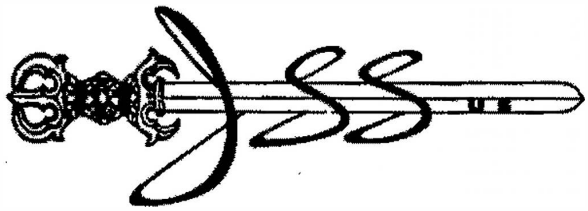
Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

Volume 16 No. 4 July-August • 1984

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Some of what is done to expand our knowledge and enjoyment of the Japanese sword comes from your officers and committeemen. There is the recent example of Tōken Taikai '84 in the East. Bob Coleman and his crew, notably Kiyoharu Omino and Saul Ploplys, achieved great results. But a great deal can come from you. Some of our members, for example, have formed local study groups. I'm hoping to participate in such a group, in the Richmond, Virginia area, which George Moody and Mark Fletcher are forming. If more of these study groups form, they'll provide great benefits for their members, and they will also be able to produce results of value to all of us through articles in the Newsletter, articles to be sent in by group members.

What to do in a study group? You can think of the obvious--gathering blades or kodogu or koshirae of a school or period, observe, discuss, read, enjoy, learn. What about examining reference books? They are a major expense for any serious collector, but we must buy them, usually, on the basis of scanty knowledge. Why not pool our resources, examine each others books and even compile a list of books available for reference in a local area?

One other possibility comes to mind, a subject I've been interested in for years. It's a subject that lends itself well to group study as well as to individual effort. Museums. Several years ago I reported in the Newsletter on my experiences in finding sword and kodogu in museums. How many of you have done the same? I have continued and have learned a great deal by finding collections--usually unlisted and uncatalogued--and viewing them. This summer, for example, I am immersed in a collection of over 600 tsuba in a local museum. The museum director has set me up with a desk and a place for my reference books, and once a week

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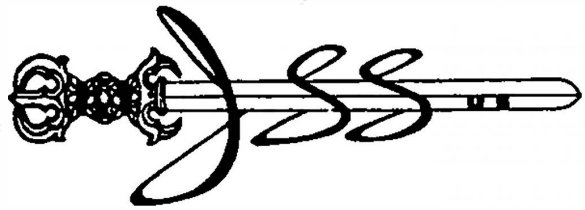

The Japanese Sword Society of the United States is registered with the State of California as a non-profit organization for the appreciation and advanced study of the Japanese art sword and related fields of interest.

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REWARD - $1,000 will be paid by the Society for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of anyone stealing sword or fittings from a JSS/US member, and the recovery of the lost items. Payment will be subject to Officers and Directors approval.

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 benefitting 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.**

LETTER cont'd.

I spend some happy hours cataloguing treasures, which some of them are.

Wherever you live there are museums. Some of them are public, some of them belong to colleges or universities, a few are private. Many of them will have Japanese swords and kodogu in them. In the early part of this century there was a great interest in Japanese art in the West, and many Americans travelled to the Far East and bought just those pieces of Japanese art that delight us. Now, however, with what looks like a slackening supply of swords to buy, we may find ourselves looking more than buying. How sensible to know where to look. Even if we can still find swords, how much richer and more satisfying our experience would be if we could drive down to the local museum and spend our time in quiet study of Japanese swords.

With such possibilities in mind, I urge you to investigate what lies around you. When you discover a collection, large or small, you will find it surprisingly easy to gain access to it. You can, after all, be of service to the director in identifying the collection for him, for in most cases there is no description and the director knows nothing about Japanese swords or kodogu. Send me a description of these collections. My hope is that the Society can publish a list of them for the whole of North America. Even more, with travel increasingly usual, perhaps we can have lists of sword collections around the world. Japan, of course, has the greatest collections, and we should find out what is there. I shall work on that task, but first let's start at home.

A. Z. Freeman

* * * * * *

SOCIETY HONORARIUMS -

It is the society policy that authors of selected articles, used in the society publications, be awarded a $25 honorarium. In the past, the honorariums were given out by the Newsletter editor. This past year, honorariums were not paid out because it was intended that the Publications Committee handle this job. The wheels of progress turn very slowly--but they do turn--and we are just now getting such details worked out on a committee basis. For those people who have had articles published this past year, and are wondering what has happened to our honorarium policy, hang in there mate. The details will be worked out soon with due honors given.

Meanwhile--many, many thanks to the members who have been so kind to send in articles. Please continue to do so. We are always in need of all types of material from one page discussions of a favorite sword or fitting to very scholarly and lengthy research papers.

Once the committee can take over the award duties it is felt the membership will be more than pleased with way things will be handled. Again, thanks to all for your cooperation.

1984

SOUTHEAST TOKEN KAI

BIRMINGHAM SWORD SHOW

August 31 , September 1 & 2

AIRPORT RAMADA INN

TABLES ARE AVAILABLE FOR RENT IN THE BUY-SELL SHOW ROOM.

CONTACT: **PAUL COUCH**

Personal exhibits of swords, armor or kodogu are encouraged. Contact Paul about any planned exhibit prior to the show. Complimentary exhibit space can be made available for significant and sizable displays.

Plan to attend the show if you can. It promises to be a nice break for the summer! Although basically a buy-sell-trade event, lectures and exhibits are always welcomed at the show.

1984

16TH ANNUAL TOKEN STUDY GROUP

JAPANESE SWORD SHOW

October 5th, 6th and 7th

RAMADA-O'HARE INN
MANNHEIM & HIGGINS ROAD
DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS

Set up on Friday afternoon. Admission free to TSG members/families, $3 all others. Tables $30/members and $40 all others, for weekend.

This annual event is always a good sword show and very often is a sell-out for table space. To avoid disappointment, advance table and hotel reservations are suggested. For table reservations contact:

The JSS/US will once again have a special table for the sale of books and sword supplies. A good selection will be on hand for your convenience. Stop in and say hello.

One last note - be sure to mention the Token Study Group show when making your room reservations. Plan to attend if at all possible.

INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF SWORD COLLECTING -

During a phone conversation with Ted Wysocky last month, following his recent heart attack, Ted brought up the subject of recording the history of sword collecting in America--while some "old timers" are still around to recall it. The thought was not a new one, but sometimes it takes a brush with reality to stimulate one into action. In the last five years, at least eight of the "old guard" have left us--perhaps it is high time to swing into action and record our history while we can.

While thinking about such a project it immediately becomes obvious that such a historical record can not be restricted to collecting in the United States if it is to be complete. Such a record must be an International History and include historical facts from all points of the globe. A committee should be established with someone given the title of Society Historian, for the gathering and sorting out of collected information. We have several professional "historians" in our society who would be delighted to work on this project I am sure.

Information to be gathered could include any number of things, a few which are listed here:

1) Facts on when swords left Japan and when their study became of interest outside of Japan.

2) Listings of early private and public collections and background on their beginnings. What impact these early collections had on sword collecting internationally.

3) Facts on how the various study groups and sword clubs became established and how they reflected interest in collecting swords. The various clubs could assist in the gathering of these facts.

4) The history of how many thousands of swords left Japan after WW2 and where they came to rest. Many individual stories could be told here.

5) Personal accounts of "how things got started" would be a light-hearted but interesting aspect to the history.

6) The history of the great flow back to Japan in the 1970s and the effects of world economics on international collecting.

Recording the international history of sword collecting would be an interesting and exciting project. The facts could be edited into a formal publication which would have interest both in the collector's world and as a public record. To initiate the idea, may I suggest volunteers contact A.Z.Freeman who will in turn pass the information on to the proposed committee once established. Jack Paras, Albert Yamanaka, Lou Chappelear, Ira Duncan, Otto Nishida, Tom Buttweiler, Billy Johnson, Tom Hoopes, Bumpei Usui, to name a few of our "lost historians"--think about it!

JSS/US SUPPLIES DUTIES SHIFTED -

In an effort to improve services while at the same time ease some of the time-demands which have become increasingly burdensome this past year, Ken Wichmann of St.Louis (Hazelwood) has agreed to handle society supplies sales. Ken has been a society member since 1981. He operates a gift shop, so his experience in handling merchandise, keeping inventories and records, etc., should greatly improve our supply service. Being local, the transition and shift of stock will be not too great of a task.

Supplies will continue to be made available at the various sword shows as in the past.

A 1984-1985 Supplies List was expected to be included along with this mailing of the Newsletter, but this became impossible. Once this issue is mailed, the new list will be completed along with the new mailing address for supplies, and most likely sent out as a seperate mailing. The new list will be illustrated and will include most complete line of items ever sold by the society. A special "air mail delivery" rate schedule will be sent to all foreign members (except Canada). Your patience is appreciated.

