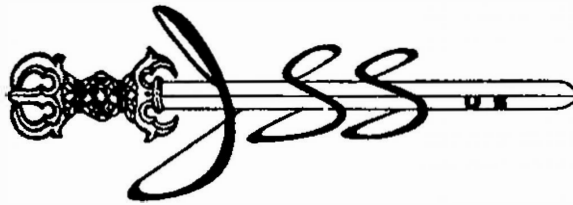


Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

Volume 13 No. 4

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NIHONTŌ NEWSLETTER REPRINT -

Preliminary cost estimates have been calculated and have been presented to the officers and directors for their approval. The cost of printing, binding and shipping 250 copies will amount to approximately \$20,000. To assist in raising needed working capital a special Prepublication Offer is planned. A suggested price of \$125 per set (approximately 2,400 pages of data bound in a two-volume set) has been presented to the Publications Committee. After publication the sets would sell for \$140 per set. An initial 100 sets must be sold (at the discounted price) if the project is to be a success. Response to this offer will determine how many copies will be printed.

This is a preliminary notice intended to give everyone time to save some money and to consider buying a copy of this fine bit of material. DO NOT send any money in at this time. A formal announcement will be sent to all members upon Publications Committee approval. Your prepublication order would be of great assistance at that time. Plan on it.

LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN -

Since the last Newsletter, the Society officers have discussed and decided to offer a standing "reward", of \$1,000, for information leading to the recovery of swords or fittings stolen from JSS/US members and the conviction of those responsible for the robbery. In the world of high priced swords, this reward represents only a token amount, but it does reflect the Society's dedication to halting sword theft. We simply can't tolerate the stealing--especially violent theft--of our collections. We must close ranks and do what we can. This reward is one thing that the Society can do. Administratively, the reward will be handled by the Chairman and a committee which he will designate. If anyone has or hears of any information felt to be relevant, bring it to the attention of any Society officer.

CHAIRMAN cont'd.

In discussing the reward, it was very accurately pointed out that if the individual owner doesn't take the proper precautions, no reward will protect his collection. That is a basic point that can't be stressed too much. Each one of us must include making sure that the pieces are in a safe place either in our home or elsewhere. I hate to see more and more collections being moved to bank vaults but many members now feel that is necessary. If you have some insights to share about how to secure and enjoy a collection, I hope you will send them in to the Newsletter. Once a collection is secured, it must be checked regularly and thoroughly. It is impressive to me that some robberies have not been discovered until well after they have happened! Finally, and most important, a collection must be thoroughly catalogued and recorded. Without a good catalogue recovery is near impossible. The act of cataloging can be tedious but it can also be a satisfying exercise that makes you sit down and really look at every piece in your collection. Ron Hartmann has printed several items on how and what to record in a collection catalogue. These have been very useful. The challenge is putting down all of the basic information on size and shape, etc., but then also figuring out the characteristic that truly "fingerprints" a particular item. Again, if you have any idea how to do this or a scheme that has worked for you why not send it in to the Newsletter. Members are interested in these topics and good ideas are worth sharing. If you come across suspicious swords or have any other information which may help recover stolen material, share it with me or any of the other officers.

One other topic, I have had a couple of reports of various problems individual members have had with agents and polishers in Japan. These are very hard for the Society to deal with since we have no leverage or legal basis for intervening. Apparently, though, at least one Japanese dealer who had been fairly active in arranging various services and sales has suddenly dropped from sight. For obvious reasons his identity can not be published here, but his reputation seems to have spread fairly widely. For now there is little that can be done about the situation. The lesson to be learned is to look before you leap. Before you consign anything to an agent or a dealer it is wise to ask some questions of other collectors. Good and bad reputations get around and so a few questions should give you some idea of the kind of person you're dealing with.

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Editor's comment - To further aid in the recovery of stolen items, the Newsletter has always offered to print any photographic records of the lost items. This is offered at our cost of \$20 per printed page--the cost of a half-tone plate and printing costs. Oddly enough, only one person out of the last four or five thefts has taken advantage of this offer. The Society can help in some ways but the owners must first help themselves. Do your bookkeeping and photographic record keeping and if a loss happens, quickly publish the records.

TOKEN STUDY GROUP SWORD SHOW
OCTOBER 9-10-11, 1981
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

OSAKA SHINTŌ SWORDSMITHS EXHIBITION WITH
ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CATALOG

BUY-SELL-TRADE ROOM * BANQUET * LECTURES

to be held at

THE DRAKE OAKBROOK HOTEL
York & Cermak
Oak Brook, Illinois
(close to O'Hare airport)

The format of this years sword show has been developed around the many requests of the collectors who usually attend this annual Token Study Group event. The format is an excellent one which aims at promoting sword study along with good fellowship.

Around twenty, in polish, authenticated items will be on exhibit featuring the products of various Osaka schools during the shinto period. Such a concentrated exhibit will truly be an exciting and educational feature of the show. An exhibition catalog containing oshigata and background material on the Osaka schools will also be available. This catalog promises to be a fine addition to any sword library.

A banquet is planned which will be followed by a lecture program.

As always, the buy-sell-trade room will be there featuring lots of activity between collectors.

A JSS/US table will be set up with books and supplies available for purchase. Several library reference books will also be made available for use during the show.

The Token Study Group is trying very hard to give the collector what he or she wants, making their show more than "just another show". Express your interest in this type of educational show by attending. Only your attendance can make it a success--assuring future shows.

A SPECIAL FLYER WILL BE MAILED OUT BY THE TOKEN STUDY GROUP IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE. REGISTRATION FEE AND OTHER PARTICULARS WILL BE CONTAINED IN THIS MAILING.

SHINTŌ-SHU TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE -

The Society has purchased a supply of the english translation to the Japanese book of oshigata, Shintō-shu by Yoshio Fujishiro. The translation, by Mr. Steven Winkley, consists of 59 typed pages. The sets we have for sale are unbound and are sold loose-leaf. The translation is beautifully done and is a must for anyone having a copy of the Japanese book (which is also available, through Mr. Winkley).

Price of translation: \$15.00pp (surface mail)
\$20.00pp (foreign air mail)

Order your copy today!

