

Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

Volume 13 No. 2

March-April • 1981

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

As announced in the last Newsletter, six vacancies for directorship needed to be filled. It was decided that an election between officers and directors be held to determine who should fill these open slots. An election was held and the following people are our newly elected directors:

Andrew Quirt.....Edina, Minnesota
Mel Oka.....Dickinson, Texas
Bob Coleman.....Chicago, Illinois
Bob Lewert.....Chicago, Illinois
Curtis Uhls.....Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
John Nettles.....Chicago, Illinois

Our sincere thanks to the other nominees, Gil Novak, Kansas City, MO.; Wes Walker, Plano, Texas; Karel Wiest, Detroit, Michigan. Their concern in wanting to assist in the functions of the Society is greatly appreciated. The newly elected directors will fill the slot for the two-year term, 1980-1981, with Mr. Ed Dobrzanski and Mr. Rod McIlquham moving into the three-year slots in need of filling. Our new directors are concerned members and will certainly be assets to our organization. (It should be noted that Mel Oka was the founder of our bi-monthly Newsletter about ten years ago.)

LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN -

The major problem facing the JSS/US is communication. It is very hard for an organization like ours to "pull together" or even to identify widely shared goals because we members are so widely spread. We can't just sit down and decide to do something. As a next best alternative, the officers and directors have begun a regular "Officers Letter" as a means of initiating and organizing Society projects. Since January, I have sent out two OL's and have enjoyed getting the responses of the other officers. The OL is a brief ditto's letter which

The Official Bi-Monthly Publication of the Japanese Sword Society of the U.S./Inc.
Annual Membership \$15 U.S./Canada and \$20 Foreign. Life Membership
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CHAIRMAN cont'd.

deals strictly with JSS/US business. They are non-confidential but fairly dull! In the first two OL's, I dealt mainly with organizational issues and selection of directors to fill the openings which existed. In addition we have also made some slight progress on a couple of fronts.

First of all, the Officers have decided to try to add substance to the Newsletter by asking one or more established sword authorities to accept a regular honorarium in return for regular contributions to our publication. The first individual we will approach is Mr. Albert Yamanaka. I certainly hope that he will accept our offer and write for our NL the same fine articles he had in his Nihonto Newsletter. With an ever expanding membership, we hope to expand this program.

In a second area of activity, the Officers have moved to make themselves a "Publication Committee" which will oversee distribution of generally useful sources on Japanese swords and fittings. This is a hard area. We have a couple of projects in the very preliminary stages. I hope to have some specific results to report in the next Newsletter. In the meantime, I encourage all of the members to send me suggestions for publication which they would like to see the JSS/US undertake.

Finally, we have begun discussion of a JSS/US Sword Show or Convention. Before we proceed, we have to know whether or not the membership desires such an event. Again, please let me know your thoughts on what would make such a gathering successful.

Let me sign off by saying that I hope all JSS/US members will feel free to communicate their ideas with me or with other officers. That is the best way we have of making progress as a group.

(signed) Peter Bleed

**THE JAPANESE SWORD SOCIETY OF
MARYLAND
and
BALTIMORE ANTIQUE ARMS ASSOCIATION
Pikesville Armory - Pikesville, Maryland
MAY 23 - 24, 1981**

NEW MEMBERS -

We are happy to welcome the following new members into our group:

Jan Eric Svanberg,
P. Fialides,
Don Nishimura,
D. Vaughan,
Hugh M. Sanborn,
Frank Tipton Jr.,
John Vanhise,
Stan Myers,
Dale Meiners,
Robert B. Jensen,
N. Hatanaka,
William H. Rapp,
Collector's Corner,
James R. Spear,
Robert K. Butcher,
William R. Thompson,
Garrett S. Olmsted,
Tom Clinton,
Edmond H. McCarthy,
J.L.Mundorff,
Herb Rosenbaum,
J.J.Bowden,
David Darby,
Richard L. Darby,
Chappie Gennett,
Richard Bell,
David Pryor,
John F. McHugh,
Alan J. Kawaters,
M. Andre Pelland,

BOOK ON GOTO FAMILY -

Although not a formal review, a personal indorsement is in order. The Japanese book, GOTO KE JUSHICHI DAI, the 17 generations of Goto, is a most worthy addition to any library. Hard cover, thirty-eight color pages, the remaining in well illustrated photos and line drawings, 258 pages total. A good portion of this text goes into details showing the "secret marks" of the various artists from Goto family. Hopefully this can be translated into english at some future date, either privately or as a society venture. Cost is around \$100US and can be highly recommended for any collector interested in kodogu.

BIRMINGHAM SHOW A SUCCESS -

The Southeast Tokenkai sword show was held mid February in Birmingham, Alabama. A good crowd was on hand with forty one tables rented; a successful event indeed.

Aside from the usual resale items being offered for sale, several significant items were also on hand, if not for sale at least to be enjoyed. Perhaps the most rare item seen at the show was a ko-Bizen tachi, ubu, signed by Sukehira (ca. early 11th century, SU-50, K593). Also on hand was a fine Hasebe Kunishige tanto and a beautiful Naotane wakizashi. Other fine blades were also on hand to enjoy making it a most enjoyable weekend. A number of exhibits were set up including the "cream" of my personal menuki collection (thanks to Billy Johnson who located an exhibit case for me). Paul Goodman also had some fine fittings available along with several other table holders.

A Society table was again donated for society use by Paul Couch. Supplies were sold and members solicited.

Sensei John Yumoto was on hand to answer questions and give opinions on blades and fittings. John also presented a slide lecture on kodogu history. Following this lecture a video tape was shown, compliments of Dallas Channel Thirteen, depicting master swordsmith Yoshihara forging swords during the Dallas affair last year. This tape was followed by a tape of the National Geographic special, Living National Treasures of Japan. (Both of these tapes have been added to our library).



JOHN YUMOTO EXAMINING A SWORD



ROY STROHACKER SHOWING A VERY LARGE
KOTO TACHI WITH FINE HORIMONO.