Many thanks to Ken for volunteering his services. I am sure everyone will give him their cooperation as he learns the ropes.

NEW BOOK LIBRARY LISTING COMING -

Cookie Davenport, book librarian for the society, has worked up a complete and thorough listing of the books available for loan from the JSS/US library. A little more "editing" needs to be done on this list prior to distribution, but hopefull this will be mailed out along with the new supply list mentioned above. (A video library listing will also be made available soon).

NIHONTO ZUIKAN; KOTO VOLUME -

This fine book continues to be out-of-stock with us but word has reached us that our stock will be replenished by October at the latest. Please be aware of this.

VIDEO TAPES RECALLED FROM LIBRARY -

The video series "Tokugawa Iyeyasu" announced as being available for loan last Newsletter has since been pulled from the library. Bill Shapland, donor of the tapes, discovered that they were defective and asked for them back in order to rectify the problem. Hopefully new tapes can be made available very soon. Availability will be announced in the Newsletter.

Video librarian Dann Hydu has been working hard to improve the titles available for loan and the number of tapes so that "wait time" is cut down. Those interested in improving this portion of our library should feel free to contact Dann with your ideas and offers of assistance.

NEW MEMBERS -

The Society would like to extend a sincere Welcome to the following new members of the JSS/US.

Sandra Plasner,
Michael Tillerson,
Lawrence D. Beshore,
Jeff Dorr, OH
Marvin Drucker,
Curt L. Heath
Paul E. Penn
Anne Morere
L. Davis, Canada
John R. Harris,
Ming Y. Hvang,
Frank A. Knapp, NY
Raymond J. Kuhn,
George B. Pendlebury,
Bryon Shimizu,
Mike Venezia,
Steve Yap,
Robert J. Pieper,
Robert Y. Hood,
L. David Brown,
Jim Geiger,
Penny J. Rogers,
Elizabeth Schrader,
James E. McGee,
Jay A. Roberts,
Marilyn Karos,
Jeff Givens, Il
Daniel N. Gilroy,
Paul S. Kenyon,
Ronald H. Reeder,
G. Allen Stevens,
R. B. Theus,
Jack Wanderman,
Daniel Watson,
Dennis Wright,
Olaf Muller, An Der Hammerhalde
Robert W. Dodson, Jr.

John H. Reutner, Jr

Alan H. Holland,
Robert L. Bringle,
Jack Green,

cont'd.

LETTER FROM DR. JUNJI HOMMA -

The following letter was received by JSS/US secretary, Gary Murtha, with regards to the new Membership Certificate which was initiated earlier this year. The letter expresses the willingness of Dr. Homma and the N.B.T.H.K. to assist in sword study outside Japan.

June 11, 1984

Mr. Gary D. Murtha
8813 McElroy
Kansas City, Mo 64134
U. S. A.

Dear Mr. Murtha:

I thank you very much for your kindness in sending me a certificate of being a honorary member of the Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.

It would be a great pleasure that I will be of some help to you and your members in the appreciation and study of the Japanese sword. Please send my best wishes to all the members of your society.

With much gratitude.

Sincerely yours,

Junji Homma

Junji Homma, Litt, D.

/tm

BOOK DONATED TO SOCIETY LIBRARY -

A copy of The Samurai Sword; An American Perspective - Vol.2 entitled "Sword Fittings", by Gary Murtha, has been given to our book library by the author. An advertisement for this new book, in the paid ad section of this issue, tells what this volume is all about.

This new publication by Gary is attractive and very well done. The listing of over 2,000 fittings artists should prove very helpful for anyone trying to research kodogu. The book provides a good source of information--in English--and will hopefully help to minimize the frustrations of such research for us non-Japanese reading collectors. Many thanks to Garry for this welcomed addition to our library.

BOOK REVIEW -

TEIRYO YOJI

by Honami Koson with editing
and translation by
Albert Yamanaka and David Scott

Roses are red, violets are blue,
Teiryo Yoji is the book for you.

It is difficult to write an objective review without sounding like an advertisement for this book, or even a shill for David Scott. After several delays in publication, and having received mailings from Mr. Scott explaining the difficulties that he was encountering with reproduction and binding of the text, I did not expect Teiryo Yoji to be much of a book. That is, if it materialized at all. Right now I will publically eat all of my doubts; the book surpasses every expectation.

Beautifully bound and boxed, Teiryo Yoji is a wonderfully clear reproduction of Honami Koson's text on the identification of Japanese swords. In fact, this text exceeds the clarity of the original scrolls thanks to some costly and inovative ultra violet photography. The bilingual text is printed on excellent paper, and the binding has been carefully stitched. The Japanese notations about the kantei points that accompany each of the 802 blade illustrations are translated into English. Naturally, the technical terms are written in Romanized Japanese, and there is a clearly written glossary of some 225 terms that offers definitions to guide the reader.

A three-tiered index allows the reader to move easily through the book focusing on whatever interests him. The first index is an alphabetical listing of the smiths by name. The next section lists the seven "Dō", the roads or trade routes while the third index is by province. This format helps make Teiryo Yoji an invaluable reference book and learning tool.

The text is divided into three sections: Jo Kan, which deals with koto; Chu Kan, which covers shinto and shinshinto; and Ge Kan, which covers tanto of all periods.

Unlike Juyo Token Nado Zufu, which is made up of illustrations of specific swords, none of the swords illustrated in Teiryo Yoji actually exist. This text illustrates idealized examples; what a sword by a certain smith or school should be expected to look like. This is a diagrammatical teaching aid; the actual blades are subject to many variations in style and technique.

Some of the translations of the longer passages of the text are confusing. However, the most important part of this monumental work is not the general history that accompanies each school and time change, but the concise illustrations and lists of characteristics. This is a distillation of knowledge accrued

REVIEW cont'd.

through generations of study; a clear compilation of what generalizations can be made about schools and smiths. But just as buying tools and lumber does not give you a completed house, this book does not offer an instant education. Teiryo Yoji is an important tool for anyone who is serious about the study of Japanese swords.

To those I have heard say "For that price I can buy a sword.", let me ask, "How many important swords do you have to misjudge to cover the cost of one book?"--not very many, I think.

Students of the Japanese sword owe a debt of thanks to Honami Koson for writing this text, to Albert Yamanaka for preserving the scrolls and generously offering them for publication, and to David Scott who had the insight to recognize the importance of this text and the energy to see it through publication.

Andrew Quirt

* * * * *

LOS ANGELES SHINSA COMMENTS -

The following was directed to A.Z.Freeman by Keith Mueller of Phoenix, Arizona. Keith remarked, "If a picture is truly worth 1,000 words, I submit the following instead of 1,000 words describing the first shinsa I attended in Los Anglese.....long live mumei blades!" Surely some of us can relate to this?

THOUGHTS ON COLLECTING KODOGU, Continued

By Paul Goodman

Earlier I discussed the average statistical chance of getting green papers on fittings. The figures were based on a hypothetical 100 pieces of each type of fitting being submitted for shinza. It was interesting that very few collections were actually balanced with equal numbers of menuki, kozuka, etc. Even where collectors had tried to get an even balance of papered pieces, some things were scarce.

I have gone through auction catalogues and my notes on several collections and several shows from which I have formed some impressions on the availability of each type of fitting. Out of an average 100 of collectable fittings offered from all sources, you might expect to find the following:

46	Tsuba	24 of which could get green papers
22	Fuchi-Kashira	10 of which could get green papers
17	Kozuka	8 of which could get green papers
10	Pair of Menuke	2 of which could get green papers
4	Kogai	2 of which could get green papers
1	Kozuka-Kogai set	0 (one in two or three could get papers)
100	Fittings	46 probable green papers

OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND HYPOTHESES

1. Pre-selection once yielded between 40% and 50% green papers.

2. The new Hozon papers will probably reduce the papers issued to one in three. I think the reduction will come with fewer mume fittings getting papers.

3. Fittings purchased from American auctions and sword shows have a higher rejection rate, primarily due to a higher percentage of fake signatures. European auctions, especially those handling the sale of old collections, seem to have the highest percentage of good signatures. Even old collections have a high rate of bad signatures.

4. The higher rejection rate for Hozon papers should raise the value of the Hozon papers as well as the old green papers. For every Hozon paper, currently costing $42.00, there will be two and possibly three rejects. Rejects currently cost $21.00. This will bring the cost of the average Hozon paper to about $100.00. The old shinza costs and rejection rates made the average cost of green papers about $65.00.

