

Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

The Official Bi-Monthly Publication of the Society. Membership - \$10.00 Annually
c/o 5907 Deerwood Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63123

Volume 8 No. 2

March - April 1976.

JSS/US St. Louis Sword Show -

Our host, the Missouri Arms Collectors Association (MACA), is in the final stages of planning their (500) table Gun Show to be held in St. Louis during the weekend of June 5th and 6th. The JSS/US will hold our Sword Show in conjunction with this MACA event. An initial bloc of (32) tables has been set aside for us at this show and table reservations are now being taken. Clarence Siman is our liaison with the MACA and he will handle all JSS/US members reservations. Remember, we will also receive a rebate from the MACA on (25) table or more.

Hopefully this event will be the start of a regular annual show by us and your participation is heartily encouraged. NOTE: A FLYER CONTAINING PARTICULARS ON THIS SHOW IS ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER!

NEW MEMBERS -

It is our pleasure to welcome the following new members into our organization:

John Davis

Thomas Buttweiler

John Hamilton

R. J. Kassmann

Mayer Zar

Charles G. Ross

Gary K. Root

Joe M. Staples 2501

Ian Brooks

Daniel J. Kungie

Robert J. Miller

Miss E. M. Green 38



THE WALTER A. COMPTON COLLECTION -

The fabulous collection of swords and fittings of Dr. Compton has been on display at Japan House Gallery in New York City since March 4th (display closes 4/25). The superb quality and significance of this unique exhibit has already received international acclaim.

The catalogue of this exhibition, entitled NIPPON-TŌ: ART SWORDS OF JAPAN, has been offered by the gallery at a special price (on a first come, first served basis) to members of various sword societies. A large format (36.4cm x 25.7cm) and 142 pages of the most excellent photographs and printing, this book is a MUST for every sword library! The first part of the book is devoted to sword study and the back part contains the most mouth-watering swords one could ever dream of having! It is excellent...100% first class!

This book/catalogue has been created by four of the most leading sword scholars today: Drs. Homma Junji, Sato Kanichi, Mr. Morihiro Ogawa, and of course, Dr. Compton himself. This book is very highly recommended by our society and you are urged to order one today. They can be ordered (if supply lasts) from:

Checks to: Japan Society Inc.

Prices are: Soft-bound - \$12.50; Hard-bound \$28.00; ADD \$1.50 domestic or \$1.85 international for handling and postage for EACH book ordered. (N.Y. residents, add 8% sales tax)

BIRMINGHAM REPORT -

During the weekend of February 21st, 1976, the first Southeast Token Kai sword show and seminar was held in Birmingham, Alabama and was an instant success. This success was the results of many long hours of work by Paul Couch, Billy Johnson, Ray Deadman, and the whole Birmingham crew. Some 35 tables were rented with around 50-60 people in attendance.

A prime factor in making this event a real success was the presence of Mr. John Yumoto. John was on hand in the capacity of SENSEI, and was a most willing TEACHER to everyone. A two hour lecture - with a question and answer format - was held Saturday afternoon with John discussing various topics at length including blade shapes, polishing quality, menuki study, habaki study, and numerous other areas of study inquired about from those in attendance. A like session was held again on Sunday and it too was equally informative. Mr. Yumoto was a great asset to this event and everyone is very grateful for the teaching services he so willingly supplied. These lectures were recorded by Paul Couch and, after transcription, will be made available.

A delightful taste of true southern hospitality was in order on Saturday evening when Mr. and Mrs. Billy Johnson opened their home to everyone at the show for a wonderful buffet and excellent drinks! This was a most memorable segment of the weekend which was enjoyed to the hilt by all.

BIRMINGHAM (cont'd.)

After the festivities at the Johnson home, everyone returned to the show area for several movies of the last Sword Tour to Japan which was led by John Yumoto. We all felt envious of those fortunate enough to take such a trip - an educational thrill of a lifetime! (A 1976 tour is in the planning and anyone interested should contact John immediately).