PAUL COUCH AND JOHN YUMOTO



ACTION ON THE FLOOR



THE HARTMANN FAMILY AND PAUL COUCH

Photographs
compliments of
Paul Couch
and
Jim Baize

Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



J.S.S.U.S. LIBRARY UPDATE 1981

As a reminder to all members both old and new, the society provides a library for the free use of available books. The procedure for borrowing books is to first request the books of your choice from the librarian. These books will then be mailed 4th. class book rate and insured to the borrower. Upon receipt the cost of postage and insurance paid should be returned to the librarian and within 30 days the books should be returned by the same method at the expense of the borrower. Also I would like to request that being as we are an ever growing society of approximately 500 members, that the borrower be patient when waiting for books ordered, as we have but single copies of some of the most borrowed books with a sometime waiting list of 2 or more, which means a waiting time in excess of 60 days. Therefore please limit the number of books borrowed to 3 at any one time and every effort will be made to get them to you as soon as possible.

Also an attempt is being made by your librarian to update this service by providing the following:

1. That whenever possible a "J.S.S.U.S. Library Reference Table" be set up at sword shows making available reference material for members attending, such as Hawley, s Vol. 1&2, Fujishiro's Koto & Shinto, Shinto shu and Yamanakas Newsletters.

2. And being as we are basically an educational organization that select books in both Japanese and English text, books of greater interest to the more advanced collector be purchased regularly and added to the library.

3. That additional copies of the most used and borrowed books also be added to shorten the waiting time as previously mentioned.

Hopefully with approval these services will come to be soon.

The following books and etc. are presently available.

Respectfully,

Howard Sloan, J.S.S.,U.S. Librarian.

Editor's note:

Howard will see that reference books are made available at future shows whenever possible. They will be set aside for use on some specially designated table, clearly marked for that purpose.

Additional copies of most requested books and a program to buy new titles for the library on a regular basis is being looked into. This should not be any problem for us.

There are a number of seldom used titles in our library that could be sold and the money then turned into more useful titles. This idea too is being investigated.

The problem of turn-around time when borrowing books, particularly with our more distant members, may soon be solved by the formation of mini-branches to our library. Again, another idea which has been brought up and is being investigated.

THE KUNIKANE OF SENDAI

by Peter Bleed

The following is a brief geneology of the Kunikane line of swordsmiths. It is based on information in the fine volume Sendai-Han Toshō Meikan. The Kunikane line were the premier swordmakers of Sendai and for more than 250 years they made beautiful swords characterized by masame hada and fine suguha hamon. The beauty of these swords makes it remarkable that their makers are relatively poorly known. The men who held the name Kunikane lived in an isolated northern city. Their lords in the Date family were rich with agricultural lands and did not seek to develop trade and industry as did the rulers of areas like Hizen. The Kunikane, thus, made swords for Sendai and their works tended to flow directly into the Date armouries. They had scant followings in Edo, though their skill was always respected. Bad luck also plagued the line and kept it from fame. The story of the Kunikane heightens the simple beauty of the swords they made.

First generation Kunikane was of the Minamoto line. He was born in the Yamato district and came to Sendai at the behest of DATE Masamune in 1627. At approximately that same time he obtained the title, Yamashiro Daijō. He retired at the age of 54 but did continue making swords. In the 16th or 17th year of Kan-ei (about 1639) he took the classical name Yōkei, sometimes writing it Yōkei Kunikane. He died at the age of 72 (some reports say 73) in 1664. He was a student of Etchu Kami Masatoshi.

The second Kunikane was the legitimate son of the first master born in 1611. He studied with his father and took the title Yamashiro (no) Kami in 1668 or a bit earlier. He died in 1672 at age 61.

His legitimate son was the third Kunikane, born in 1634. He started his apprenticeship with his father very early and retired in the 10th year of Genroku (1697). He died at the age of 73 in 1707.

The fourth Kunikane was the younger brother of number three. He was born in 1656 and was the first of several generations to die young. He died at age 41 in 1697. Note that all of these first four generations overlapped in time.

The fifth Kunikane was the biological son of the fifth Kanekura, a parallel line of smiths started by a student of Kunikane 1st. He was adopted into the Kunikane line as a young boy. He died in 1707. His age was unclear. By this time, the line was falling on hard times. The sixth Kunikane was the son of number four. He was born in 1694 when his father was quite old. For whatever reason, he was apprenticed to Kunitsugu (KU 784) but unfortunately died at only 34 years of

KUNIKANE cont'd.

age in 1726 (?). The seventh smith to hold the name Kunikane was the brother of number six. He was born in 1701 and his first signature was Kuniyuki (). He died at the age of 41. The eighth Kunikane was younger brother (?) of number eight. He studied with the Kanekura and later with Kuniyoshi (KU 933). He too, died young, aged 30, in 1763.

The tenth Kunikane made a valiant attempt to strengthen the line. He was the son of number nine. He first studied with Kaneyuki (KA 380?) but later, in 1782, he went to Edo to apprentice with Suishishi Masahide. He started to use the name Kunikane at the age of 22 and is known to have signed blades together with Masahide. He was a skilled artisan but, again, the line was hit with an early death. This man died at the age of 29 in 1786.

The eleventh Kunikane lived to the age of 50, dying in 1816. It is claimed that he was the son (?) of the ninth generation although he supposedly was born some years after that man's death. The records are, thus, unclear. He was apprentice at various times to Kaneyuki (KA 380?) and later Kanemitsu (a Sendai smith who had studied with Masahide). The line was continued by the twelfth Kunikane, the son of number eleven. He, too, studied with Kanemitsu. Several of his signed and dated swords exist and he was quite active. He died in 1848 at the age of 49.

The thirteenth generation was lucky for the Kunikane line. The man who held this position was the son of number twelve. He made a great many swords having apprenticed with his father. He died at the age of 61 in the 13th year of Meiji (1880). He continued making swords after the Meiji Restoration and so it would seem that the Kunikane line had successfully made it all the way through the Tokugawa period and into Japan's modern era. Consider how few swordsmith lines did that. If the fourteenth generation could--literally--keep the fires burning, as did smiths like Gassan Sadakazu, the Kunikane line would have been unique. That almost happened. The son of number thirteen learned the craft of his father and made swords until he was well into his mid-twenties. Early in the Meiji period, though, this man left Sendai, became the adopted son of a family named Satō, and took up their family business. He became a fish merchant!