5. Kogai have the highest overall level of artistic quality and workmanship, yet they are one of the scarcest fittings. This seems to indicate that Kogai were made by advanced craftsmen. The apparent higher quality and scarcity would indicate that they were made for a more select market. I think there were more important uses for the Kogai than just being a hair arranger. There seems to be an economic distinction, with better quality work costing more, among users that must reflect a distinction among some class, rank, or vocation.

6. I have not been satisfied with the explanation that wari, split, kogai were used as chopsticks for eating. I have tried to eat with them and they are much more difficult to use than regular Japanese chopsticks. Split kogai occur only once in every 100 fittings. Every samurai had to eat, so why weren't they more common? I think a more plausible explanation is that they were used by wealthy samurai who were tea ceremony masters to arrange charcoal and incense in the fire.

7. There seems to be at least twice as many tsuba as there should be based on the number of available fuchi-kashira and blades. Does this mean that twice as many tsuba as blades were made during the Edo period? I think it does. I think the Japanese preference for collecting tsuba over all other fittings had its roots in the first fittings collections formed during the early Edo period. The number of tsuba that have never been mounted seem to indicate that tsuba were popular gifts among the samurai of the Edo period.

8. There seems to be fewer so-called katana tsuba than the number of existent katana would indicate. Many katana found in old collections are mounted with medium to medium-large tsuba. They are mounted with tsuba which my Japanese friends would identify as wakazashi tsuba. I suspect that the current Japanese desire for very large tsuba must be a late change in "samurai high fashion." Most of the Meji and Showa kinko tsuba are larger than the average Edo kinko tsuba.

9. According to my understanding of the development of the different schools of fitting makers, 90% of all kinko fittings and 80% of all iron fittings we see were made after 1650. There must have been thousands of fitting makers prior to 1650. They must have created several million tsuba, fuchi-kashira and menuke. Where are they? Where did all the early fittings go? Should more of the mume kinko and iron fittings be dated much earlier?

10. The traditional Japanese explanation of fake signatures on fittings has been that they were "dock side additions" done at the request of European buyers and were primarily for export. I question this. I have been able to trace too many fittings directly off mounted swords from old collections to the shinza where they were

rejected for fake signatures. Mr. Yumoto Sensei has pointed out in his lectures that every village he visited as a boy had its own "genuine signed Masamune." I think that the desire for the prestige of owning blades by big name makers carried over to a desire to own prestigious fittings by big name makers. Wealthy patrons who could afford important blades would also demand important fittings. The lack of detailed photographic information about fittings and their signatures until recently must have made it very difficult during the Edo period to prove a fitting counterfeit.

11. There must have been at least 500 Juyo class sword makers. When you add all the fake blades to the genuine ones, there must have been a large number of fine blades that deserved fine fittings. Regardless of today's judgements, there seems to have been about 50 Juyo class fittings makers whose work was prestigious enough for important blades. This probably explains why there is a much higher percentage of counterfeit signatures on fittings .

If any collectors have any information, observations, comments or differing opinions, I would welcome them. We all can benefit from the exchange of new or different ideas.

Editor's note: Paul Goodman has supplied us with a lengthy supply of material on kodogu and the collecting of kodogu. These articles will continue in the Newsletter as a series for a number of future issues. Our thanks to Paul for his presenting this interesting material for all of us to share.

SYMPOSIUM ON "THE ART OF SAMURAI" -

As announced last Newsletter, an important International Symposium consisting of lectures, demonstrations, exhibitions, and many other activities pertaining to samurai art. The event will by at the DEUTSCHES KLINGEN-MUSEUM in SOLINGEN, WEST GERMANY from SEPTEMBER 12TH TO SEPTEMBER 16TH, 1984. A few fliers are available from the Newsletter, or you can contact: KUNSTHANDEL KLEFISCH,

AN INTERESTING AKIHIRO SWORD

by Earle J. Stone

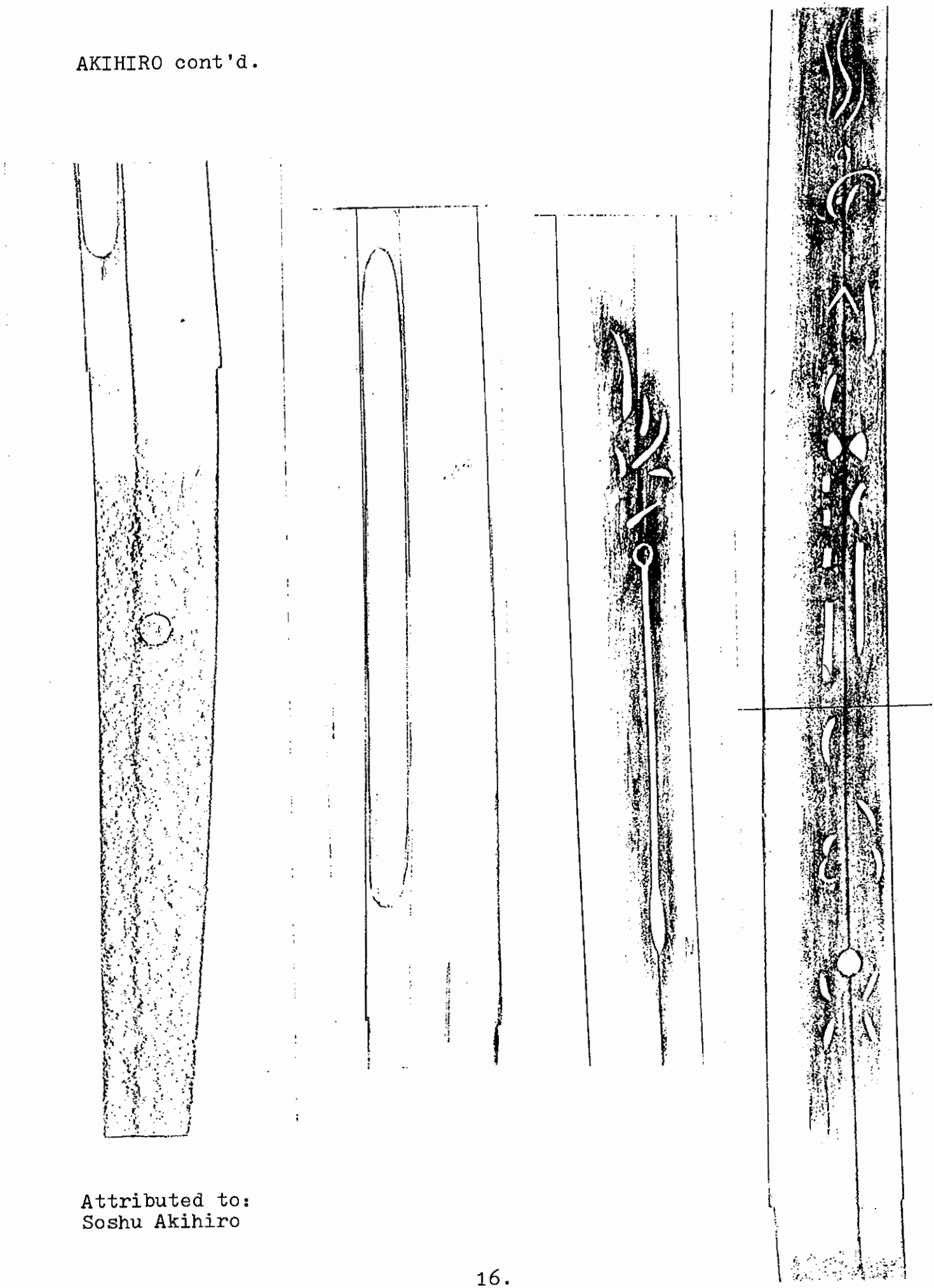
"Many years ago a very interesting Japanese sword came into my possession...." Now, doesn't that sound like all the stories you ever heard?

This was a wonderful find, and at the time I really wasn't aware of the treasure I had acquired. I was just a poor student at the time, but the blade appeared to be of great interest, especially since it was covered with strange characters, which I tried to translate. I did not know how difficult running script can be to translate, so in 1946 I went to Berlitz school in an attempt to learn Japanese, so I could translate the many things I was running across.

Well, I guess many of us started out the hard way, with an instructor that spoke little or no English, so I dropped that and learned on my own. About twenty years later I gave up on the saya-gaki, and sent the full writing to Japan with a friend who is Japanese, and he in turn had his grandfather translate the writings. Here is the recent history of the blade, as set down in my friend's letter to me in 1966.