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SOUTHEAST TOKEN KAI SWORD SHOW
AUGUST 28-29-30, 1981
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

THIS SHOW IS HELD FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING THE COLLECTOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISPLAY, BUY, SELL OR TRADE, AND TO STUDY THE JAPANESE SWORD. AS ALWAYS, THE SHOW PROMISES TO BE

No special exhibits or lectures are planned, but if anyone wishes to provide an exhibit or to deliver a lecture on a specific area of expertise, arrangements can be made to do so. Such a contribution would of course only add to the total weekend's enjoyment.

The show is not open to the public and those attending must be a member of the JSS/US to be admitted. An up-to-date membership roster will be on hand to assist in identification in case a membership card is not in hand. Those new people wishing to join will be signed up at the show.

Table rental is \$25 for the weekend. For table reservations and hotel reservations, contact:

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COMING ELECTION -

Next issue of the Newsletter will open nominations for six directorships, to fill the spots of six out-going directors. It is not too soon to think about this. Anyone interested in acting as a director of the Society, an active director willing to work, should submit their name in to the Chairman or any other Society member, officer or director. We always have many contributors of "suggestions"--but few willing to give up personal time working on projects! We do not need lip service--we need willing workers! It is rewarding in many ways as is all volunteer work.

SATSUMA SWORDSMITHS

-Part One-

by Albert Yamanaka

The first swordsmith who worked in this province was named Naminohira Masakuni who is recorded as having been active during the Eien Era (987-AD) and thereabouts, that is during the late 10th Century. Therefore as compared to activities in other Provinces, activities in Satsuma Province seems to have been quite early, so far as recorded history is concerned.

Masakuni is reportedly to have been originated in the Uda District of Yamato Province. He eventually went to Satsuma Province and settled there and came to call his followers or his group Naminohira. The descendant of Masakuni came to call themselves Hashiguchi for their surname, which name is quite common in Satsuma district. Masakuni having decided to settle in Satsuma he went back to Kyoto or Yamato to bring his family back with him to Satsuma. On the trip he was caught in a storm and to quell the sea gods, he offered one of his swords to the gods which supposed to have calmed the sea. Thereafter, his group was called Naminohira or 'calm waves'. Perhaps a dreamed up story by later historians but nevertheless very convincing. Anyway, having brought his family to Satsuma he settled in a small hamlet a little south of present day Kagoshima City, called Taniyama. Since that time Taniyama became associated with the Naminohira smiths.

In the Tales of the Rise and Fall of the Minamoto and the Heike, there is a passage where a Genji General beheads a Taira General and the sword he used in the beheading was a blade by Naminohira. So even way back in those days the Naminohira sword was already well received by warlords. This was the period whereby the Bizen swordsmith of Ko-Bizen was already well known as well as the Kyoto swordsmith of Sanjo and Gojo. This proves that the Naminohira blades must have been a very good cutting instrument. There are also many other passages of these battles where swords are mentioned, but we give one example. How much of the following can be believed must be left to the reader to decide.

During the early life of Sanjo Munechika, he is supposed to have been banished to Satsuma Province. He is supposed to have gotten on friendly terms with Masakuni who took him in and taught him the sword making trade during banishment. After his time was served, he returned to Kyoto and eventually came to be known as Sanjo Munechika. This may be a 'tall' story and a little hard to believe, however in the diary of Fujiwara Kaneie, known as the Omiya Ki, there is a mention in it as Munechika did learn the sword making art from Masakuni of Satsuma during the time he was in banishment. This fact has been written for many years although the diary itself, Omiya Ki, has never been seen by anyone.

SATSUMA cont'd.

During the Kamakura Period after the Minamoto took control of the country by establishing the military dictatorship, the Minamoto send the Shimazu Clan led by Tadahisa to oversee the three provinces of Satsuma, Osumi and Hyuga. This continued on until the end of the Tokugawa Reign in 1867 which went on for over 700 years. The Naminohira Group or school had the patronage of the Shimazu Clan as well as other local warlords under the Shimazu all during these times.

The so-called Ko-Satsuma refers to the works of the Naminohira smiths until about the early Muromachi Period of pre-1400s from its initial start during the Heian Period. The Chu-Naminohira are the works of the group from the Muromachi Period until the late Kotō Period. The Sue-Naminohira are the works of the group from the Shintō Period. During the Chu-Naminohira time which is the period in which this group becomes known for their steel - ayasugi hada. Ayasugi hada more or less becomes synonymous with the Naminohira works.

During Shotoku 2nd (1712), the Honami family, the famous appraisers and polishers, is known to have requested the family geneology of the Naminohira. In this chart Yasukuni is listed as the founder and counting from Yasukuni the chart continues on for fifty-eight generations up until the time that the family tree was made in 1712. However, there seems to be much dispute against this geneology, especially the founder who is listed in many records as Masakuni and not Yasukuni! Whoever or whichever may have been the founder really does not matter much to us today, either one can have the credit for both made pretty good blades.

Sue Naminohira smiths are the ones who were active from the late Muromachi Period into the Shintō Period, and in some books, strickly Shintō smiths. In 1397 (Oei 4th) the Taniyama Clan who controlled the area where Naminohira worked, were defeated in the battle against the Shimazu and they were forced to abandon the castle there and many of the Naminohira smiths seem to have fled with the Taniyama warriors. So the sword making at Taniyama Village more or less waned. Then during about the Onin Era (1467-68) the shock of the Taniyama defeat must have settled down and once again sword making in the Taniyama area became active, probably led by the original group with the help of a branch Naminohira group called the Ishigami Group. There is a work by Ishigami Shigezumi dated Choroku Era (1457-59) and this is about the time when most works come to be known as Sue Naminohira. This is also the period in which exceptionally long blades were made as there are works by Naminohira Yasunori which measure 160 cm or 5 shaku 2 sun 8 bu, and another by Naminohira Yasutatsu which measures 206 cm or 2 shaku 8 sun long. Most people in the west expecially know the Japanese to be short, bow legged 'runts', however, for a man to weild a sword of this great length he just could not have been a runt, but of some stature and more so than the average Westerner, probably just as big as a Swede or an Irishman (?) and not like the runts of the pre or post war Japan. The Naminohira works

SATSUMA cont'd.

we know are worked in the Yamato Tradition with very distinctive grain in masame and in some cases the itame is mixed in which turns into masame and then into ayasugi hada. This type is mostly seen on the works of Chu Naminohira.

