intentionally by various smiths subsequent to its earlier accidental discovery. If this noticeably exists on the blade, we can use it to identify the blade.

BIZEN UTSURI - The sword made in Bizen Province from the Kamakura to the Muromachi Period, almost without fail, has white utsuri. These can be divided into two groups; midare-utsuri, or the irregular or wavy ones and bō-utsuri, the straight, stick-like ones. Also, these midare utsuri are not necessarily continuous but sometimes break off or are interrupted here and there.

In the Kamakura to Yoshino Period, you will find midare utsuri among the Ichimonji, Osafune, Hatakeda and other schools. (Note: midare utsuri can be found in midare yakiba as well as suguha. The utsuri does not necessarily reflect the hamon. For example, in blades by Mitsutada one finds utsuri discontinuous and different from the pattern of the hamon.)

In the early to mid Muromachi Period, Osafune Bizen work becomes bō utsuri or stick-like, straight utsuri regardless of the hamon. Late Aoye school work in the Yoshino Period sometimes has bō utsuri.

SHIRAKE UTSURI (whitish utsuri) - This is irregular shaped utsuri, vaguely shaped and reflects just a white appearance. This will be found in many kotō blades of Hyushu, such as Yukihiro, Miike, Enju, Naminohira and so forth. We call this condition shirake, gokuro. When shirake gokuro exists it is a whitish reflection that does not form a definite utsuri. Found in Mihara school of Bingo Province, Kamakura to Muromachi, almost all Mino Seki blades during Muromachi, and almost all Kaga Province work in Muromachi Period.

JIFU UTSURI - Ordinarily utsuri appears as a white or lightish color. Contrary to this you might find dark colored spotty areas. That is called jifu. This is also found among the swords of ko-Aoye or chu-Aoye swords from Heian to Kamakura Periods. This is called sumi hada of Aoye. Sumi means clear in this case. This dark colored spotty hada is called sumi hada of the Aoye school. This is also commonly called namazuhada or cat fish hada because the skin of the catfish resembles this sort of dark grey hada. However, in a strict sense, this namazu-hada should refer to black and white mixed together in a fine grain. Sumi hada is jifu mixed with an ordinary hada. These jifu are found among the work of the masters of the Soshu school from Kamakura to Yoshino Periods. Often you find a concentrated spot that becomes blotchy and this is called ubashiri. This is only found in masterworks that are basically nioi deki. In shinshintō, Suishinshi Masahide often tried mixed jifu of white and black. Other shinshintō smiths also tried this idea.

COLLECTION STOLEN IN ARMED ROBBERY -

Member George Moody of Charlottesville, Virginia lost his collection plus a sizable amount of precious stones (George makes jewelry) May 27th during an armed robbery. The sword "Hot Line" was used and the "Newsletter" was given a list of items stolen. It is felt that the tsuba and blades will be dumped on the market as a lot so we should make note of the descriptions and keep our eyes open for such a grouping. The items stolen are as follows:

Naginata, unsigned, 15½", ubu, shinto, suguha hamon, full polish and in shirazaya (with tsuka missing).

Katana, black handachi mounts, mumei, 26 1/16" long, ubu, koto, chip in edge at monouchi, thin tachi shape with midare hamon. Was in red sword bag with gold flowers.

Tsuba:

Iron, rnded square, flat inlay brass and silver insects, three on front and one on back, katana size, unsigned.

Shakudo, nanako ground, oval, Goto style, small graceful gold plant on lower right, mumei, 6.5 x 6.1cm.

Iron, mokko with boar's eyes, gold tendrils around carved leaves, signed SHOAMI KANENORI, 6.9 x 6.6cm.

Iron, oval, carved cherry blossoms on smooth waves in smooth border, mumei, 7.2 x 6.8cm.

Iron, round, reed cutter looking at moon, gold and silver details, signed TOU, 7.5 x 7.3 cm.

Iron, rnded square, silver head of fukurokuju, mumei, 8.3 x 7.5cm.

Iron, round, fully carved dragon chasing tama inside heavy smooth border, gold accents, signed and dated INSHU ---SAI, 12th month Kaei 3 (1851), 7.3 x 7.2cm.

Iron, mokko shape, trees, nets, birds with gold and copper, mumei, back side pitted, 9.2 x 8.6cm.

Iron, round, shishi and peony carved in full round, heavy border, signed: ECHIZEN JU KINAI SAKU, 7.2 x 7.2cm.

Iron, lotus leaves fully carved without border, signed: CHOSHU JU TOMOSHIGE, 7.6 x 7.3cm.

Iron, oval, lilies and leaves in full round carving, Tetsu-gendo school, signed in script with gold kakihan, 6.4 x 5.8cm.

Iron, oval, etched mokume pattern, mumei, 7.4 x 6.7cm.

Iron, oval, carved dragon with heavy gold overlay, Jakushi school, mumei, 7.4 x 7.0cm.

ROBBERY cont'd.

Iron, oval, leaves engraved with one pierced, shakudo plugs, mumei, 6.1 x 5.8cm.

Iron, mokko shape, carved dragon in clouds, mumei, tanto size.

Iron, mokko shape, carved dragon in clouds and waves, mumei, (mounted on katana that was taken).

Kashira, iron, carved dragon in clouds, gold eyes, from a set signed: SOTEN. (the fuchi was dropped during the robbery).

#### SWORD FORGING DEMONSTRATION -

For those who missed Mr. Yoshihara in Dallas, you will have another chance to see him forge swords. The "ABANA-CBA North American Blacksmith Conference", to be held at the University of California, Santa Cruz, August 20-24th, will have swordsmith Yoshihara Yoshindo forging swords as part of their international aspect of the conference. This will certainly be a wonderful opportunity for members in the area. For further information on this conference, contact the University.

#### NEW SWORD GROUPS FORMED -

The Houston, Texas area collectors have formed an informal study group. The Houston Token Kai meets bimonthly on the 1st Sunday, usually at a members home. They welcome visitors! Please contact: Mel Oka or Gordon Bailey for meeting information.

The Japanese Sword Society of Canada has been formed as a study group in the Toronto area. Interested parties should contact: Frederick Fimio,

#### LIBRARY ADDITION -

The catalogue of fittings from the Raymond Bushell collection, entitled "The World of Sword Furnishing", has arrived from Japan and has been placed in our library. The 56 page catalogue has abundant pictures of fine menuki and other fittings. The picture quality is excellent and there is English/Japanese text although that does raise questions at times. It is still a fine addition to one's library. It is available for purchase at \$20 from: Mr. Raymond Bushell,

#### STOLEN SWORD HOT-LINE - **(800) 435-5119** ext.700

Remember, if you had a sword stolen or suspect the finding of stolen sword and fittings collections, call this number and the FBI will be advised immediately.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - The next issue of the "Newsletter" is due out first part of August. Please have all material intended for that issue into the editor well ahead of this time.



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