The success of this show has brought about plans for a repeat show to be held next year at about this same time of year. Since this event, the members of this group asked that we state their intent for being - and it is a commendable intent to say the least! Briefly, the Southeast Token Kai was formed this past year and is comprised of a local study group from in and around Birmingham. They wish to remain an informal group without officers, dues, or publications - their soul purpose being to provide occasional local sword study sessions and to provide a meeting ground for southeastern area collectors by which serious sword study and appreciation can be promoted. Their main goal each year will be to present an annual Sword Show and Seminar similar to the one held this February. Such a sincere attitude must be saluted! The JSS/US will assist Southeast Token Kai in pursuit of their goals by presenting informational notices and reports as needed via our own publications.

CATALOGUE REVIEW -

The following review was supplied by Arnold Frenzel, who felt this publication to be an important addition to ones library:

Catalogue of a show held at Singer Museum, Laren, Netherlands, 1975. JAPANESE KUNST UIT NEDERLANDS PARTICULIER BEZIT, 164 pages, very well illustrated with sections of prints, ceramics, lacquer, inro, netsuke, paintings, the Dutch influence in Japan, and a section on metalwork and "sword ornaments", by J. van Daalen. This last section is (24) pages long, illustrating primarily tsuba which are seldom seen, together with a map, glossary, line drawings, and bibliography. While it is in Dutch, there is a two page English summary. Van Daalen is the author of the famous and scarce catalogue of the General J. C. Pabst tsuba collection which was sold in 1956.

Those interested in ordering this catalogue should send a \$11.00 (U.S. Dollar) money order to: Society for Japanese Arts and Crafts, Sumatrastraat 62, Den Haag, Netherlands.

Editor's Comment -

Members learning of significant publications such as this should feel free to review them for the NEWSLETTER. Often such publications go unheard of by a good number of us unless someone takes the time to publicize them via a brief review. When possible, the society will order a quantity of such books for society sale. The membership will be kept informed of whatever is one the market either through other groups or publisher or directly from JSS/US.

SAMURAI SWORD TOUR OF JAPAN - 1975
(Excerpts from a journal - by David Pepper)

Note: The recent trip to Japan was in my opinion, more than a success - as well as planned events there were numerous surprises, like finding antique shops in the back streets, stumbling into a polisher's shop late at night (and purely by chance), where we were served tea, shown the polisher's private collection of blades, and allowed to photograph their work. These 'extras' were experienced by many of our group as we explored the towns and cities during our free time. Sometimes they seemed more than coincidence, as if the ancient gods of Japan were working in mysterious ways to welcome us. For example, on the plane going from San Francisco there were many returning Japanese, among them a group of about 100 elementary school teachers who had gone on a special tour of the U.S. All were from Hokkaido, which is the area of least volume of swords and sword study, both now and in the past. Fate had however placed the one person in the group who did have a connection with our favourite subject, right beside me! Mr. Watanabe, when he learned of our Sword Tour, told me that his younger brother was at present a student of Miyairi, the top swordsmith in Japan, in Nagano Prefecture. This year the brother will return to his hometown of Date City to marry a daughter of Horii Nobuhide. Nobuhide is a son of Toshihide (Hideaki) and is, as his father was, a leading Hokkaido smith. Nobuhide's new son-in-law will continue to study under his guidance. Coincidence or not, this chance acquaintanceship resulted later, through Watanabe-san's kindness, in my visiting the Date Museum and in a delightful visit to Nobuhide's home, where I had the privilege of seeing fine blades by three generations of the Horii family.

Monday, September 22:

At 9:30 a.m. we went by electric train to the National Museum in Ueno Park. By special arrangement we were let in by the back door, as the buildings are closed to the public on Mondays.

The cluttered museum offices and dim passages reminded me so much of the R.O.M. that I felt right at home. Even the smell was there - of wax and dust and a thousand other ingredients so characteristic of museums.

We were greeted by Mr. Kashima, head of the sword division, and Mr. Ogasawara, whose small colour-illustrated book on swords is familiar to many collectors. Swords were laid out for our viewing on cloth-covered tables, each blade resting on a sausage-shaped silk pillow. After being given a basic explanation of each sword, we were allowed to handle and examine them. This was of course done with the utmost care. We all wore white cotton gloves brought especially for this purpose, and in addition used soft white cloths when holding the blades.