The ayasugi hada of the Naminohira is not made in uniform style as compared to those of the Gassan works of Dewa Province whose grain is very much in uniform pattern. These two quite often are confused. The Gassan ayasugi hada is made uniformly where as the Naminohira ayasugi hada is not uniform. The Naminohira works are made in nioi with nie, though the early works are in ko nie.

In my earlier writings it was mentioned about the ko-Naminohira as worked in narrow yakiba and the blade having fumbari and the whole shape being made very elegantly. The width of the yakiba is narrow in chu suguha worked in nie with ashi, uchinoke at the hamon edge as well as with hakikake. The Jitetsu is made very fine and in masame hada with ayasugi hada mixed in. In the later works of the sue Naminohira, the works are in the usual late kotō style of the Momoyama Period. The width of the yakiba is narrow in chu suguha with hakikae at the hamon edge with hardly any activities to be seen within the hamon. Some works are in komidare or ko gunome midare. The boshi will be in komaru or yakizume. The steel is very flat and the grain in ayasugi hada with some in komokume hada which will run in places and become masame hada. In the works of the Gassan of Dewa Province, there will be whirlpool-like effects at the hamon edge and this is quite distinctive, whereas in the Naminohira steel the hada is not uniform. Again, there are the two differences between the Naminohira works and that of Gassan.

In the next installment, we will cover the minor groups who worked in Satsuma Province during the Kotō Period, as well as the smiths of the Naminohira geneology.

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Editor's note - Not all Japanese terms will be explained when used in Mr. Yamanaka's writings although selected terms will be singled out for explanation at the end of each writing.

HAKIKAKE: This is mostly found on blades in suguha with the steel forged in masame hada. The border of the hamon will have streaks as though left by broom strokes. A boshi which is "swept" with lines is also referred to as having hakikake.

UCHINOKE - A "new moon" type formation of nie appearing above the hamon.

REVEALING THE PAST

by Robert Corella

Have you ever wondered about the background of one of your swords? The soldier who took it to war? The history of the sword? Did you ever wish it could talk? Well, one of my swords did, in a way. A few years ago I purchased a katana of good quality. The saya had a leather covering around it and attached to it was a wooden name tag with the name and address of the previous owner. On the other side of the tag were the following words written in kanji; kotō (old sword), Kaho (family treasure), mumei (unsigned). My curiosity started to get to me. Was the previous owner still alive? What could he tell me about the sword's history and did it belong to a famous samurai? Hundreds of questions filled my mind.

On one of my trips to Japan, opportunity knocked on my door. My next door neighbor in Tokyo worked for a veteran's reunion organization. Since I had the wooden name tag with me I asked if perhaps the owner could be located. Two days later she was able to locate this past owner. I wrote him a letter and asked to talk to him. A phone conversation followed and needless to say, he, the owner, was quite surprised to hear about his lost sword. I told him that I was a collector and that I had bought the sword in Phoenix, Arizona. I also mentioned that because of my love for the sword that I was not able to return the sword to him. However, I assured him that the sword would be taken care of and that it would get the best of care. Obviously, if it ever did become for sale he would be the first notified. Below is the reply which I received from the long lost owner, Mr. Tamura.

(dated July 22nd, 1978) Dear Mr. Corella. How are you getting along considering the constant severe heat we are having every day?

Thank you very much for your letter concerning the Japanese sword that I owned before. I would like to present my sincere thanks to you. That sword had always been preserved as a treasure of my family. Unfortunately, I was drafted and I carried the sword with me to war. The odds were against us and the war was eventually over. At the war's end, all weapons were returned to our country and confiscated by the American army. At that time, my own private sword was also taken away from me. Against my will, I had to obey the order, reluctantly, since it was a military command.

My sword was a kotō blade and without a signature, but it did not seem like an ordinary sword. At the time of confiscation I was notified by my military unit that someday the sword would be returned. But, it never came true. After 30 years I never expected the sword to be found, owned by you.

I can't tell you anything about the history of the sword since it is obscure. Through out my enlistment, I never actually used the sword except for having it with me.

PAST cont'd.

I would like to ask you to preserve the sword well for the rest of your life, for ever and ever. I hear you are going back home in August. I hope you take very good care of yourself and I wish you good health. (signed) Noruyoshi Tamura

From the time I first wrote to Mr. Tamura I have learned much about the sword. I have had the sword polished by Mr. Kentaro Yoshikawa and have also received kanteisho from the Nippon Token Hozon Kyokai. The kanteisho revealed that the sword is a shintō blade in reality, made by (attributed to) Yamato Daijo Masanori of Echizen, first generation work from around Kanei Period (1624).

This summer I will be meeting Mr. Tamura in Japan. Perhaps I just might learn a few more things about the sword. I have had other swords with the names of the owners attached, but I have never been successful at tracking down their history. It is hard to retrace tracks from some 35 years ago. Anyway, I do look forward to meeting Mr. Tamura and perhaps learning more about the sword.

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TANTO ORDER DELAYED -

Our present supply of the book Tantō (available @ US\$18pp) is depleted. A new order has been placed but unfortunately, it has been delayed. Anyone wishing to place an order for this fine little book would do well to wait until around late August. The english translation (available @ US\$5pp) is to be reprinted soon and will probably be done so on a new format, to the size of the original Japanese text. More on this reprint at a later date.

POCKET TYPE MEKUGI REMOVERS -

There are about half-dozen back orders in hand for this item. Due to a mix-up, the order from Japan has been delayed. All orders will be filled immediately upon receipt of our shipment from Tokyo (expected to arrive any day now).

AUCTION CATALOGUES STILL AVAILABLE -

Bob Haynes advises that copies of the Jack Paras Auction Catalogue are still available. The value of this catalogue as a reference book is important and therefore, it would be well to order yourself a copy to add to your library. For particulars, write: Robert Haynes, 2231 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123.

JSS/US LIBRARY UP-DATE -

Anyone experiencing a delay in book orders should note that the Librarian, Howard Sloan, has been away on business and some delay will be realized with library activities. This delay should be rectified in the next few weeks. Your patience is appreciated.

LIBRARY cont'd.