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SEVERAL IMPORTANT AUCTIONS TO BE HELD -

Two significant auctions are scheduled which should be of great interest to all sword and kodogu collectors. The first to be held will be the Alfred Cohn Collection. This is a fine collection of quality items, primarily mounted tantō. Alfred was a JSS/US member and his love for tantō was well known. It should be an impressive auction. Catalogue is available from

Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc.

MAY 5th, 1981
Sale #4596Y
Catalogue \$10.00

AUCTIONS cont'd.

The second auction scheduled is The Jack Paras Collection, to be held by Butterfield & Butterfield in San Francisco. Jack is one of the founding fathers of the JSS/US back in the late 1950s and his collection is well known by many. Indeed this too will be an auction of great interest to all of us. A full page ad pertaining to this sale appears on the back cover of this issue of the Newsletter.

BUTTERFIELD & BUTTERFIELD

MAY 26th, 1981
Catalogue available
after 3/15th @ \$12.50

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A WARNING FROM NBTHK -

The following warning was printed in the latest issue of Token Bijutsu (english edition) by the NBTHK.

Recently, a number of false Jūyō Tōken Shiteisho are known to have been in circulation mostly in the Ōsaka area. Since they are totally forged, not merely falsified or altered, in printing the form itself, it is foreseen that the false certificates are ready for mass production and will be spread out widely.

It is not too difficult to distinguish those false certificates from authentic ones because the printing of the forged form is quite poor and the *tsuba* printed on it are unclear and partially only faintly showing, and also because they bear wrong designation numbers. The attached illustration of *oshigata* is also printed, but the tracing of *hamon* is poor, and especially when the *nakago* area is examined closely the authentic illustration is collotyped and therefore shows no mesh, while the forged *oshigata* just like the photographs used in Tōken Bijutsu shows mesh.

So far, those forged certificates are only found of *mumei* (unsigned) blades, but it is feared that they will soon begin to include signed blades. Be sure to inquire of us, if you should come across any doubtful cases.

False Jūyō Bijutsuhin certificates have been also discovered recently. We should like to advise you all to be on the watch for such false papers.

JSS/US MEMBER DIES -

The Newsletter was recently informed of the death of Norman F. Darby. He died suddenly November 27th at the age of 35, from a heart attack.

Of Norman's many interests, collecting swords was his main hobby. Upon graduation from the University of South Florida, he spent four years in the Navy. After discharge he went to work for RCA on Andrus Island and was with them for eight years. Norman's interest in swords was probably sparked by his several visits to Japan during the war. He was a JSS/US member for two years.

In his memory, Mrs. Darby, his mother, has signed up his two brothers as new society members. Their interest in carrying on Norman's collection stimulated this gesture. On behalf of the society, we wish to express our sympathy to the family of Norman Darby.

Ron Hartmann-editor

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A REQUEST FROM MRS. TREVINO -

Shirley Trevino, wife of the late Bill Trevion (Nihonto Kemma, Ltd.), has asked that the following notice be included in this issue of the Newsletter.

A number of people gave Bill items to be presented to shinsa during the Dallas affair last April. Most of the papers are in hand now and if the owners would send her a description of their items which are due papers, she will send the papers. (If the item is a sword, a rubbing would greatly assist in identifying the paper). She can be contacted through PO Box 1256, Denton, TX 76201.

Thanks to Bill's many friends a minimum of confusion has been experienced while sorting out his business transactions. The patience of those awaiting word about their papers or swords, etc., is greatly appreciated.

MORE SWORD FORGING IN DALLAS -

Mr. R. B. Caldwell has notified us that Mr. Yoshihara Yoshindo, master swordsmith, will return to Dallas soon to again forge swords by the traditional methods. The kajiba, which will be dedicated to the memory of Bill Trevino, will be dedicated April 24th.

Commissions for blades are now being accepted. Early placement of orders is suggested as the number of blades to be forged will be limited.

YOSHIHARA cont'd.

Attendance at this event will be by invitation only since the forge is at a private home, and not a public affair as was the event last year. Anyone interested in ordering a sword or to perhaps express a desire to visit the forge while Mr. Yoshihara works, should contact:

NEW ADDITIONS TO SUPPLY LIST -

Several new items have been offered on the 1981 Supply List, included in with this mailing. They are:

Tantō, by Suzuki - 1980 reprint. Our supply of these books are enroute from Japan. This is a beautifully illustrated book, Japanese text, showing fine tantō. Thanks to a generous discount given by the publisher we are able to offer this at a most reasonable price.

Early Japanese Sword Guards; Sukashi Tsuba, Sasano - 1972. One of the most stimulating books on iron sukashi tsuba, it is guaranteed to warm the heart of anyone even vaguely interested in iron tsuba! Although offered by us for many years, our supply finally ran out and the book was found to be out-of-print. Thanks to Mr. Sasano, a supply was found in England and we were able to purchase them. Although our cost has gone up on these books, it is still a bargain at it's price.

Weighted bags - Although lead shot bags, for use with making oshigata (to hold down the paper), are easily made it was thought that perhaps such an item would be of interest to the membership. They are being offered as a convenience item. Their use when working with oshigata paper greatly helps to hold the paper in place, always a problem when making a rubbing.

ITEMS NOT ON NEW SUPPLY LIST -

Japanese Swords, Benjamin Smith Lyman, 1890 (reprint). A 38 page heavy paper cover booklet, reprinted awhile back by the late Tom Buttweiler. A paper read before the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia, April 3rd, 1890. \$3.00pp

Exhibition Catalogue - Paperback booklet written by Mr. Charles Watrall (JSS/US member) to go along with an exhibit of swords and fittings several years ago. An interesting little booklet. \$3.00pp

Token Taikai 1976 Book of Lectures - Our long awaited supply has come in but, unfortunately, only enough copies were found to cover our back orders. One extra copy may remain but if so it will be placed into our library. Sorry about the limited copies. If anyone knows of available copies of this publication, please notify the Newsletter.