> On the 7th of February, Meiji 37 (1904), I left my native country to follow the army to conquer Russia and navigated the waves of the sea. After Korea, I entered the inner part of Manchuria. Eastwardly, I crossed the border of Tsūka[1]; westwardly, I went to the boundary of Eikō[1] Beach; southwardly, I went down to Ryojun[1] and Dairen[1]; and northwardly, I reached the extreme of the battle front. For that while I either worked for the communication or commanded coal-mining. (This sword of mine) was not marred in gun-smoke, in shot and shells, in the extreme winter cold, and in the extreme summer heat. In September, Meiji 38 (1905), peace was at last brought. The reason I could accomplish my job is solely owing to the fact that I possessed this sword, because the virtue of the sword consists in maintaining justice. If I cannot accomplish my job I will take my life with this sword, for the turning-point of honor and shame consists in one's decision.
>
> Since I left my native country I have all the while been able to rely on my undistracted will power, and all this is owing to the virtue of this sword. I now well know its virtue. True, its dignity necessitates a firm decision
>
> Made by Akihiro, a habitant of Soshu
> Length: 1 shaku 9 sun 1 bu
> In Dairen[1], October, Meiji 38, I wrote this.
> Takahashi Sakae

1) (translator's note: The name places noted are in Japanese pronunciation. They are well-known a ferocius battle places.)



Attributed to:
Soshu Akihiro

AKIHIRO cont'd.

Now, this sword was not a war souvenier, it having arrived in the U.S. many years before WWII. Never-the-less, a couple of years ago I tried to locate the Takahashi family, and did find a member in the Monterey Peninsula area, but this person was not interested in assisting me to locate the family of the prior owner, so after many tries, I gave up.

The blade is O-suriage, and the maker, Soshu Akihiro, is included in the saya-gaki, and it also appears on the habaki, which is contiginous to the tsuka. It does meet the criteria of the Soshu man, and the many blade characteristics would bear this out. The course striations of the masame grain is very good. The hamon is suguha, and very straight and narrow. The blade was probably shortened at one time by moving the machi forward. Removing the tip of the nakago also removed the signature. The horimono is probably original, and is clean-cut.

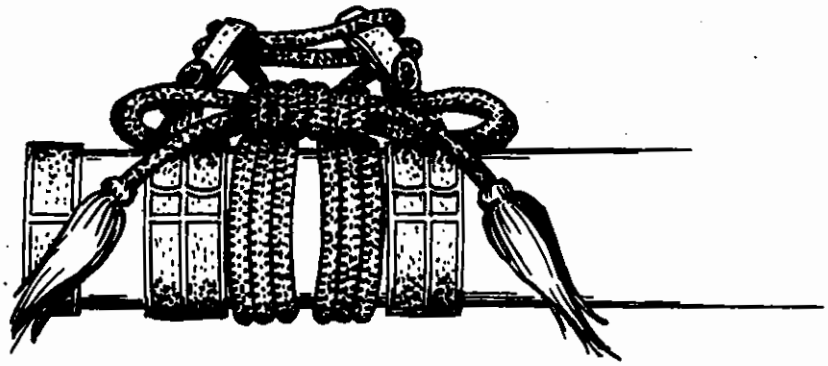
The dragon on the ken is highly stylized. There is a Kannon-Fudo bonji, and a renge or lotus bud. The short bo-hi is well rounded and cleanly cut. The blade has a rather shallow sori, however some of the curve near the nakago has been lost. The boshi is between small and medium. The yokote is blurred from time and wear, and a new polish would bring out all the semi-hidden beauty in the steel. There is ancient rust on the nakago which could be removed, and the color is right. There is one mekugi-ana, which is slightly crooked in the drilling or punching.

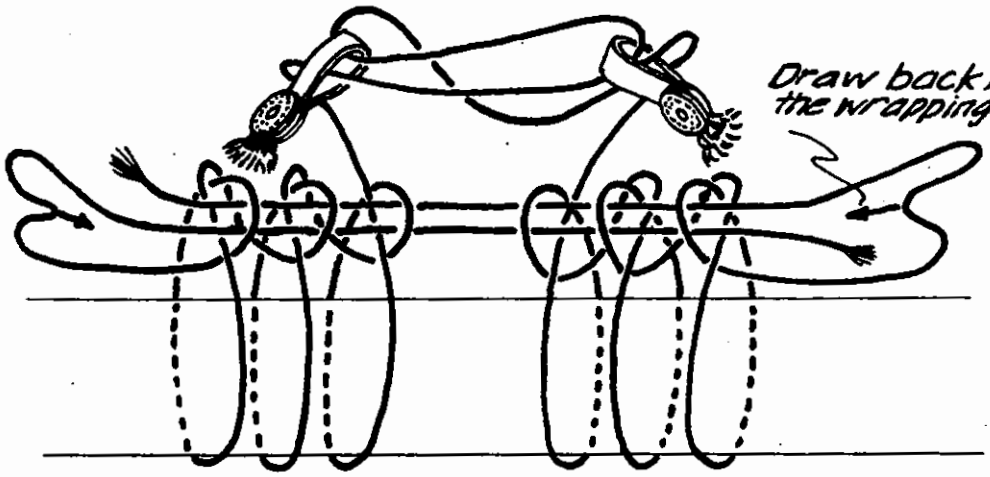
An example of horimono on Akihiro blades may be found in the catalogue of the 1976 Special Exhibit at Tokyo, number 236, among other listings.

The sword is excellently balanced, and feels good in the hand. It was probably in some sort of military mounting, which the owner, Sakae Takahashi, removed, so he could record his chronicles on the shirazaya. I think that is one of the reasons this particular sword has a historical feeling as well as the enjoyment of a great little blade by an important maker.

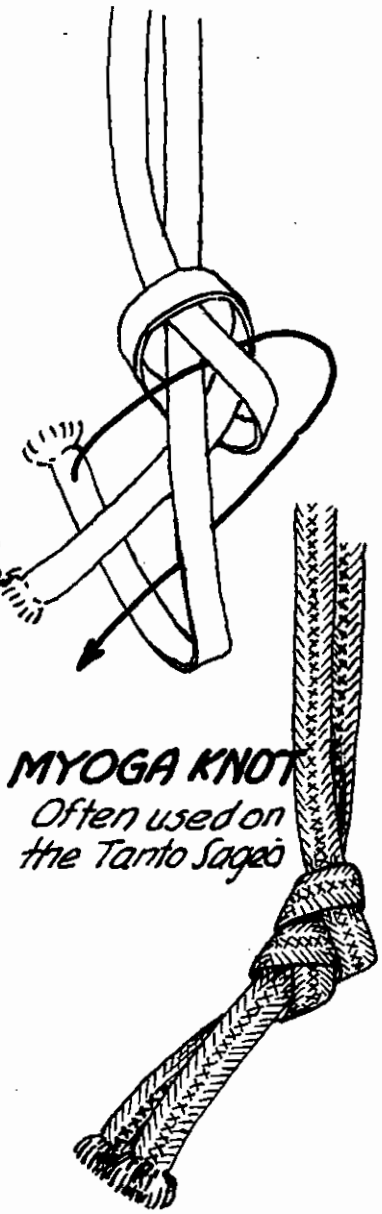
JAPANESE ARMS and ARMOR KNOTS

C. Hay

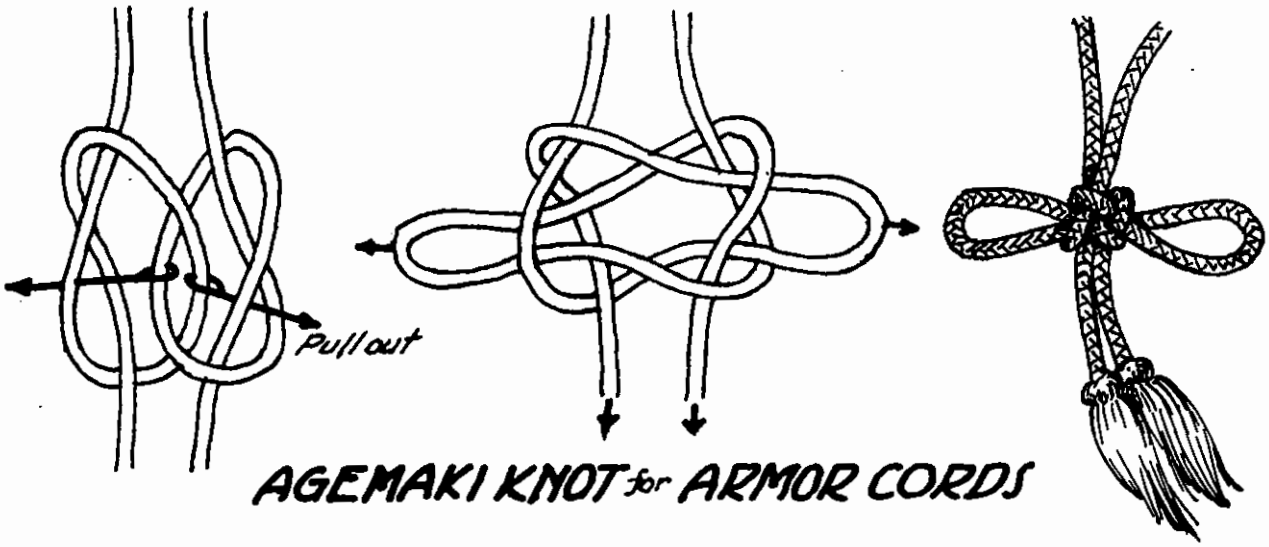




BASIC 'DRESS' KNOT for the ITOMAKI TACHI



MYOGA KNOT
Often used on the Tanto Sageo



AGEMAKI KNOT for ARMOR CORDS

MITSUTADA TACHI

(Jūyō Tōken Nado Zufu - Vol. 1, plate 19)