Library additions: several new volumes have been added to the library and are available for loan (taking into consideration the above mentioned delay). The new titles are:

Nihontō Koza, volume 3 (kotō blades); volume 5 (shintō blades); volume 6 (more kotō makers). These volumes contain many fine oshigata on smiths from these eras.

To aid in avoiding delays in borrowing books, please order only one book at a time when requesting books. Many people order many titles each time, thus tying up these titles for other people who may wish to request them. One book per order please.

TSUKA WRAPPING HINT -

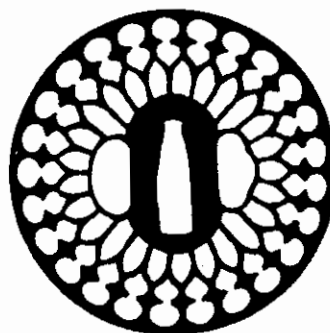
Member Bill Shapland has offered a suggestion to those who attempt to rewrap their tsuka. Bill points out the difficulty of making the traditional paper "pads" which are placed under the binding of a handle. A rather unorthodox method of making pads--but one which works well--is to make these pads from the pulpy paper used in paper egg cartons. It is bulky, compressible, hygroscopic and very maleable.

TSUBA APPRECIATION -

Kyo-sukashi tsuba of elegant design in negative silhouette depicting a twenty-five floret chrysanthemum. The design, the gentle shape of the ryōhitsu, the shape of the seppa-dai, are all typical of the Kyoto elegance of early Edo.

Dimensions: 8.1 x 8.1cm round form with even thickness of 5.5mm

Signature: mumei (unsigned)



Goto work of Kaga Province. Beautiful blue-black shakudo plate with rich gold hira-zokan (flat inlay) depicting a Praying Mantis and two Bell Ring insects amid grasses. A small but elegant example of hira-zokan on soft metal typical of Kaga Province. Judging from the richness of the inlay, I would place this work from early Edo Period.

Dimensions: 7.0 x 6.6cm oval form with rim of 4.4mm and seppa-dai of 4.6mm with the center portion sunken to a thinner thickness.

Signature: mumei (unsigned)

BOOK REVIEW

The Baur Collection

by Arnold Frenzel

Collectors of tsuba and other fittings who have seen no more than one or two of the original editions of those great catalogs of the Naunton, Hawkshaw, Behrens, Church, or Seymour Tower collections done by the renowned Henri L. Joly around WWI, might fairly wish to have been born in another era. However, our own time now affords the opportunity, perhaps the last for the indefinite future, to acquire a catalog in that same tradition and of comparable quality. I am referring to B. W. Robinson, The Baur Collection - Geneva: Japanese Sword-Fittings and Associated Metalwork, 1980

The large and handsome volume of 444 pages measures 11" x 9". Included are 2,591 described pieces with introductory explanations by grouping, 12 genealogical tables, 16 superb color plates illustrating 100 pieces, 128 black and white plates with 760 pieces, 22 plates of 746 enlarged signatures, various internal dictionaries and lists, and of course, an interesting background introduction. The book is beautifully printed on high quality paper and is provided with a dust jacket, slipcase, and is boxed and numbered. 1,500 cloth bound copies have been printed along with 50 copies in leather. It is Volume 7 in a set on the Baur Collection which also includes a planned total of ten volumes on his wide-ranging interests in Chinese and Japanese ceramics, jades and netsuke. The cataloger is known to many, both through his landmark writings on Japanese swords, tsuba and prints and for his generous personal helpfulness; he was formerly Keeper, Department of Metalwork, Far Eastern Section, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, where he is currently Keeper Emeritus. It is fitting that Robinson should have done the Baur catalog in that he is cut from the same cloth as Joly and that helps to make the Baur volume seem like a smooth continuation in type and content similar to Joly's famous works. Distressingly few catalogs have been done on Western collections; the aforementioned and a few in French and German number only about a dozen.

The fittings collection of the late Alfred Baur, a Swiss gentleman of obvious means, was begun in 1907, with intense acquisition activity between 1924 and 1949, much of it with the help of the Japanese dealer Tomita. One wonders if Swiss neutrality during WWII allowed Baur to continue to acquire during that period? In any event the inter-war years were a period of scant interest in Japanese art and one can imagine that Baur enjoyed many fine opportunities not offered those who came just before or after him. He did not just accumulate as we are told that maturing taste was reflected in selective upgrading from time to time.

REVIEW cont'd.

The collection is strongly oriented toward kinko in both tsuba and small fittings. While the full spectrum of groups, kinko and non-kinko, are represented, the collection does reflect the taste, particularly the non-Japanese taste for decorative kinko tsuba that has held sway in large Western collections until very recently. It is clear that Robinson enjoys the same sort of material that Baur did, and while he is sometimes somewhat reserved about the beliefs of old, there is a very pleasant rapprochement struck between cataloger and collection. Naturally such a collection is well sprinkled with big names, the biggest names, kinko and otherwise: Nobuiye, Kaneiye, Myoju, Goto by the dozen, Toshinaga, Yasuchika, Somin, Jo-i, etc. In comparison with a reference source like Kinko Meikan, sometimes the signatures look convincing, and sometimes not, and Robinson, making reference to differences in "expert" opinion, makes no attempt to go beyond classic description of each piece without judging any piece as "right" or "wrong".

This reviewer finds such an attitude rather refreshing in light of the genuflection shown by a substantial number of Western collectors at every opportunity for a shinsa judgement. Robinson implies that he believes that some pieces might not be right, but writes "...in general....I have felt far fewer and less serious doubts on the authenticity of pieces in the present collection than in any other comparable range of material I have examined." He also states, "I have indeed always felt that the time-honoured principle of British law should be applied in the art world, and that any given piece is 'innocent till proved guilty.'" I think that is going too far, but it is certainly in the tradition of most Western collectors, particularly the British, until recently. Robinson very modestly states that definitive judgements on signatures are beyond the capacities of a non-Japanese. Possibly, though careful observation of shinsa conduct and shinsa results suggests to me that accuracy and certainty are very will-o-the-wisp like no matter where those judgements are sought. If the classic Western position has been the legal dictum mentioned above, then today the pendulum has swung fully in the other direction: guilty till proven innocent. Surely there is some middle ground. Honest differences of opinion sometimes can never be resolved, inside Japan or out, and every collector would be wise to learn to make carefully researched first approximation judgements on his own based on workmanship, group characteristics, comparative signatures - all well laced with some skepticism and caution.