HISTORY OF THE JAPANESE SWORD
Reprinted by permission
Nihonto Newsletter, 1968
Albert Yamanaka

Prior to the Heian Period, there is, in sword history, a period called the Historical Period and though swords were made in that early period, they are of the style we know as the forerunner of the later shinogi tsukuri. The blades of this early period are mostly straight edges without sori or shinogi and the few that do have sori are those made after the Taiho Era (701-703) by such smiths as Amakuni and his followers in Yamato Province or Shinsoku in Northern Kyushu. Smiths like Amakuni are more legendary than historical. There are many smiths mentioned in the very early chronicals such as the Kojiki and Nihonshoki, but these smiths are undoubtedly mythological. Probably the blades from these early periods were brought from the mainland continent by invaders, immigrants, traders or what-have-you, and whoever had intercourse with mainland Asia in that far off period. We will let this phase to the archaeologist and anthropologist.

The blades of the Historical Period are almost straight edges as evidenced by those in the Shosoin Repository in Nara and a few in temples such as Shitenoji in Osaka, Komuro Shrine in Kochi, Kashima Shrine in Ibaragi or Kongoji Temple in Osaka. These blades have temper line which suggest that forging methods were already highly developed. Probably some of the settlers from the Asian Mainland were swordsmiths.

During the reign of Emperor Mommu (697-703) in the Taiho Era, a law was decreed for establishment of 217 "Kaji no Hei" or forges in the Kinki area, the present Kyoto-Osaka area, and from these forges swords, halberds and spears were to be made for the armory. By this, we can see some organized methods were in practice by the early central government, which in another sense tells us that skilled swordsmiths were being sought. The "Edict of Taiho" decreed that all swordsmith were required to sign their name on the nakago of their blades and so probably the Taiho Era can be said to be the true start of the Nihonto rather than the first year of Daido (806), the first year of the Heian Period.

Much credit is given to Amakuni as the father-founder of the Japanese Sword. He is said to have been the man who first put sori (curvature) on the Japanese sword. This probably is due to the importance given him by later sword experts, for development of this sort cannot be attributed to any one given man. Such technique takes years to evolve as did the birth of wakizashi in later period. Be that as it may, Amakuni is nevertheless regarded with great awe, respect and whatnot. There is no blade in existence, which can truly be pin-pointed as a true Amakuni. We have never seen one which can be said, without any traces of doubt, to be Amakuni, though we have seen many, many blades which have been attributed to him. We have also seen a good many blades with the signature of Amakuni, all of which were of a later period, both the signature and the blade. Those blades passed off as Amakuni are usually of the

HISTORY cont'd.

ko-Senjuin School of Yamato Province...active from about the late Heian Period into the early Kamakura Period. The early chronicles tell us that Amakuni worked in the Uda District of Yamato Province during the Taiho Era. Though his blades do have sori in the case of tachi, it is so slight that they are almost straight and they are very narrow with a high shinogi. The steel has an abundance of nie and the blade pattern is suguha hotsure (straight with an edge like frayed yarn) with nijuba (double hamon) and hakkake (lines of nie). The boshi is yakizume (without turnback) or hakkake (sweeping lines) resulting from the nie kuzure. The jitetsu has been extremely well worked with the texture resulting in masame hada mixed with mokume hada. This description is given for Amakuni by the old Honami judging method, we not having seen a true one do not know? But, this description can also be applied to the ko-Senjuin blades. Thus, as mentioned earlier, ko-Senjuin blades invariably are passed off as Amakuni with some slight tampering on the nakago, such as the alleged Amakuni signature. The majority of the so-called Amakuni blades we see today are tanto or ken, mostly the later. We think it would be bewildering if there were to be a tachi attributed to this man, although there is one blade which has been attributed to him, the famous Kogarasumaru, once the heirloom of the Taira Clansmen, who controlled the country during the late Heian Period. This blade is currently in the Imperial Collection. Though the blade is attributed to Amakuni, we think it is very doubtful that it is the true work of this man. Also, the reason why we say that anything longer than a tanto or ken by Amakuni being rare is that, although the short blade is easy to "fake", it would be difficult to do the same on a longer blade and come up with the same results.

Honami Koson, under whom we studied from 1945-50, thought Amakuni was a title given to a swordsmith at an annual contest, for in his opinion, in all of the so-called Amakuni he had seen during his lifetime, though they have similarities, they also had aspects suggesting that they were not made by one man. Some hold the belief that, as in the case of the Kogarasumaru, the blade is not old enough to warrant attributing it to the Taiho Era or around 700 AD. Many of the old texts list Amakuni as having had the following students: Amakura, Tomomitsu, Chutoo, Amayuki, Katsuichi and Katsuishi. And here one can't help but wonder, since there is no mention of smiths prior to the Taiho Era in recorded history, why then the sudden emergence of Amakuni and his students? Whether this is the result of someone's imagination in a later period, to build earlier sword history for the purpose of forging swords of imaginary smiths and selling them is hard to tell. Here we are referring to smiths of recorded history. The annals of earlier history such as the Kojiki, Nihon Shoki and others list many smiths. However, they are ostensibly mythological and so we will have to disregard them. In the span of about one hundred years between the Taiho Era and the end of the Enreki Era (805), there are the following smiths recorded:

HISTORY cont'd.