Reprinted with permission

TACHI - signed MITSUTADA (two-character mei)

MEASUREMENTS - 2.3 shaku (cutting edge). Sori 6.8 bu. Motohaba 9.4 bu and sakihaba 7 bu. Kissaki 1.2 sun. Nakago length 7.5 sun with 1.2 bu sori.

STYLE - Shinogizukuri form with ihore-mune. Shortened length but has koshizori yet. Kissaki is slightly extended chugissaki.

KITAE - Ko-itame (small woodgrained pattern forging) with ji-nie (nie on the surface) and midare-utusuri.

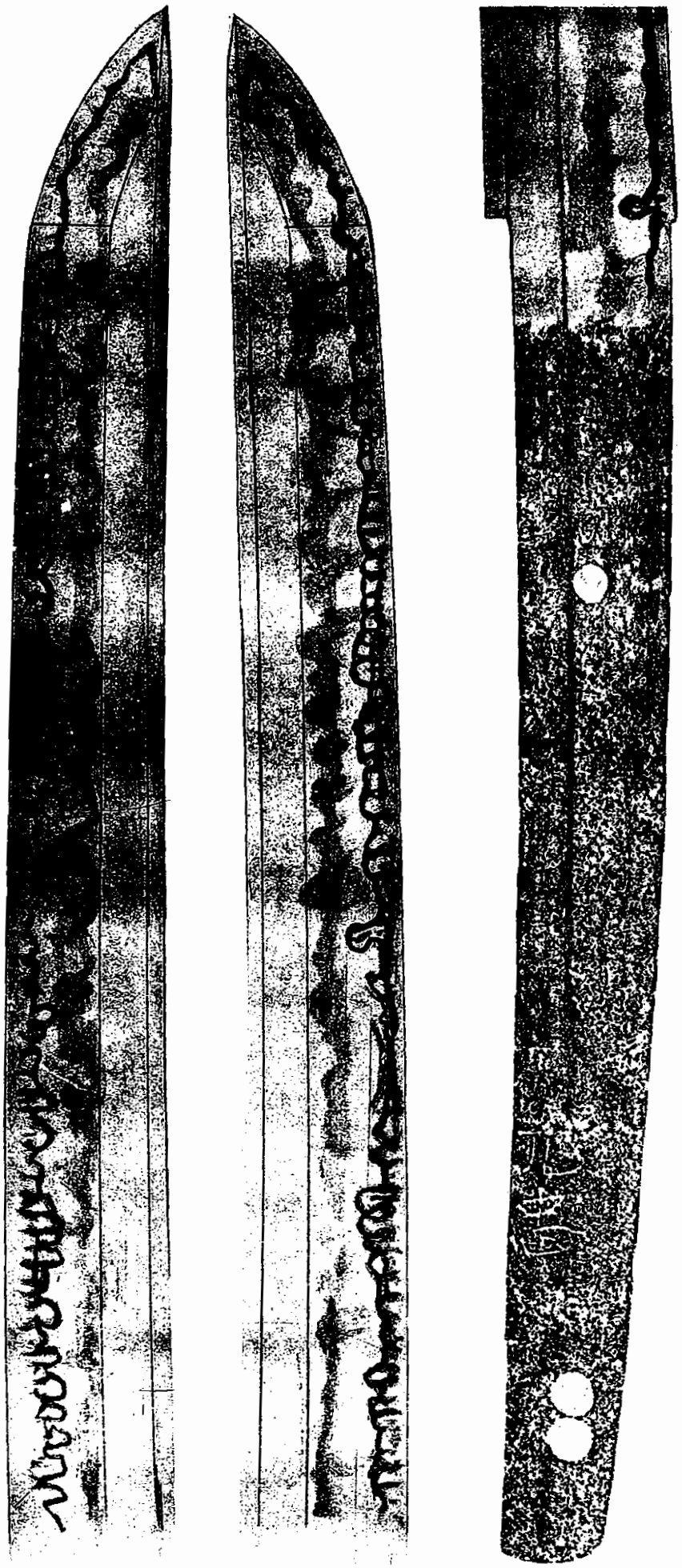
HAMON - Basically choji, mixed with Kawazunoko (tadpole "sack shape" choji) and togariba (sharply pointed edge or yakiba, with gunome. Has many ashi and yo within the hamon with ko-nie and occasionally fine, short kinsuji.

BOSHI - Midare-komi (irregular).On omote side it is slightly wavy, but pointed on ura side. It has ko-maru (small rounded) return.

NAKAGO - Suriage (shortened). Tip is kurijiri. Yasurimei are kattesagari. There are three mekugi-ana. A two-character signature made large is close to the mune, near the tip of the nakago.

EXPLANATION - It is obvious that this blade was done by one of the masters of the Bizen Osafune School during the mid-Kamakura period. However, there is a slight doubt as to the authenticity of the signature "Mitsutada". This blade resembles work done by the Nagamitsu. Some say there was the character "Naga" above the "Mitsu" and that this was erased and the character "Tada" added below the "Mitsu". However, we cannot come to any conclusion on this point yet. This blade is also accompanied by a certificate by Honnami Mitsutada (Kōchū).

Bizen Osafune School: This name was given to a school of smiths in the village of Osafune who worked after the zenith period of the Ichimonji School. They started in the mid-Kamakura Period and ended in the Yoshino Period. "Soden Bizen", "Kozori" and "Oei Bizen" schools followed in the koto period.



太刀　光忠と銘がある

NAGAMITSU TACHI

(Jūyō Tōken Nado Zufu - Vol. 1, plate 20)

Reprinted with permission

TACHI - signed NAGAMITSU (two-character mei)

MEASUREMENTS - 2.535 shaku. Sori 8.5 bu. Motohaba 1 sun and sakihaba 6.4 bu. Kissaki 1 sun. Nakago 5.3 sun. Sori of nakago 1 bu.

STYLE - Shinogi-ji (with ridgeline), ihori-mune (two sided back edge), strong koshizori (deepest curvature down towards nakago) with fumbari (pronounced taper of unique nature), chūgissaki (medium sized kissaki or point.

KITAE - Very fine itame (woodgrain pattern) with midare (irregular pattern) utsuri ("reflection" above the hamon).