SWORD TOUR (cont'd.)

Most of these pieces were JUYO, and there were several NATIONAL TREASURES as well. For some of us, this was a first-time experience. Imagine the inner feeling when holding a historical blade. It is almost like taking a living thing into one's hands! First of all, seeing the shape and then the workmanship in the steel, and knowing the priceless character of such a treasure. This is even more intensified in some cases by the knowledge that a blade has been owned and even carried into battle by one of the great men in Japan's history!

The first group of blades we saw were arranged in order, to give a brief historical glimpse of the Bizen smiths work.

- 1) A tachi made by TOMONARI (10th Century) in the classic shape of the Heian period (794-1185).
- 2) A tachi by ICHIMONJI (12th Century) made in the Kamakura period (1185-1333), heyday of the great swordsmiths. (ICP)
- 3) A tachi blade by YOSHIFUSA (early 13th century) NT.
- 4) A tachi by HATAKEDA MORIYE (13th century).
- 5) A tachi by Osafune NAGAMITSU (early 13th century), one of the best preserved blades by this smith. (ICP)
- 6) A magnificent tachi by KAGEMITSU (early 14th century), former possession of the General Kusunoki Masashige (1294-1336), famed for his loyalty to the Imperial cause. This was the favourite sword of the Emperor Meiji. It is named Nozoki-Ryu, the Peeping Dragon, because of the horimono on the blade. It was shortened many years ago, so that only the head end of the carved dragon peeps out from under the habaki. NT
- 7) For comparison with #6, a katana by the 19th century smith KOYAMA MUNETSUGU was shown. While not an attempt at forgery, this blade was obviously closely patterned on the shape and horimono of the Nozoki Ryu.
- 8) A rare and beautiful tachi by CHŌGI (read as NAGAYOSHI), 14th century. This blade was worn by the Emperor Meiji with his Western-style uniform, mounted in Kyu-gunto style.

While the first lot of blades were cleaned and put away, Mr. Kashima gave a talk on tsuba and kodogu, illustrating it with many fine examples laid out on the tables. Many of these were familiar to us, having been illustrated in Mr. Kashima's book on fittings in the Nihon no Bijutsu series. A good historical range was presented, and all of the pieces were of such superb quality that it was impossible to choose favourites. Unfortunately there wasn't enough time to study these pieces as thoroughly as I would have liked. One set of mitokoro-mono by the first Goto master YŪJŪ (late 15th century) was really outstanding; menuki, kozuka and kogai in shakudo and gold. Each menuki

SWORD TOUR (cont'd.)

is composed of five intertwined gold dragons; there are ten each on the kozuka and kogai, for a total of thirty! This is undoubtedly the same set mentioned in the 1902 edition of Captain Brinkey's book on the History, Art and Literature of Japan (Volume 7).

Meanwhile, a second set of blades had been laid out for our inspection.

- 1) A tachi by HOKI YASUTSUNA of the Heian period (9th century), dating from slightly before the TOMONARI we had seen.
- 2) A tachi of Yamato Province, by TEGAI KANENAGA - a very rare signed example (Kamakura period).
- 3) A tachi by RAI KUNIMITSU of Yamashiro Province. (These blades are called Kyō-mono as they come from the Kyōto area.) This blade with suguha hamon containing many ashi, and beautiful jigane, dates from the late Kamakura era. NF
- 4) A tantō by RAI KUNITOSHI of Yamashiro Province, dated Gen-0 (early 14th century).
- 5) An early example of katana shape from Seki in Mino Province (Muro-machi period: 1333-1568). This is the best work of NOSAI (Kanesada) and typical of Seki blades, excellent jigane. An inscription on the blade reads, "When you fight, be sure to be in front".
- 6) A katana by SUKENAO of Osaka (17th Century) with toran hamon. Osaka was a town of trade and commerce, and this blade reflects the flamboyance of the Chōnin as opposed to the more reserved taste of the blades of Edo, a samurai city. (Chōnin are the merchant class; "townsmen")
- 7) A katana by KUNIKANE of Sendai who followed the style of Yamato-den, with masame-hada and suguha hamon. (17th century)
- 8) A tantō by HANKEI (early 17th century). In this period (late Momoyama) the style of blades from Sōshū Province was much admired and many smiths attempted to produce work in this style. HANKEI's work was particularly well thought of.