Taiho Era (701-703)

Yamato Province

Amakuni
Amakura (Amakuni student)
Tomomitsu (ditto)
Kamiichi (ditto)

Mutsu Province

Fujito
Mototoshi

Wado Era (708-714)

Yamato Province

Tomokuni (son of Tomomitsu
of Taiho Era)

In Japanese mythology there appears many swords which have been woven into the history. The first such sword that comes to mind is the Kusanagi no Tsurugi, also known by another name, Ameno-Murakomō no Tsurugi. The story concerning this sword is that the god, Prince Susanoō, on one of his many trips around the island which he eventually supposed to rule, came to the Hi River in Izumo Province where he found the populace very much in fright. Learning that an eight-headed, eight-tailed dragon in the hills demands the yearly sacrifice of a young maiden and that the time for the sacrifice is only a few days away, Susanoō goes into the hills to subdue the dragon and accomplishes the feat by getting the dragon drunk on eight kegs of sake for the eight heads, whereupon he slays it. Susanoō in dismembering the dragon strikes one of the tails, hits something hard and finds it to be a sword. This blade he gives to his sister, the Goddess Amaterasu, and the blade then becomes the treasure of the Japanese emperor system. There seems to be some foundation for this story. One is that the region of Izumo was in the days gone by famous for iron-sand from which Japanese swordsmiths made swords. Also, some of the old texts mention that the Japan Sea coast was infested with bandits and robbers and so probably the eight-headed, eight-tailed dragon may have been a gang of bandits, or it may very well have been a group of swordsmiths from whom Susanoō extracted the famous blade. This blade later became one of the three sacred treasure of the Imperial Family and is supposedly enshrined at the Shrine of Atsuta. Some version say that the blade went down into the Inland Sea with the infant Emperor Antoku when the Taira Clan was defeated at the battle of Dan no Ura in 1185.

Of the many blades of the Historical Period, some are stored in the Shosoin Repository. The vast numbers of articles stored there were the belongings of Emperor Shomu who reigned from the first year of Shinki (724) to the eighteenth year of Tempei (746). After the death of the Emperor, his belongings were donated to the Todaiji Temple of Nara by the Empress. The temple built a special warehouse to house the vast numbers of articles and except for a few times when some of the weapons were taken out for use in wars, the majority of the articles have been left intact for the last 1200 years. The contents of the repository are well known for a precise inventory has been kept. It includes many items from the near East, some from around the beginning of the Christian

HISTORY cont'd.

Era, as well as a number of items from the Chinese Mainland. The whole inventory numbers over 5,600 items. Among them are many weapons from that period. There are 550 tachi, 50 tehoko or hand halberds, 30 hoko or plain halberds. There are some 70 Tosu, a kind of a knife which the early people wore suspended from their waistband by a cord. The tosu is said to be the ancestor of the tanto. Though few of the blades have sori, the majority are of the straight-edged, straight ridged type. There are a few made in the shinogi-zukuri style which suggest that the evolution from the straight edge to the later shinogi-zukuri style with sori was already in the process in the early Nara Period.

There are many different styles of blades in the Historical Period, however they can roughly be divided into two categories: The hiratsukuri style and the Ryo Kireba Tsukuri style. The latter, the Ryo Kireba Tsukuri, has the ridge close to the cutting edge on both sides of the blade. The Kogarasumaru as mentioned earlier attributed to Amakuni is made in a very distinct style. The style is shinogi-zukuri with sori, but, since the curve at the nakago is accentuated, the blade looks like it has a high sori. There is a hi carving which runs down the shinogi into the nakago and past the mekugi-ana. The peculiarity is that from the tip there is a cutting edge on the mune which runs down about half the length of the blade. This type which has a cutting edge on both sides of the tip is called Unokubi-tsukuri and was made later in the Kamakura and Yoshino Periods though with a few slight changes. This type of Kogarasumaru shape was copied by many of the smiths during the Shinshinto Period and one comes across them every now and then. So the style of the Japanese sword as we know it today was developed sometime in the latter part of the Nara Period and came into its own in the Heian Period. From the late Nara Period until the Meiji Restoration, thousands and thousands of smiths made countless numbers of swords. The Haito-Rei of 1876, the prohibition of carrying of swords, did have short term effect on swordsmiths. A few smiths still persisted in carrying on their trade. With the introduction of the Western style army and navy, the officers and enlisted non-commissioned officers carried swords, as well as the policemen and with the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, the swordsmiths saw some increase in activity. When the Japanese army and navy were marching all over China and Southern Asia and South Pacific, sword making was on the verge of a comeback, but the caliber of blades that were made then were of the poorest quality. Though the cutting edge could serve the purpose of a sword by cutting or lopping off prisoners-of-war's heads, its artistic value was absolutely zero.

Today, with the aid of the government as well as some small groups, swordmaking is on the comeback with the government's Education Ministry having nominated two smiths as "Living Cultural Assets" and aiding them financially. We are told that there is an American apprenticed to one of them.

HISTORY cont'd.

There is an annual swordsmith contest held in which about 60 smiths submit their works. At the contest held last year (1967) it was estimated that there are about 100 smiths today.

The division of the periods were given at the beginning of this article, however, a few notes are necessary on these dates. The Kamakura Period is divided into three parts, early, middle and the late. There were many changes in this period, dividing it into Early Kamakura (1184-1218), Mid Kamakura (1219-1277) and Late Kamakura (1278-1333). After the Kamakura Period comes the Yoshino Period, towards the end of which we see changes in the style of carrying swords. The Tachi style sees a decline in use and in the next Muromachi Period comes the birth of the wakizashi and the carrying of the tachi shortened into a katana and the wakizashi, the two pair being called Daisho. The next period, the Sengoku is referred to in general history as the Momoyama Period, and with the end of the Sengoku ends the Koto Period. The next period is the Shinto Period or Edo Period. In the Shinshinto Period of 1781-1867, there is a slight change in the style of swords made. The sori of the swords becomes almost straight. Every historical period had its own peculiar demands on the works of the swordsmith. Similarly, the style of swords and the sword making varied with the place of production. During times of relative peace, such as the Heian Period, sword styles tended to be very elegant and highly stylized. But during the periods of constant war, the blades all became utilitarian. Thus, on the basis of the area and the time in which the blades were made, the Honami school of sword studies divides the Koto Period into five distinct "traditions", named after the regions where they were practised, they are: the Yamashiro Tradition, Yamato Tradition, Soshu Tradition, Mino Tradition and the Bizen Tradition, and in the Shinto Period, the single Shinto Tradition. All region other than the above have connection with these traditions so that they can be traced to them regardless of the area or the time in which the swords were made, with very few exceptions.

to be continued

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NBTHK NOTICE -

The following alert was printed in the latest issue of the Token Bijutsu (English Edition) by the NBTHK organization

WARNING!