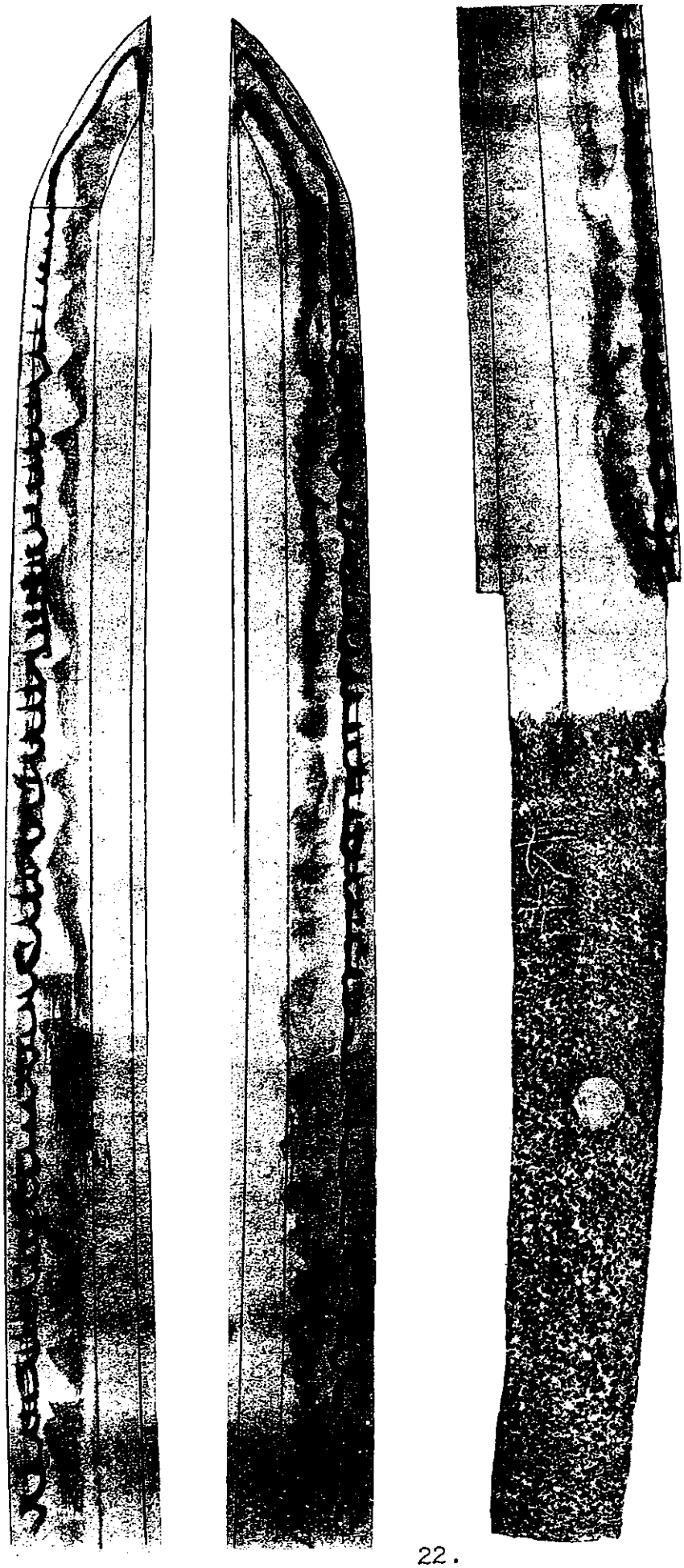
HAMON - Basically suguha (straight) mixed with choji. There are ashi and yo within the hamon. Nioi guchi is wide and has ko-nie and occassional kinsuji.

BOSHI - Midarikomi (irregular pattern) with komaru (small rounded return). This is also called "san-saku boshi.

NAKAGO - Ubu (unaltered). Tip is slightly shortened, kiri, yasurime are kattesagari. One mekugi-ana, with two-character signature on ura side just below the habaki close to the mune.

EXPLANATION - There are quite a few blades, signed pieces, by Osafune Nagamitsu of Bizen province. Among his works, there is one flashy one, like the work of his father Mitsutada, and also the blade made by him which is basically suguha with narrow nioi mixed with little ko-ashi. Furthermore, there are blades similar to this particular one--basically it is suguha mixed with choji--and each and every one of this style shows his characteristics. This blade is typical of one of his styles. The nakago is slightly shortened, but the machi is ubu with the original machi (notched portion at the start of the cutting edge) is still there.

HISTORY - This was among the blades of the Asano family, Lords of Aki province.



太刀　長光

KIN NASHIJI KIRIMON CHIRASHI ITOMAKI TACHI KOSHIRAE

(Jūyō Tōken Nado Zufu - Vol. 1, plate 27)

Reprinted with permission

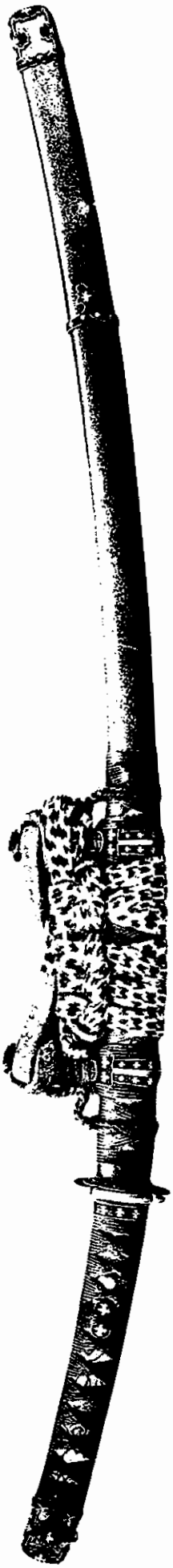
MEASUREMENTS - Total length 3.5 shaku. Curve 2.2 sun. Length of tsuka 8.1 sun. Sori of tsuka 3 bu. Length of saya 2.62 shaku. Curve of saya 1.2 sun.

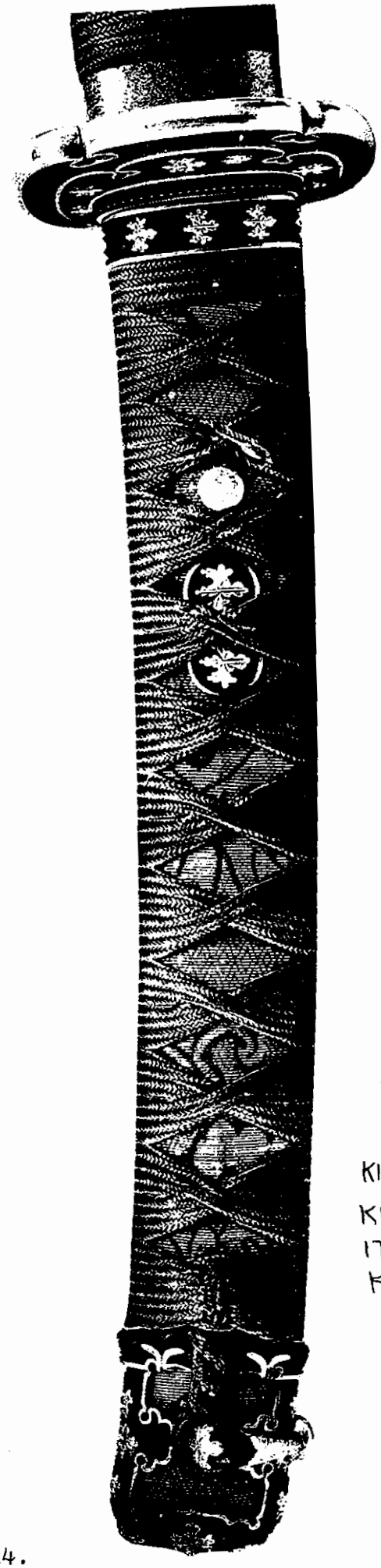
DESCRIPTION - The entire kanagu (metal pieces) are of shakudo in nanako-ji. The kobuchi is gold, with "go-san no kiri mon" in takabori iroe. The menuki are also with this same motif and treatment. The tsuba is mokko gata shape, and has perforated shiho inome, inome (boar's eye design) on four corners, with kin fukurin (gold rim). The O-sepa are mokko gata shiho inome sukashi. The eight kiri mon (crests) on the kin kobuchi are takabori iroe. The ko-seppa are three in number; the top and bottom ones are kin-gise, and the middle one is shakudo. The material under the binding is brocade of green color called kinran. The tape is brown. The ashi-kawa are blue. The scabbard is of lacquer called kin-nashiji (gold pear skin).

EXPLANATION - The fad for extravagant and gorgeous itomaki tachi mountings started after the Momoyama Era. Tachi of this type were used by warriors and generals for actual combat and also for ceremonial service. Blades of high quality were used in this type of koshirae. The highly decorated mountings, such as this one, are usually with the family crest in shakudo nanako-ji style. The scabbard is of lacquer of kin-nashiji type or ikakeji type. There is usually kinran brocade under the tape, and they are usually bound with tape. Since this type of tachi is bound with brocade, it is called itomachi tachi. This type was very popular in the Keicho period (1596-1614). It was exclusively for the warrior class, and was called Keicho Tachi or Buke (warrior) Tachi because of this association.

HISTORY -

This particular tachi mounting was given by Toyotomi Hideyoshi to Uesugi Kagekatsu. It has been handed down in the Uesugi family since then. Because of this, the history of this tachi is very clear. It is considered very valuable. It is characteristic of the fittings of this era that the kashira and kojiri have sharp corners and the tsuba is slightly smaller in the round. Also, the saya is made very flat.





二七 (27)

KIN NASHIJI
KIRIMON CHIRASHI
ITOMAKI-TACHI-
KOSHIRAE

BUY-SELL-TRADE SECTION

This section of the NEWSLETTER is offered as a FREE SERVICE to the membership. Please keep ads brief and direct. For larger ads announcing items for sale, it is advised that the members be asked to write for a complete listing of items. Business ads are not allowed. Paid advertising is offered at reasonable rates for professional ads. Direct all ad copy to the NEWSLETTER EDITOR. Please note deadline dates.