The question of authenticity of every piece aside, the Baur collection speaks well for itself. It is rich in variety with a high level of quality and many tasteful and excellent pieces well illustrated and described. In addition to tsuba,

REVIEW cont'd.

menuki, fuchi-kashira, kodzuka and kogai, 39 mountings for wakizashi and aikuchi are illustrated along with their blades. Aside from some typographical errors amounting mostly to transposed kanji, the catalog is a superb work and a credit to both Messers Baur and Robinson. While this volume has only been out several months, interested persons are advised to try to secure a copy without delay. Most of the earlier volumes are out-of-print and already commanding handsome prices in the used book market. Price is 85 pounds sterling and if not available through your usual dealer for such material, try Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 9 Park St., Boston, Massachusetts, 02108.

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Editor's note: The most reasonable price for this book seems to be as offered by JSS/US member, Mr. K. E. Skafte, at US\$140. Availability would need to be verified. (see paid ad this issue). Free flyers on this book are also available simply by sending a s.a.s.e. and a request to the Newsletter.

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.

- FOR SALE - A good selection of fine tsuba and other kodogu are being rotated from my collection, along with some cheaper, average quality pieces. Pictures and listing available upon request. Contact: Ron Hartmann
- FOR SALE - Gendaitō, mounted civilian, 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ " 99% polished blade, signed: Shoji Jiro taro Naokatsu and dated 1830 era. Handsome blade. Contact: Bob Stokluska,
- FOR SALE - Arrowhead, large triangle, pierced, stained, @ \$75; same, large, pierced w/sakura, pitted, @ \$50; same, large, leaf shape, polished, in shirazaya, signed Kuroda, @ \$150; same, small blunt type, polished, shirazaya, @ \$75. Contact: Dale Meiners,
- FOR SALE - Several katana and wakizashi. Send for list. Contact;

COLUMN cont'd.

- WANTED - Tōshō, katchushi, Onin, Kamakura-bori tsuba. Cash or trade first class tsuba from many other groups. Contact: Arnold Frenzel,
- WANTED - Hawley's List of Swordsmiths, Volume #2 w/suppliment. Contact: Phil Wilsey,
- WANTED - Tachi seppa set, similar to military but w/o hole for retainer (traditional mounting set). Contact: Jack Landis,
- WANTED - War fan, also ko-tōshō, katchushi, kanayama, owari tsuba. Also wish a copy of Stone's Glossery. Contact: Stuart E. Broms
- WANTED - Tsuba or "skull" or other "death" motif. Cash or trade. Contact: Phil Davis,
- WANTED - Any fine, crisp menuki, particularly deep, black shakudo. Any early fittings. Contact: Ron Hartmann
- INFORMATION WANTED - Wish to trade photos and oshigata of smiths: Hosho Sadayoshi (SA-421) and Ayanokoji Sadatoshi, (SA-100 & 101). Contact: Fred Pochelle,
- WANTED - Ainu swords and other items made or embellished by the Ainu. Also interested in acquiring pre-modern Japanese coins and sword fittings which show round or rectangular coins. Contact: Peter Bleed,
- WANTED - Seppa for military mounting (set of three), also need inexpensive hilt and habaki which could be fitted to wakizashi. Contact: Charles Lyle,

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San Rafael, CA 94901 (armor related questions).

TEXAS STUDY MEETINGS -

The local collectors in the Houston, Texas area have formed an informal study group which meets every two months at a member's home. Those interested in attending should contact: Mel Oka,

HISTORY OF THE JAPANESE SWORD
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Nihontō Newsletter, 1968
Albert Yamanaka

KAMAKURA PERIOD - From Genryaku 1st (1184) to Genkoo 3rd (1333).

The Kamakura period saw many changes in the evolution of the Japanese sword. Therefore, this period is divided into three stages; Early Kamakura, Mid Kamakura and Late Kamakura Periods.

EARLY KAMAKURA - From Genryaku 1st (1184) to Kempo 6th (1218).

Entering the Kamakura period from the Heian period, we see an outburst of energy among the various swordsmiths throughout the country, resulting in many fine pieces which today are National Treasures and Important Cultural Objects. It can be said that this was the renaissance or the golden age of the Japanese sword. The class and clan struggles, which had sprung out here and there in the previous period, had finally culminated in the great war between the Taira and the Minamoto in which the whole country got involved. The resulting demands for weapons must have been staggering.

Another thing that contributed to this renaissance is the influence and prestige lent to the art of the sword making by Emperor Gotoba. The emperor had summoned most of the great smiths of his time to his villa and had these swordsmiths instruct him in the difficult art. The smiths deemed it the highest honor to be called to the emperor's villa so that the efforts and energy they spent to improve their skill resulted in the great surge in the skill of the smith in this period.

The predominating influence at this time was still that of the Yamashiro Tradition carried over from the previous Heian period with little firmer tendencies. Another significant point is that, when these smiths were invited by the emperor, some received titles. It is or was the custom of feudal Japan, that a commoner could not appear before the court so that when such an occasion arose, a title was given to them--Fukuoka Ichimonji Norimune of Bizen Province had the title of Kyobu no Suke; Awataguchi Kunitsuna had Sakon Shogen; Awataguchi Norikuni had To Umano Suke; Ichimonji Sukemune had Shuri no Suke, etc., etc. The practice of swordsmiths using titles in later periods such as "Kami" with a province name is a carry over from this period. In Yamashiro province, the Awataguchi School was founded by Kunitomo and from this school great numbers of smiths came forward, from amongst which six went to serve the Emperor Gotoba. In Bizen Province, the Fukuoka Ichimonji school was led by Norimune and his son Sukemune, both of whom served Gotoba along with more than twenty others from this province.

Also in the very last part of the Early Kamakura Period, the start of the Ikubi Kissaki is introduced and by the Mid Kamakura Period this shape was being made by most of the famous smiths of the time.

HISTORY cont'd.