Recently we found out that there had been advertisements appearing in newspapers in certain places outside Japan to announce that the NBTHK is now officially procuring Japanese swords scattered in those places. The advertizer seems to pretend as if he were a representative sent there by the NBTHK. However, we have never engaged ourselves in such project; nor have we commissioned anybody to act in our behalf for such purpose. Such activities have nothing to do with our organization. We would like you all to be on the watch not to be misled by fraudulence.

MASAHIDE CONTROVERSY: FURTHER COMMENT -

The following letter was recently received from Arnold Frenzel and is in response to comments in the last issue of the Newsletter.

Without wishing to engage in any "free for all" I would however like to comment on the partially reprinted letter of member Klaus Leibnitz to Newsletter Editor Ron Hartmann that appeared in the last issue, and, more generally, on criticism as such found in our pages. Like most members I followed the Bowhay-Benson et al exchange with interest and educational benefit. I am proud of our organization for its growth, for its publications, for its meetings and events, and also for its fine cumulative output of articles and notes that, over the years, have frequently displayed remarkable scholarship. I believe that the Bowhay-Benson controversy and its fall-out is firmly in that tradition and far from the "cheap polemics" referred to by Mr. Leibnitz. While the various commentators doubtless wrote spiritedly about the facts as they saw them or purported them to be, surely the underlying revelation of the truth was more important and central to the controversy than any alleged "personal feud" which, indeed, neither writer may have held towards the other.

I very much hope that the JSS/US will continue to deal with controversial issues in articles, notes and reviews. I believe our organization can take some satisfaction in revealing, if indeed not in discovering that spurious NBTHK papers are in circulation. We know that there has been a major procedural reorganization at the NBTHK and while that might have had no direct connection with the Bowhay-Benson controversy, at the very least the JSS/US played an important role in speedily bringing news of the origami scandle to Western collectors. Experienced and prudent collectors have always viewed origami, no matter when issued, where, or by whome, with healthy skepticism, and the Bowhay-Benson controversy has pointedly underscored that and helpfully brought the whole shaky origami process to the attention of collectors at large.

Finally, I would like to make a passing comment on the review by Peter Bleed of Gary Murtha's, The Samurai Sword; An American Perspective, about which I have heard that some misgivings have been voiced regarding its critical bent. While I neither know Mr. Murtha nor have read his book, I did not on the surface find Mr. Bleed's review of the book strident, excessively critical or out-of-place in publication such as our Newsletter. It is unfortunate that few organizations such as ours step beyond black and white news events or even self interested promotion. There is much nonsense in print about Japanese swords and their lore; some mis-informed and some explicitly mis-leading, and an organization such as the JSS/US that seeks to retain its premier position among organizations

FRENZEL cont'd.

of its sort in the West has a legitimate role in critically reviewing new publications. It is of course important that balanced coverage be given and that just cause exist for statements of fact and opinion, but beyond that let the chips fall where they may. We should only be glad that we have willing and able reviewers such as Mr. Bleed who are prepared to step forward.

(signed) Arnold Frenzel

* * * * *

Other membership response followed the last Newsletter including that of Andy Quirt. Andy says in part, "It seems to me that the Masahide controversy is exactly the sort of thing that the JSS/US must publish.", and goes on to say, "I think the society owes it to its membership to present facts, and correct errors when mistakenly presented." Andy recently returned from Japan and reports that the Newsletter is observed and read in Japan. He adds, "The JSS/US is--- no, has already become an important voice of the American collector. While in Japan, several people asked about articles etc. that had appeared in the JSS/US publications."

Comments such as the above letters and remarks help to set policy for the society. It is encouraging to know that members are concerned and interested in what the society does and how it represents itself and its membership.

RCH - editor

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A SUGGESTION FROM AUSTRALIA -

Norman Moore of Lane Cove, N.S.W. Australia, one of our growing down under membership, has suggested that an article be written to serve as a guide to museums in Europe and Japan (and elsewhere) where Japanese swords and armor can be viewed.

To this end, perhaps the membership could keep this in mind and, as museum collections are discovered, advise the Newsletter of their existance. Mention could be made which each new discovery, and as the list grows, eventually compile a complete listing of museum exhibits worthy of study.

INFORMATION REQUESTED -

Paul Couch has asked that the "seal", illustrated below, be shown to the membership in the hope that someone might identify the smith. This is a stamping which was found on a daito which is apparently of shinshinto vintage. Any research material on this smith would be appreciated. The rest of the sword nakago is unsigned.



SHIN KEI TANEMITSU TSURUKU

Oshigata by Howard Sloan

- TYPE AND FORM - Katana in shinogi-zukuri form (made with ridge line), Torii-zori (even curvature). Blade is 73.2 cm, nakago length is 22.6 cm.
- JIHADA - Forged in ko-mokume (small burl wood grain).
- BOSHI - Midare-komi (irregular) with medium turn back.
- HAMON - Basically in nioi, of kawazuko-choji (clove pattern made like arrow heads).
- NAKAGO - Ubu (not cut down). Yasuri-mei (file marks) are suji-chigai (slanting left) and are finished off in full dress.
- SIGNATURE (Mei) - (omote) SHINKEI TANEMITSU TSURUKU
(ura) KEIO SHI NEN NI GATSU HI
(dated: one day of the 2nd month,
4th year of Keio - February 1868)