Tuesday, September 23: We visited the Sword Museum at Yoyogi, an experience which deserves an account in detail. I will save that for another time.

Wednesday, September 24th:

The next day, the 24th, when most of the tour group were still asleep, three stalwart souls set out through the teeming rain with a very special mission in mind. At about seven in the morning, soaked through in spite of our umbrellas, we wound our way up the inclined

SWORD TOUR (cont'd.)

road leading to the temple of Sengakuji. We walked through the grounds, under gnarled and ancient pines, through dripping gateways, all of us, I'm sure, very much aware of another group of men who had marched over those same stones two hundred and fifty years before. Indeed the presence of the loyal forty-seven is still strong at Sengakuji; as if one might meet their ghosts along the paths. The little museum building which houses their pathetic, decaying relics was not open at this early hour, so we went to visit the grave of Lord Asano first, then Oishi Kuranosuke's, and all the rest. There is a forty-eighth grave - of a man who performed seppuku many years later. He wished so much to have been able to aid the Ronin in their great mission of revenge, but as the whole event took place long before his birth, he offered his soul to accompany them in the next world. In recognition of his courage, he was buried with the men he so admired.

In spite of the rain and the early hour, others were making the same pilgrimage. Although the surrounding area is built up solidly with the most unattractive types of modern architecture; factories and ugly shops; within its gates Sengakuji retains a quiet dignity. The smell of incense and the sound of rain on roof-tiles completely erased thoughts of the outside world, and for a few moments, the present ceased to exist. The worn and lichened stones sit above all that remains of the loyal men of Ako; a few ashes in the earth; yet all the world knows of their courage, and remembers. Each of us in our own way paid his respects before we left.

The street outside the temple is filled with shops selling every kind of souvenir imaginable, all connected with the tragic story - toy swords, helmets, drums, lanterns and war-coats, scrolls, banners, candies and sweets, commemorative towels, handkerchiefs, plates, bottles, scarves, key chains, amulets, charms and a hundred others. After making a few hasty purchases we raced back to the hotel by subway and train, just in time to connect with the group as we set out on the main adventure of the day - a visit to the tantōshō (sword forge) of YOSHIMURA YOSHINDŌ and his brother....but that is a story in itself.

David Pepper

THE AGE OF WAR Two limited editions of 5 prints each by Roald Knutsen

R M K Studios

About the prints

This is a genuine limited edition of 5 prints in each of the sets, each set numbering from 1 to 200. Carefully and faithfully printed in litho from the original drawings, each print has been inspected by the artist and signed by him individually, not on the plate. After printing each edition the plates have been 'struck' and destroyed. This ensures no further reproduction.

The illustrations are printed on high quality cartridge paper in a dark grey giving a tasteful finish. The picture is within a drawn frame measuring 9" x 5½" but printed on a sheet cut generously oversize to allow you to suitably frame your set. They will come to you in book form with fly covers, stitched down one edge, to avoid edge damage.

No more than the stated number will be produced and allocation will be made strictly according to the date your application is received.

1. "Preparing for Battle"
2. "The Field of Battle"

Price for each set of 5 prints

£15.00 inclusive.