To list some of the better known smiths of this time:

Yamashiro Province- Awataguchi Kunitomo
Awataguchi Hisakuni
Awataguchi Kuniyasu
Awataguchi Kunikiyo
Awataguchi Arikuni
Awataguchi Norikuni

Yamato Province---- Ko-Senjuin

Sagami Province---- Kunitsuna (from Awataguchi of Yamashiro)

Bizen Province----- Ko-Ichimonji
Fukuoka Ichimonji Norimune
Fukuoka Ichimonji Sukemune
Fukuoka Ichimonji Nobufusa
Fukuoka Ichimonji Nobukane
Fukuoka Ichimonji Sukefusa
Fukuoka Ichimonji Yoshifusa
Fukuoka Ichimonji Yoshihira
Fukuoka Ichimonji Munetada

Bungo Province----- Yukihiro

Satsuma Province--- Ko-Naminohira

To be continued.....

* * * * *

AWATAGUCHI KUNITOMO OSHIGATA

From Juyo Token Nado Zufu, Vol. 1

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TYPE - Tachi

MEASUREMENTS - 2.45 shaku, 7.2 bu sori, Motohaba 9 bu, Sakihaba 5.4 bu, Kissaki 8 bu, Nakago 7.15 sun, nakago sori 2 bu.

STYLE - Shinogi-zukuri, ihori-mune, Hosomi (slender blade), strong koshizori (deepest curvature close to nakago end of blade, same as Bizen sori), Funbari (rapid decrease from hamachi), ko-gissaki (small kissaki).

KITAE - Very fine ko-itame. Lower section of hakiomote side has slight running grain. There is fine ji-nie (nie formations on the blade surface).

HAMON - In general, it is hoso-suguha (narrow straight) having ko-midare (small irregularities), ko-ashi (small ashi) and yo (foot print like nioi formation within hamon). It is full of nioi as well as ko-nie and there is kin-suji (golden lines within hamon) here and there.

HISTORY cont'd.

BOSHI - The boshi is suguha (straight pattern) with ko-maru (small rounded return. The nioi fades slightly but there is some ko-nie.

HORIMONO - There is koshi-hi (short groove) on haki-omote side made in marudome (rounded ends).

NAKAGO - The machi (notches) have been moved upward slightly (called Machi-okuri), however the nakago is ubu (not shortened). Kijimomogata (pheasant thigh shape). Saki (tip) is in kurijiri (evenly curved) done shallow. Yasurime is sujichigai (slanting left file marks). There are two mekugi-ana. A two character mei, Kunitomo, made with a fine chisel is on the haki-omote side near the mune.

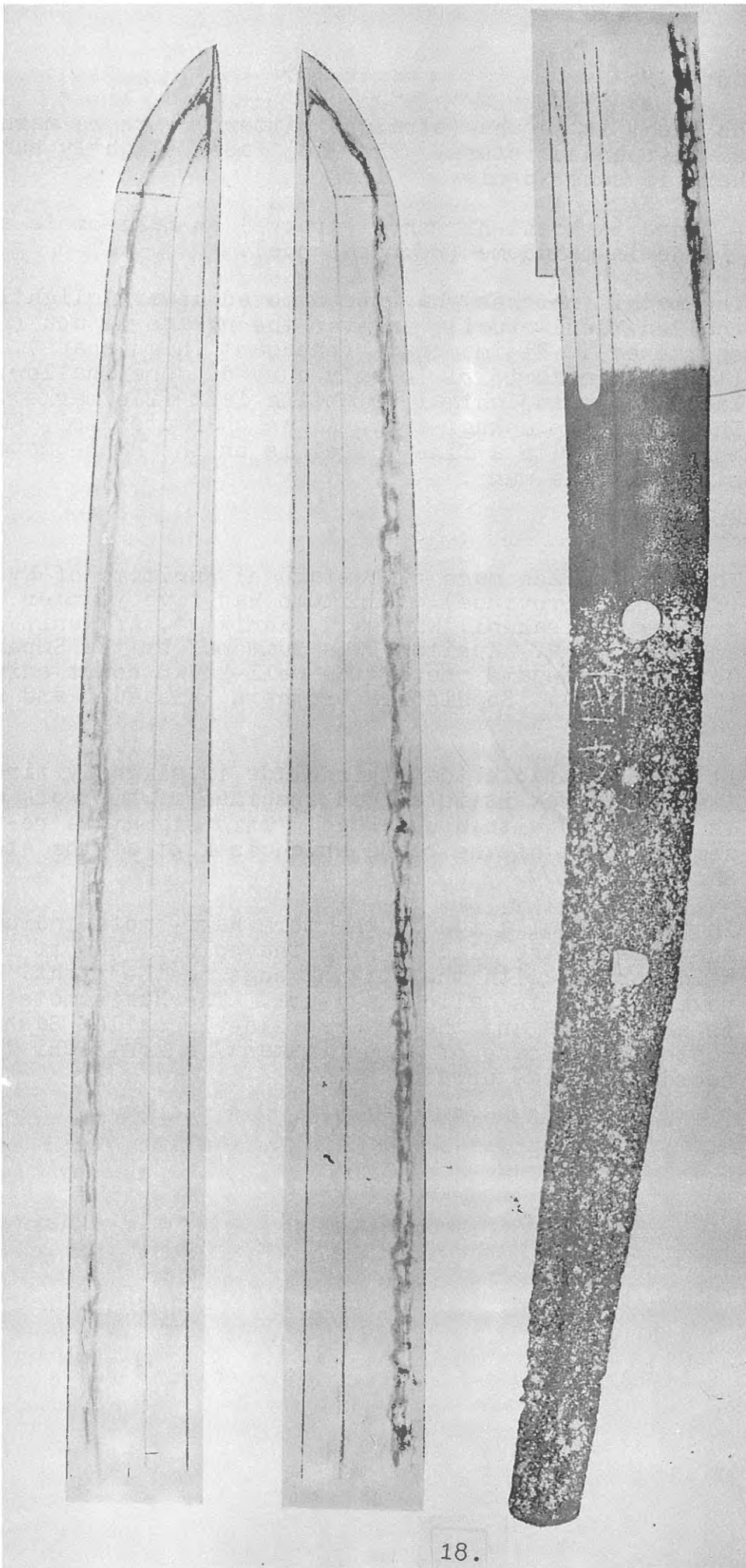
EXPLANATIONS -

This is a blade made by Awataguchi Kunitomo of Kyo (Yamashiro Province). Kunitomo had five younger brothers, Hisakuni, Kuniyasu, Kunikiyo, Arikuni, and Kunitsuna. Kunitomo was summoned by the Emperor Gotoba and became one of the well-known court smiths (Goban Kaji). So did his brothers, Hisakuni and Kuniyasu.