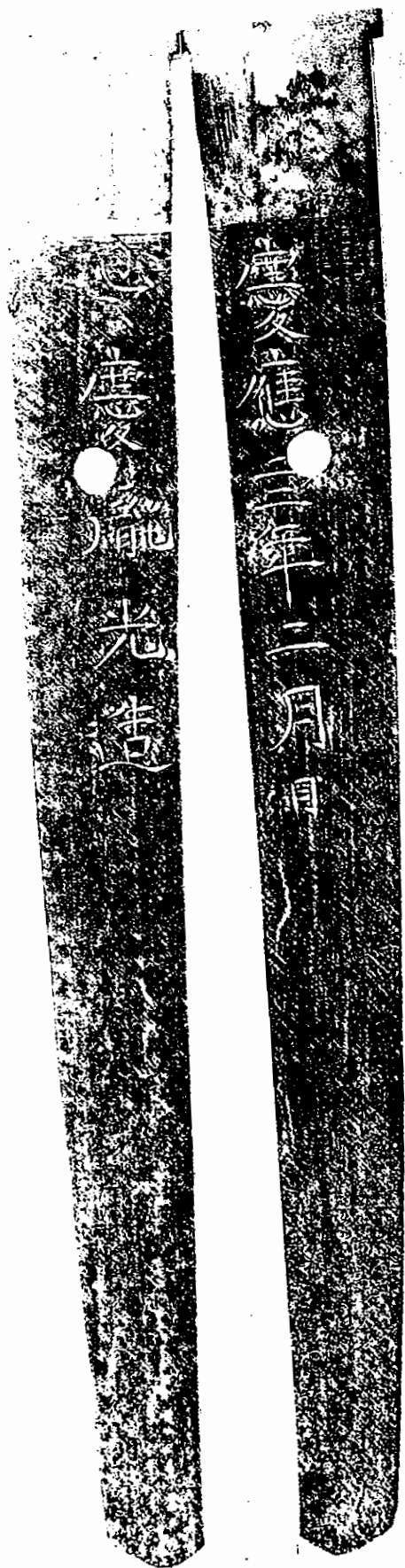
REMARKS -

This is a very long and stout blade with a somewhat extended kissaki (point). It is mounted in Showa Era naval mounting (apparently hand made) of superb quality, with family mon.

Tanemitsu, Musashi Province was a student of the famous Shinshinto smith Naotane. Tanemitsu live in Edo.

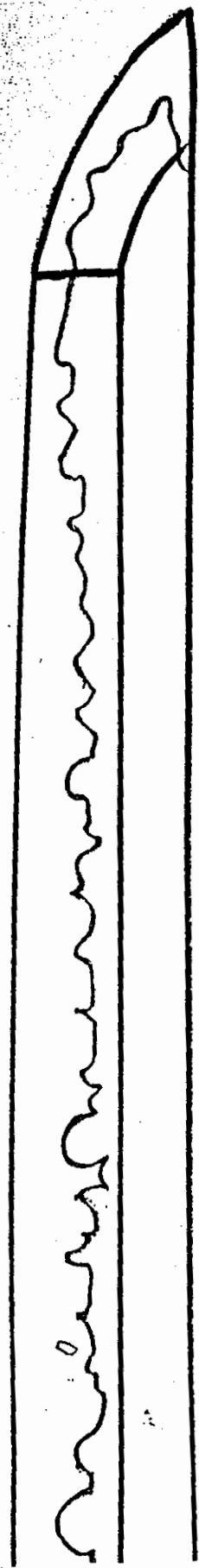
This blade is a recent find and has not yet been to any shinsa for authentication. There seems to be very little available information about this smith. No succeeding generations of Tanemitsu have been found. Anyone who may have some knowledge of this smith, beyond what has been stated here, and would like to share it with me, it would be appreciated.

References: Hawley #TA-447
Fujishiro #S-146, oshigata
Nihonto Zuikan, oshigata on page 503
Shinshinto Nyumon, oshigata on page 113



寛文
光造

寛文
三年二月

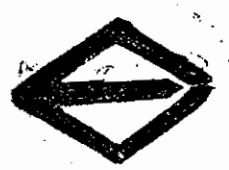


SHINKEI TANEMITSU TSURUKU

MINAMOTO YUKIYOSHI
oshigata by Andy Quirt

- TYPE - Tanto
- SUGATA - Hirazukuri (without ridge line), length 24.8 cm.
- MUNE - Ihore mune (two sided).
- MEI - Minamoto Yuki-yoshi (omote)
Tame Nakano Michihiro Kun (for Mr. Michihiro Nakano)
and dated Showa 47, 10th month (October 1972)
(ura).
- HAMON - Nie deki (made in nie tradition) with toran of
gunome, slightly midare (bellowing mounded pattern
slightly irregular), with ashi (nioi tailings down
from between the gunome), yo (foot prints of nioi
within hamon), kinsuji (threadlike lines within
the hamon), changing to a suguha ko-midare (straight
pattern with small irregularities) with some nijuba
(double line). There is ha-nie (nie within ha area).
- JIGANE - The jigane is made of masame hada (straight forging
texture of steel) with some weak chikei patterns.
- KOSHIRAE - Light brown lacquered saya with horn fuchi-kashira
lacquered to match. An unwrapped same' tsuka with
mon (family crest) menuki. The tsuba is iron with
gold nunome inlay.
- COMMENTS - This tanto was given as a gift by Mr. Iinuma, who
owns a museum/store in Chiyoda-ku, the Nihon
Bijitsu Kaikan. The store features all sorts of
Japanese art from all time periods and various
qualities.

This gift, though certainly undeserved, was a more
than welcome one, and is a memento that I shall
always treasure.



MINAMOTO YUKIYOSHI oshigata
October, 1972 (special order)

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 or to announce specific items available for sale or trade. Ads must be kept short and to the point. Business ads will not be allowed. Direct all ads to the editor.