WANTED - FOR SALE - TRADE

WANTED: An exchange of information pertaining to swords by Hizen TADAHIRO II (Hawley TA-15). Anyone who wishes to exchange particulars on this man - particularly anyone owning a blade by this man - please contact: Vaughan H. Cottle

WANTED: Blades from the SHIMADA SCHOOL of Suruga Province. Tantō, wakizashi, katana, fully mounted or in shirazaya. Sukemune (SU163), Yoshisuke (YO985), (YO987 thru YO992). Write:
Gary E. Haulman

WANTED: Kabuto, Mempo, other armour parts. Contact:
Jack Landis

FOR SALE: (or trade) Full suit of samurai armor. Contact:
Ray Deadman

)
FOR SALE: Small (35.6cm) Shinogi-zukuri wakizashi by a late generation YASUTSUGU. White Papers - IKK Dallas 1972. No kizu and in 'bright' condition - needs polish. Repairable saya, tsuka. Write for details:
Ron Hartmann

NOTES ON THE NIHON-TŌ TAIKAN -

Robert Lewert was kind enough awhile back to give us a copy of his compiled index with accompanying notes by himself and Mr. Soichiro Miyazaki. This paper covers the first (3) volumes only - but will prove a great aide to those having these volumes or those who have access to a set. There are (49) 8½ x 11 typed pages available. These are now available through the society (write c/o the NEWSLETTER). Cost will be probably \$10 (cost of xeroxing and postage plus a buck or two to the society). Those interested should contact the NEWSLETTER. We wish to thank Bob for thinking of us with this paper - it is truly appreciated!

COMING SWORD SHOW -

THE JAPANESE SWORD SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

Pikesville, Maryland

★ MAY 29TH & 30TH ★

COST IS \$15.00 FOR BOTH DAYS

**For Reservations or Information Contact:
STANLEY I. KELLERT**

FORT McCLELLAN DISPLAY ON COL. C.V. CADWELL -

For those who are not familiar with Col. C.V. Cadwell's role in the preservation of the Japanese Sword, here are a few words of explanation. When the Army of Occupation began disarming the Japanese population, all swords and like weapons were classified as unlawful. Due to the pleas of certain Japanese officials and sword lovers, Col. Cadwell was convinced that the Japanese sword was indeed an art object and made it possible for the sword to be treated as such in most circumstances, such as in collections, museums, and temples. He is known as the SAVIOUR OF KATANA by the Japanese, and in gratitude for his contributions the Tokyo Sword Museum had cast and presented a bust of him. This bust is presently located at the Military Police Museum at Ft. McClellan, Alabama. The museum is most impressive and contains items of uniforms and arms of the military Police Corps throughout its history. Col. Cadwell's bust and display are the center of attraction there. (reported by Paul Couch)

Editor's note: An elaboration on Col. Cadwell is presented in the new Compton Collection catalogue along with a photograph and description of the tantō presented to him by Dr. Homma, in appreciation of his help to the Japanese. A fantastic tantō - attributed to SENJIN, ca 13th century. (The Senjuin School is known to be the oldest and existing examples are among the rarest in the schools of the Yamato Tradition of sword making). This tantō has been entrusted to the care of Dr. Compton by Col. Cadwell's widow, to be preserved in this country as a study example of this school.

UCHIKO KITS -

The first order of uchiko kits (ordered several months back) did finally arrive, but in bits and pieces thanks to the Postal Service. The company which supplied these promptly send a fresh order via air, and these arrived in first order (and better quality kits too!). These kits can now be ordered from the NEWSLETTER at the price of \$8.00 pp.

TSUKA WRAPPING -

Peter Bleed, who is presently residing in Japan, has offered to handle orders for having handles rewrapped at a local shop in his area. Anyone interested in having this service done should contact Pete and talk over particulars. Understand that Pete is doing this as a favor and can not be held responsible as to quality of work, etc., although he will expect good work as we all would. Pete's address is:

IN CLOSING.....Due to extra demands on my work loads at work these last six weeks, society chores have suffered (as have everything else), thus the delay in the NL this issue. If for any reason any member has not received something ordered or an up-dated membership card, etc., please write and mention this. Hopefully everything has been taken care of but if not, better to write then to stay quietly mad at JSG. Thank you for your patience during this time. NEXT NL IS DUE OUT IN EARLY JUNE. SEND ALL MATERIAL INTENDED FOR THIS ISSUE TO ME NO LATER THAN THE END OF MAY.

RON HARTMANN