● FOR SALE - Abumi, silver inlay "sakura floating on stream", Signed: TOMOSHIGE, ex.cond.; Katana, ss, ubu, 29-3/8", attrib. AWA SUKEYOSHI, ex. polish, full mounts; Wakizashi, Shinto, ubu, 21½", signed: OMI (NO) KAMI F/W TSUNAHIRO, ex. cond., shirazaya; Omi yari, Shinto, ubu, 23-7/8", signed: MITSUKUNI. Needs polish, saya only.
CONTACT: Andres Rodrigues

● FOR SALE - Katana, 65cm, ex. polish, shirazaya, signed: HEIANJO JU F/W HIRONOBU, Keian 3 (1650), THIS BLADE MADE FOR KUMENOSUKE YAMAMOTO FOR HIS FAMILY TREASURE.
CONTACT: Bob Luchini

● FOR SALE - Books, Nihonto Taikan (2-sets), $3,200 (7 vol.), $2,500 (6 vol.), cash or trade for swords. Also many other Japanese text books for sale.
CONTACT: Shozo Miyashita

● FOR SALE - Katana, 25½", good polish, mumei, gendaito, suguha w/chikei, gunto mtd, lacq. saya w/kurigata $400; Katana, 23.2", ex.polish, O-suriage, HIGO (NO) KAMI KUNIYASU, Osaka Shinto, nakago kiriyasurime except panel on omote is 45° sujikai, O-gunome choji hamon, beautiful! Good gunto mtd, 3 holes, $1050; Katana, 27.5", good polish, O-suriage, koto, suguha-notare, itame, f/k brass Hizen style, brass kiku tsuba, circa 1550, red grained saya, Goto horse menuki, $750; Katana, 28", ex.polish, Koto, O-suriage, chu-suguha w/yubashiri, kinsuji, ji-nie, kogunome w/ ashi and yo, itame. Thin graceful blade, old iron handashi mtds., Hizen f/k, Goto menuki. $1100.
CONTACT: Bill Gregory

● FOR SALE - Suit of armor, complete, Hoshi kabuto (1800 rivets), 62-plated, all matched except haidate, brown lacquer w/purple lacing, VG+, $3,250; Armor parts, Dō, kōte, sōde, mempō (iron w/o nose), $1,050; Mempō, 2 russet iron masks, 1 signed, $1,200.
CONTACT: R. E. Hicks III

● WANTED - Menuki, kodzuka and/or kogai (individually or matched) in "Iris" motif. Also tanto or other blades by SAGAMI (NO) KAMI F/W MASATSUNE, 1st or 2nd generation.
CONTACT: Robert M. Smith

● WANTED - Information on possible 1st generation TADAYOSHI wakizashi, needs polish, old shirazaya, habaki, deep sori with bo-hi. (blade is for sale or trade); Also wanted, Turkish & Persian shamshirs/scimitars of quality, and particularly interested in Turkish "Kilij".
CONTACT: John Mazaka or Bob Giannini

● WANTED - Good quality Nambokucho or Oei period tanto, wakizashi, or uchikatana. Also wanted, a good quality mtd. tanto or wakizashi.
CONTACT: Craig A. Bird

● WANTED - Japanese sword canes. send description.
CONTACT: Joe Bass

● WANTED - Complete set of Token Bijutsu (English edition).
CONTACT: Helge Eicken

● WANTED - Kodzuka, gold overlay frame, shakudo nanako plate of Mino style gold/silver/shakudo "flowers/leaves", must be respectable quality; Kaga hirazogan tsuba of full size in excellent condition, any classical motif; Yoshiro brass inlay tsuba and large Kyo-sukashi tsuba; Menuki in rich dark shakudo or in dark foxy-red copper. Any early menuki.
CONTACT: Ron Hartmann

● WANTED - Wakizashi or tanto by CHIKUZEN MINAMOTO YOSHIMASA (Fujishiro S-106), and an example by YASUMITSU (Yasukuni Shrine gendaito).
CONTACT: Arnold Frenzel

● WANTED - Books: Japanese Armour by Anderson; Compton's Nippon-to bound edition, Japanese Swordblades by Dobree; Japanese Swordsmiths Vol. 1 & 2 by Hawley, Toso Kodogu Meiji Taikan 1-3 by Homma/Wakayama; Toso Kodogu Koza 2, 1978 by Sato/Wakayama, Nippon-to Koza 25 volumes, 1935; Tsuba Kanso 1-2 by Shibata; Sword Guards from the National Museum, Tokyo. Please offer if in fine condition.
CONTACT: K. E. Skafte

A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS?

By Gary D. Murtha

To the right are two oshigata of wakizashi I have in my collection. The one on the left is signed Yamashiro (no) Kami Fujiwara TOSHINAGA while the one on the right is Mutsu (no) Kami Fujiwara TOSHINAGA. Reference books by Fujishiro, Shibata and Hawley states that the two are brothers with the Yamashiro being the oldest. They also state that the younger brother signed very close to the oldest. Close seems to be an understatement! Having both swords side by side for inspection brings up several questions. Are they really brothers or the same man? The signatures seem identical, especially when comparing them in hand and side by side. They are both of the same period 1660-1670 and have close to identical workmanship and quality. The only obvious difference being the nakago shapes. It is stated that the Yamashiro man also signed HIROTSUGU and a check of his nakago checks out the same as that shown here. A check of all the books shows the same nakago shapes with different signatures. The Mutsu nakago are all as shown and the same goes for the Yamashiro.

Had I not been able to view both swords at the same time then I probably would not have questioned their being brothers, as many times several generations signed very close. In these cases one must check the quality, workmanship and other individual characteristics to separate the generations. It is always possible that the older brother signed (purespeculation) the work of the brother, but I doubt that this is the case here. In any event, I would welcome any information in regards to these signatures.

The Yamashiro sword was found mounted in low quality mounts. The blade was badly rusted and pitted. The Mutsu blade was found in old shirasaya with nice sayagaki.

The Yamashiro blade was polished in 1981 and was subsequently awarded KOSHU TOKUBITSU KICHO. The Mutsu blade is scheduled for restoration soon.

It is exciting to have both swords while thinking about their past and the possibility of reuniting two brothers after 300 years!

STOLEN SWORD -

The illustrated sword was let out for polishing in 1979 and was never returned to the owner. The owner was the late Billy Johnson of Birmingham, Alabama. At this time Mrs. Billy Johnson would be most grateful if the membership could keep an eye open for this sword in the hope that it might be returned to her. A $1,000 reward is offered for the return of this sword.

The sword is a katana measuring 27-9/16 inches (cutting edge). It is signed: WAKASA (no) KAMI MINAMOTO HIROMASA.

Hiromasa was a student of the very famous Tsuda Sukehiro II of Settsu province. He worked around the 1680 era.

Nihonto Newsletter (Vol.4, no.6 page 10) states that student's swords are not too often seen, that the fame of the great master Sukehiro and of Sukenao, his brother-in-law. Because of this, this signature becomes a good example of a somewhat rare mei for our study.

Anyone thinking that they have information about this sword should contact either the JSS/US Newsletter or Mr. Ray Deadman,

Editor's note:

The Newsletter has been advised that the Japanese swords which were stolen while enroute on a train going from Denmark to Germany (Newsletter, Vol. 16 No.2, p.8) have been recovered in Europe. The swords have been returned to their owner.

SOME COMMENTS FROM JOHN YUMOTO -

Re: Newsletter Vol. 16 No.2 p.29-30;

The upper four characters on the right hand side of the ura side, I believe are the following:

"Hami" is literally 'taste of cutting edge', or quality of sharpness. "Saijo" is 'the best'.

HA	刃	刃
MI	味	味
SAI	最	最
JO	上	上

An interesting article about a cutting test performed by Nakayama Hiromichi Renshi, a high ranking Kendo master, apparently appeared in the December 1935 issue of Token To Rekishi number 340.

Newsletter Vol. 16 No. 3, p.14 line 17: "....only Tokubetsu Juyo rated.....", there are more than one such blade in America.

Newsletter Vol. 16 No. 3, p.23: John points out that the words "mumei" and "shinsa" were misspelled "mume" and "shinza".

John goes on to say that he does not mean to be picky, but in making corrections he hopes the Newsletter can become the best one of its kind. Thanks John--we shall keep trying.