- WANTED - Tsuba with skull and skull with bones motif. Also interested in a katana with quality horimono. Will trade gold tsuba medallion, swords, or cash. Contact: Phil Davis,

- WANTED - Tōshō and katchushi tsuba. Cash or trade. Contact: Arnold Frenzel,

- WANTED - Complete or nearly complete suit of armour in good condition. Send details to: Craig A. Bird,

- WANTED - Swords by KIJU, Yamato ca. 1716, KI-2/S-408 and KUNIMICHI, Yamashiro ca. 1596, KU-260/S-252. Buy or trade. Contact: William Kerwin,

- WANTED - WW2 sword belt and hanger, particularly naval. Ian Contact: Brooks,

- WANTED - Suits of armor, kabuto, mempo and other parts. Contact: Ray Deadman,

- WANTED - Matchlock musket or pistol, complete as possible in good condition, for \$225-\$250 range. Send description/photo to: Arn Slettebak,

- FOR SALE - Tagani no Hanna, set of four taikan size tsuba/kodogu books plus two companion books. Will trade for swords. Contact: Charles Ross,

- FOR SALE - Katana, shirazaya and w/excellent koshirae, TAMBA (no) KAMI TERUKADO. Excellent polish w/NBTHK Green Paper (1971). Hawley TE-42. \$8,500 firm
Gendaitō (1943) in perfect polish and excellent military mounts. NŌSHŪ KANESADA SAKU. \$875
Contact: Ken Sawitzky,

BUY-SELL-TRADE cont'd.

- FOR SALE - Word has it that a group of items are being made available, including a suit of armor in its box, and nine swords. The owner is not a member but it was felt the membership would be interested anyway. His name is: He is looking for a "lot" sale for \$20,000. Member has mentioned this and has offered to do some leg work for interested parties.

- WANTED - SHINGEN style tsuba (centapede style). Also interested in acquiring JUTTE or other samurai police weapons.
Contact: Paul Couch



JUTTE

- WANTED - High quality menuki of shakudo, or any very early quality menuki. Contact: Ron Hartmann NL editor.

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SWORD THEFTS -

It was announced earlier that Willis Hawley (California collector and bookseller) lost a good portion of his collection. Soon after this loss the bulk of it was found thanks to the alertness of Joe Bell (who runs a sword shop in California). Soon after this recovery, Mr. Hawley was "hit" again and this time in a more professional manner. Apparently the "cream" of his collection was taken this second time around.

Such tragedies make us all aware of security, insurance, etc., but the one thing which most people neglect (so it seems) is to have a good catalogue of their collection. A simple effort, worth its weight in gold if a loss is realized, is to compile such a record. The use of record sheets to list the basic lengths, descriptions, oshigata of a nanako, and to have photographic records of items, etc., will assure that if a loss occurs, at least the authorities will have something to go on when it comes to recovery. Don't wait until it is too late. Why not start on it today!?

AIR MAIL SUPPLIES DELIVERY -

Often our more distant members outside the U.S. and Canada request air delivery of their supply orders. Sometimes this can be done by charging air postage (once it is determined) but many times the cost of air mail shipping is simply out of reason. It was my intent this year to include such costs on the new Supply List, but this was not realized. Therefore, I shall list some of these costs from time to time in the body of the Newsletter as they are determined, and will assume that interested members will simply make note of these costs on their latest Supply List. Once determined, these figures can be added to next year's list.

..THE JACK PARAS COLLECTION..
AUCTION TO BE HELD AT
- BUTTERFIELD'S -

... MAY 26, 1981 ...

at 10:00 a.m. precisely (lots 1-200)
and 2:00 p.m. precisely (lots 201-450)

VIEWING

Saturday MAY 23, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Sunday MAY 24, 12:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Monday MAY 25, 10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.

.....

comprising

60 lots of swords, mostly katana, 200 lots of tsuba, 25 lots of kozuka, 50 lots of fuchi kashira, 20 lots of menuki, 14 pole arms (6 with full poles), 6 lots of arrow points, Rare sword pistol, 4 long guns, one pistol, one helmet with mempo, one very fine suit of miniature Oyoroï, Sets of books, and other items. Over 450 lots ranging from \$100. to approx. \$10,000. A very fine collection indeed.

FOR INFORMATION OR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT

Robert E. Haynes

OR CALL

at \$12.50

LIBRARY GIFT -

We are very grateful to Mr. Alan Luck, Nashville, Tennessee, for his gift of the video tape entitled, "Kendo, The Way Of The Sword". This was filmed in Dallas last year and is a fine film about the sword. It is available for loan from the library.

SUPPLY LIST AND ROSTER -

An up-dated supply list, library list, and membership roster is being included in with this mailing. Please refer to these lists when ordering supplies.

DUES -

There are still a number of members who have not paid their 1981 membership dues. If you are delinquent, send your check to the treasurer immediately. Non-payers will be dropped as of this Newsletter mailing. (Membership cards will be mailed direct from Bill Miller, society secretary.)

1980 ANNUAL BULLETIN - ANYONE THINKING ABOUT WRITING AN ARTICLE FOR THIS ISSUE SHOULD ADVISE THE EDITOR OF THEIR INTENT NOW.

K. E. SKAFTE Nykobing F Denmark

Specialist in Books on Arms and Armor
Illustrated catalogue (J) available

Old titles turn up occasionally, such as
Jap.Schwertzieraten by Jacoby, Leipzig 1904
Armes Orientales by Holstein, Paris 1931
Nihon Jôdai no Katchû by Suenaga, Tokyo 1943

Please, enquire



REG. TRADE MARK

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - The next issue of the NEWSLETTER will be mailed to members during the first week of June. All material intended for inclusion must be in the hands of the editor at least ten days prior to this week.

ADVERTISING POLICY - Paid advertisements will be accepted for publication in the Society NEWSLETTER. Ad contents must be restricted to services and items for sale. High-pressure type ads and ads not befitting the format of the NEWSLETTER will not be accepted. DESCRIPTIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS OF ITEMS ADVERTISED ARE THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ADVERTISER.

ARTICLE POLICY - Articles of a research nature are of course always welcomed for publication in the Society journals. The Society will pay a \$25 Honorarium to the author of original research or reporting articles when of sufficient stature. Brief articles and news items will not be awarded this Honorarium but are nevertheless solicited. CONTENTS OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES AND AUTHENTICITY OF ILLUSTRATED ITEMS IN THE SOCIETY JOURNALS AND PUBLICATIONS ARE THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHORS OF SAID ARTICLES.