It is regrettable that this blade is slightly tired (tsukare), but it is a good specimen of his work and is preserved with ubu nakago. This signature resembles that of the blade which is kept at the Atsuta Shrine.

In the case of a tachi, the term Haki-omote indicates the side of the blade facing the holder when it is held upright with the cutting edge to the right. The reverse side is called Haki-ura. The Haki-omote side is called ura and the reverse side is called Sashi-omote in the case of an uchigatana (a non-tachi type sword worn edge upward).

* * * * *



MUSEUM REPORT
by Arnold Frenzel

On July 2, 1981, in the company of JSS/US members Maclyn Burg and Steve Frankfort, I had an opportunity to examine the Japanese swords in the Military Museum at Ft. Lewis, Washington. The visit was arranged by Steve and we were extended every courtesy by Barbara Bower, Museum Director, and Tom Hendley, Curator of Collections. In visiting such institutions that are somewhat off the beaten path for students of Japanese swords, one never knows quite what to expect, though leaving somewhat disappointed is the usual result. In this case just the opposite was true, for while the institution has only nine swords, one turned out to be very nice and another was near the superb in my judgement.

One sword was by a solid shinshintō smith, Yoshiyuki, and it has the following characteristics:

- Sugata: Katana, 33-5/16", shinogi-zukuri, shallow koshisori, slightly high shinogi, ihore-mune, long kissaki.
- Yakiba: Medium width choji-gunome midare of nie-deki with ashi and long sugu-yakidashi. Boshi is in sugu hamon going into ko-maru with long kaeri.
- Jihada: Tight itame with ji-nie.
- Nakago: Ubu, kuri-jiri, katte-agari yasurime, one mekugiana, omote: Hakushu (no) Kuni Fujiwara Yoshiyuki, and on the ura: Kei-o san-nen ni-gatsu-hi (one day in February, 1867).
- Remarks: Swords of this size, even during the shinshintō era, are unusual, and are coming to be increasingly appreciated. The smith is illustrated in Fujishiro, Nihon Toko Jiten (Shintō-hen), p.90, and is rated Chu (no) Jo saku.

(see oshigata number one)

The second sword was by Gassan Sadakatsu, and it is perhaps the nicest gendaitō that this writer has ever had the pleasure of examining.

- Sugata: Tachi, 26-15/16", shinogi-zukuri, medium koshisori with the overall shape of a tachi of the Heian-Early Kamakura era, slightly high shinogi with niku present, ihore-mune, small kissaki.
- Yakiba: Medium width sugu-ba of fine nie-deki with uchinoke-like strands. Boshi is in ko-notare hamon going into ko-maru with short kaeri and with one brilliant kinsuji present.
- Jihada: Excellent yet subdued ayasuji continuing into the hamon.

REPORT cont'd.

Nakago: Ura: Showa roku-nen san-gatsu kitsu-jitsu (one lucky day in March, 1931); Gassan Sadakatsu kin saku with kao, omote: ko shi den ka go sei tan ki nen tame Naka gawa so (minato) shi (celebration of the anniversary of the birth of the prince, made to order for Mr. Nakagawa so).

Remarks: The sword is mounted in shirazaya, has a fine gold-foil habaki, with ample ubu-ba. It appears to have been polished once, and is flawless with a good state of polish remaining. Gassan Sadakatsu, the son of Gassan Sadakazu, was one of the foremost smiths of the immediate pre-war era, and this excellent blade, echoing the style and heroes of old, must surely rank as one of his best works. Sadakatsu is illustrated in Fujishiro (Shintō-hen), p.377, though he is not rated there because he was living at the time the book was published. The nakago is so fresh and the chisel pillow is so sharp that it was very difficult to get definition on the oshigata.

(see oshigata number two)

Nothing is known of the background of either of the swords except that they came to Ft. Lewis via Ft. Benjamin Harrison. It is our hope that they will be carefully preserved and placed on display under proper lighting so that they can contribute to public education and enjoyment.

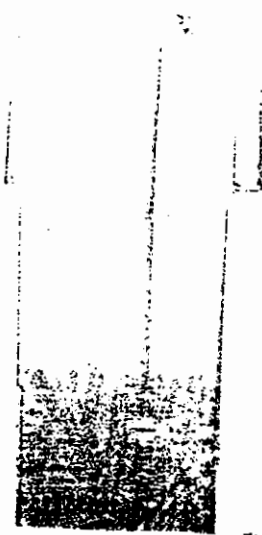
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Editor's note -

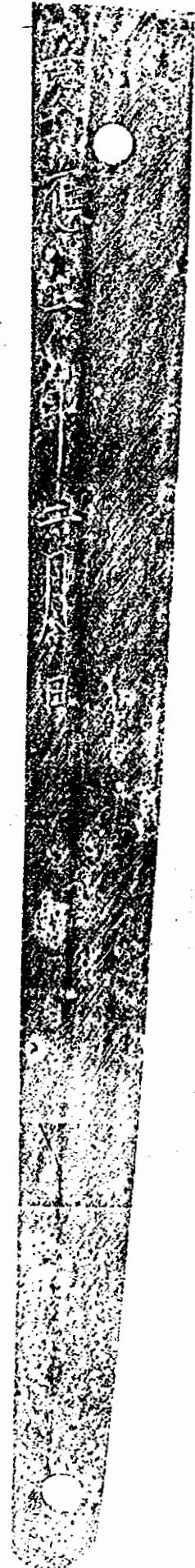
There is a very interesting xerox copy in the Society library, of a booklet advertising the availability of swords made special by Gassan Sadakatsu. The booklet is not dated but seems to be from 1930-31 era. The advertisement was put out by T. Nagahara & Co. of Osaka acting on behalf of the Society for Distributing Gassan's Sword.

For the sum of ¥2,000 (US\$1,000 at that time), one could order a tachi, fully mounted, 2.3 shaku length blade with the famous Gassan horimono, forged in either Ayasugi Secret or in Masamune Secret method (to subscriber's taste). The tachi came with sword bag, kiri box with inscription, care kit, and lacquer sword stand! The booklet gives some background on the sword and on the Gassan family along with a brief description of how the ordered sword would be completed. Delivery time was three months after acceptance of the order. What wishful thinking is experienced when reading the booklet! Perhaps fifty years from now others will have these same thoughts when reading our publications and our present opportunities with swords.