* * * * *

JAPANESE SWORDSMITHS REVISED -

The availability of this important listing of swordsmiths as compiled by Willis Hawley was announced in the last Newsletter. John Grimmitt of Baldwin Park, California is handling this book for Mr. Hawley, through his new sword shop, Oriental and Ancient Arts. However, John has asked that we clarify the cost of this book. The price is as follows:

SURFACE MAIL IS $75.00 PLUS $5.00
POSTAGE AND HANDLING, TOTALING $80.00

This is land and sea, uninsured stateside and overseas

SURFACE MAIL INSURED OVERSEAS.....$90.15 TOTAL COST

This includes book price, parcel post fee, insurance, packaging and handling. Although John does not ask this, from past experience, it is advised that all foreign orders (including Canadian) be via insured mail.

Anyone not having this book should be sure to order a copy as it is the most complete listing of swordsmiths ever compiled, and it is English.

Order direct from: ORIENTAL & ANCIENT ARTS

(818) 332-1414

PHILADELPHIA TOKEN KAI -

This recently formed Philadelphia area sword study group, as introduced in the Newsletter (Vol. 16 No.2, p.29), has sent a copy of their first research paper to your editor for reading. It is their plan to publish such research papers on a regular basis of about five per year. This first paper, entitled "Study of Hizentō", is a 17 page research paper executed in thorough and scholarly manner. They are to be commended for their effort! Dr. Bruce Kowalski, secretary of the group, will be contacted to find out more about the distribution of their papers. Our members will be advised. Best wishes in their future efforts!

DE SAMURAI -

The publication of the Token Society of the Netherlands, De Samurai, as donated to the JSS/US library recently (Newsletter Vol.16 No.1, p.4), is available for purchase direct from Holland. Mr. Han Bing Siong advises postage to be:

Publication: Dfl 25.00
Airmail post. Dfl 7.60 (Dfl 4.25 seamail)
Bank costs: Dfl 6.25

No personal checks please. Order books direct from:

Mr. Han Bing Siong

SAMURAI: THE CULTURED WARRIOR -

An exhibition entitled Samurai: The Cultured Warrior is being presented at this time by the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, The event will run through October 14th.

The exhibit features arms and armor from public and private collections. Other events include demonstrations, lectures and films relating to Samurai art in general and many other aspects of Japanese culture. An exhibition catalogue is available from the gallery. For further information please contact the gallery at the above address, or phone

MEMPHIS SWORD EXHIBIT -

The Memphis Botanic Gardens is presenting a Japanese Festival the weekend of September 15th and 16th in Memphis, Tennessee. A representative exhibit of swords and kodogu will be presented by Ron Hartmann and Jack Landis. Other sword activities will include a demonstration in swordsmanship by Mr. Frank Matsumoto of Chicago. We hope to see some local collectors while at the festival.

-NEWSLETTER DEADLINE- SEPTEMBER 15th

All material and ads intended for inclusion in the next issue of the NEWSLETTER must be in the hands of the Editor by the above closing date.

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THE GOALS ...

To unify all true forms of martial art weaponry throughout the U.S., into one association.

To incorporate the true historical samurai techniques in their authentic kata forms.

To stimulate interest in the various styles of weaponry not only as a sport, but an art also.

To establish Kendo and encourage its growth throughout the U.S. as an international sport, played in schools, colleges, and dojos across the country, as it is played in Japan.

To maintain tournaments and competition among its members on a high level of true amateurism and sportsmanships by providing rules and procedures governing such tournaments.

To establish a team representing the United States, to compete with Japan at their tournaments.

Director Jo Hanokami performing IAIDO.

THE DIRECTOR ...

(From bottom left) JO HANOKAMI - MASTER NAKAYAMA - SAKAI

The Director receiving sword and his name Jo Hanokami from Master Nakayama and Sakai in Japan - 1973.

Jo Hanokami/Bass attended Kambum Uechi School at the Nodaki Doja, Okinawa in 1952. There he learned the style of Pwan gy noon, a style of Karate. Master Kambum Uechi studied in China at a monastery. After studying under Master Kambum Uechi's son Kanei, he received his Shodan black belt on February 25, 1953. He had been stationed there to rehabilitate from wounds he suffered while fighting in Korea. He was discharged from the U.S. Army in 1955, and started teaching soon afterward. He has opened and taught schools in Illinois and Florida where he has also instructed the F.B.I., Florida Highway Patrol, and various City Police.

He joined the United States Karate Association in 1966, and was appointed Style Head of the Research and Technique Board for Uechi Ryu Karate. He was also appointed as official judge at all USKA Karate Tournaments, after retiring undefeated from Black Belt Championship Competition in 1968. In 1972, he resigned from the U.S.K.A. when he was appointed chairman and Head Sensei over the Florida Uechi Ryu Federation. In 1973, he received his Soke Shebukan from Master Kanei Uechi himself, who is now head master of that style. Present rank: Hachi Dan.

Joe Bass is also an instructor in the art of Kendo; Japanese Swordplay, Jaryu; the ancient art of the cane (or stick), and Iaido - ShindomunenRyu: the art of sword kata practiced by the Samurai warriors. He was the first and only American to study these katas under the highest masters in Japan: Masters Nakayama, Saeki, and Onagi. In 1973, he was given the Samurai name of Jo Hanokami by the Master, and recognized as a true American Samurai. In 1976, he received from Master Nakayama, certification of high degree, appointing him as Head Instructor in the U.S. He has since been appointed as the Director of the United States Kendo & Weapons Association. As Director, his main goals are to make Kendo one of the most popular sports in the U.S., and to teach the way of the Samurai

The Samurai Sword

An American Perspective

Vol. 2 *SWORD FITTINGS*

by Gary D. Murtha

At long last, a comprehensive volume on Japanese sword fittings. *The Samurai Sword An American Perspective Vol 2. Fittings* is produced in the same high quality as Vol 1. This companion volume on fittings is printed on high gloss 80 lb. enamel stock (Page size 8½ x 11"). It is hard case bound with a beautiful color dust jacket. Over 150 pages in length, *Vol 2. Fittings* is the most comprehensive treatment, ever printed in English, on these wonderful art objects. This lavishly illustrated book, with 30 reproductions of fittings in full color, as well as 13 in black and white, covers the history of over 60 schools and groups. Of particular value is a listing of nearly 2,000 artists, their signatures, styles, working period and personal background. Hundreds of Kao and Kakihan are given to help identify previously unknown masters. Although in English, extensive use of Japanese Kanji is incorporated. SOME OF THE ARTISTS ILLUSTRATED ARE:

Bushu Harumitsu, Hirata Nariyuki, Ishiguro Masaaki, Kinai, Jakushi, Akasaka, Jingo, Kumagai, Shoami Morikuni, Hikone Soten, Tetsugendo Shoraku, Umetada Muneyoshi, Yokoya Somin, Owari Masayoshi, Tanshu Sadamasa, Koike Naomasa, Kyoto Noriiye, Kyoto Kiyonori, Nara Tsuneshige, Hamano Masayoshi, Hiragiya, Yasuchika, Hamano Muneyuki, Nagayoshi and more.

ORDER FORM

Suggested retail $30.00. Direct from the author $25.00, postage and handling paid. Foreign order $28.00. No credit cards or COD please.

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WANTED

INFORMATION AS TO 1969 TRADE OF 400 SAMURAI SWORDS

Our client traded 400 samurai swords for other property in 1969 through an agent for an unknown party. The agent is dead and our client needs to cooberate the trade. If you have any possible information please write or call collect.

Joseph Phebus or Jeffrey Tock
Phebus, Tummelson, Bryan & Knox

TEIRYO YOJI

INFORMATION CONCERNING SWORD APPRAISAL

By
HONAMI KOSON

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY
ALBERT YAMANAKA
AND
DAVID SCOTT

At long last a most definitive work of sword kante is available. This work completed by Honami Koson in 1932 and never before published was given by Honami sensei to his leading students. It embodies in essence the secrets of the Honami. Consisting of three volumes which were originally scrolls (one on Koto swords, one on Shinto and Shinshinto swords and one on Tanto) with over 800 illustrations, each meticulously hand drawn, with pertinent notes in Japanese with English translation added. Full English translation of text is also provided, along with an index and glossary in English.

It is important to note that the swords which are illustrated are not swords which actually exist, but rather swords which most typify the swordsmiths work, with all blades being illustrated in the exact sequence which they appeared in the original manuscript.

This original manuscript was one of a set of six which were written between 1929 and 1932. Four sets were destroyed during the war. The location of the fifth set is unknown.

This publication is based upon the only known existing set which was given to Albert Yamanaka by his sensei Honami Koson. This is a limited edition of 300 copies and is printed on high quality coated stock; in one volume containing 450 pages, measuring 9″x12″ and weighing approximately eight pounds in slip case.

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To: David Scott