If an original copy of the booklet can be found, it would be an interesting reprint for the Society. If anyone knows of such an original copy, please advise the Newsletter.



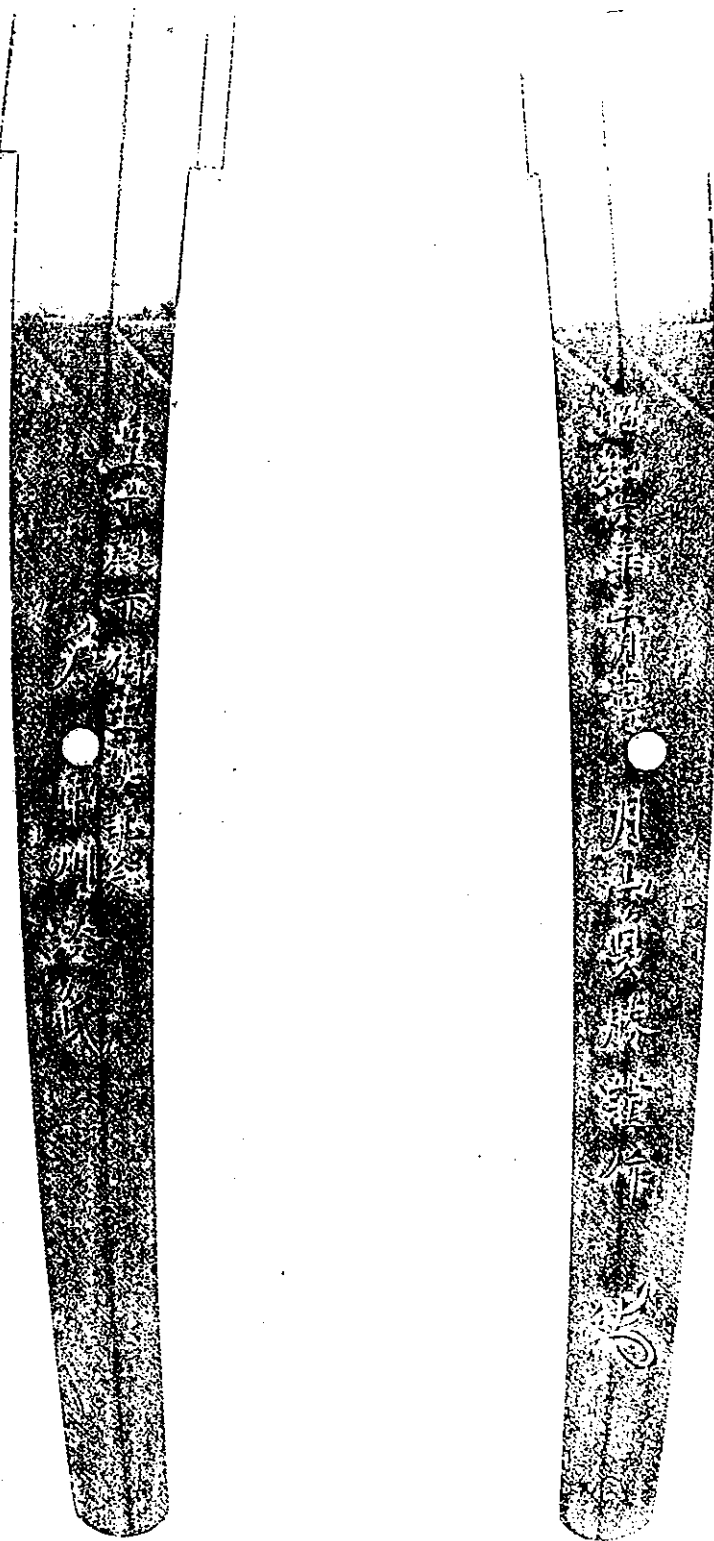
A continuation of the oshigata which shows the great size of the nakago.



Oshigata number one
Yoshiyuki

CLASSIFICATION: none known

REPORT cont'd.



Oshigata number two

Sadakatsu

CLASSIFICATION: none known

A WORD TO THE SERIOUS STUDENT -

The latest issue of Token Bijutsu (English Edition) contained a message from Dr. Homma, Chairman of The Society for Preservation of Japanese Art Sword (NBTHK). This message is directed in part to the serious sword student who has not yet subscribed to this important publication. The message reads as follows (in part):

Message from the Chairman at the beginning of a New Fiscal Year

April 1981 - March 1982

Dr. Homma Junji

It is already two years since the very first number of the English Edition Token Bijutsu was published with the aim of providing overseas sword loving people with reliable source of knowledge relating to the subject of Nihontō. To our pleasure, one hundred and eighty out of the total number two hundred twenty of overseas members being registered at present are subscribing to the Journal in English. We are earnestly hopeful, however, that still a greater number of the current members will find the English version worth keeping on their desks as study material, and furthermore that this journal will help us find more people interested in this subject, resulting in a marked increase in the number of overseas members in the years to come. For this purpose, we are particularly hopeful that all you members will try to get your friends join our Society.

The number of subscribers (180 as mentioned) should be double of that number if not tripled. Every serious sword student who is a member of the JSS/US should most definitely subscribe to the English Edition of Token Bijutsu. The wealth of information which is presented each issue is of utmost importance to anyone seriously wishing to learn. Each issue contains many fine oshigata along with detailed text which teaches one to recognize the many fine points of kantei. To publish such a fine magazine takes money and this working fund comes from subscribers. Subscription costs ¥11,000 for the English Edition or ¥19,000 for both English and Japanese (a different magazine) editions. An International Bank Check is the best way to pay. The address of the NBTHK is as follows:

The Nippon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
4-25-10 Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Do subscribe today! If you hope to "learn", it will be the best move you ever take (along with becoming a JSS/US member of course). Mention your membership in our Society when you write for subscription. Also, a typed letter will greatly aid the translator in handling your subscription.

* NOTE: EARLY CLOSING DATE FOR THIS ISSUE ONLY - September 9th

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - The next issue of the NEWSLETTER will be mailed to members during the first week of October. 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.

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