

# Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



## NEWSLETTER

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September - October - 1976

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### COMING ELECTION OF OFFICERS -

The JSS/US election of officers for the two-year term 1977-78 is fast approaching. Members are hereby invited to submit names to be placed in nomination for the offices of CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN, 1ST VICE CHAIRMAN, 2ND VICE CHAIRMAN, SECRETARY and TREASURER. All nominees will be personally asked if they would accept nomination, and upon their acceptance, will have their names placed on the ballot for voting on by the membership. Send all nominations to the Secretary Richard Mantegani no later than the end of October. A slate of nominees will be announced in the next NEWSLETTER.

Unfortunately, Arnold Frenzel has asked that he not be placed in nomination as Chairman for this coming term of office. Added responsibilities at his work will not allow his devoting the required hours demanded as Chairman of our organization. Therefore, the vacancy of this key office must not only be filled by someone new, but it must be filled by a member truly interested in the society and one who is willing to devote both time and effort to the office. It is of the utmost importance that the importance of this office (and all the other offices to be filled) be kept in mind when submitting a name in nomination.

### NEW MEMBERS -

It is our pleasure to welcome (8) new members this issue:

John A. Bracher,  
Roy D. Strohacker,  
Orvel L. Reichert,  
Joseph D. Smith,  
Gilbert A. Novak,  
Betty Killam,  
J.A. Zuchelli,  
James C. Hrbek,

GENSAEMON NOBUKUNI

Oshigata by Keith R. Evans

STYLE - Wakizashi, shinogi-zukuri form, ihori-mune, chu-gissaki.

KITAE - Itame Hada, ji-nie, chikei.

BOSHI - Hakikake, kaen tip, slight kaeri.



HAMON - Gunome of ko-nie in wide nioi base. Many ashi, yo, sunagashi, inazumi.

HORIMONO - Katana hi on both sides, bonji on both sides of nakago (which used to be the blade prior to shortening).

NAKAGO - Machi okuri (notches moved up), yasurimei: katte sagari, end: kiri, orikaeshimei (folded-over) two character mei. Signed: NOBUKUNI

MEASUREMENTS - Nagasa----	53.5cm	Kissaki-----	3.3cm
Sori-----	1.3cm	Nakago-----	13.6cm
Motohaba -	2.7cm	Nakago-zori -	none
Sakihaba -	1.8cm		

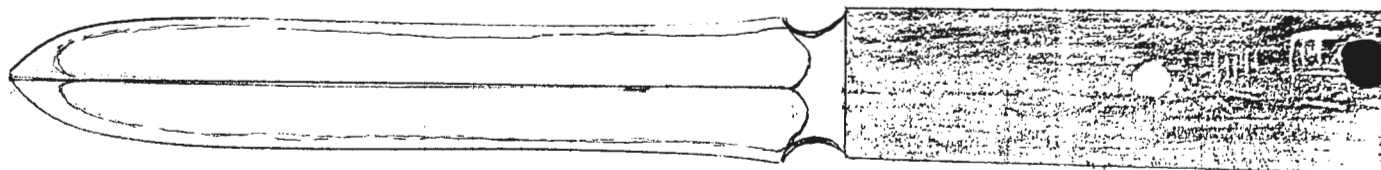
REMARKS -

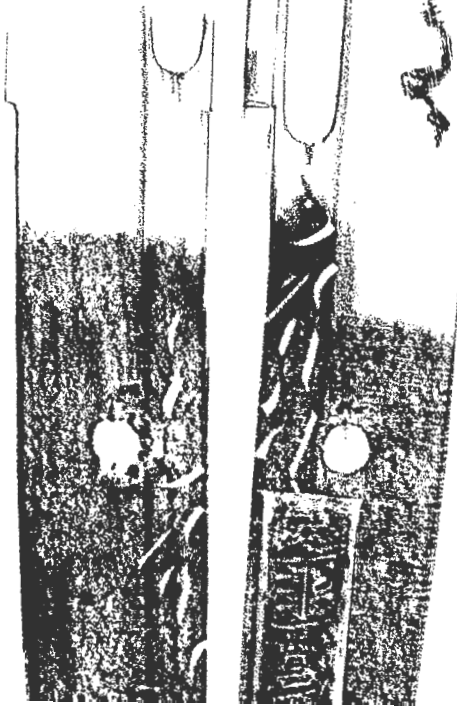
Nobukuni I was of Kyoto Ryokai School (Yamashiro Province) and later studied with Sadamune. His swords date from mid 14th century. This particular blade was made by Nobukuni of Oei Period (1394-1428), known as GENSAEMON NOBUKUNI. He signed in the distinctive way of reversing the strokes inside the KUNI wrapper from  to . Perhaps this had something to do with the word SA (left) in his name, as he is the only Nobukuni to reverse the strokes to the left side.

The bonji horimono is done in early Soshu style and has an archaic look. The hada is very tight and the flashey gunome hamon and cut down size of the blade makes it look newer than Oei Period as it is viewed with it's tsuka on.

The sword is mounted in formal black lacquer saya, plain shakudo fuchi, gashira and tsuba with water dragon menuki of shakudo, black tsuka ito over superb white same' of SENRYO ZAME class. It was granted TOKUBETSU KICHO TOKEN (NBTHK Green Papers) in March 1975.

Editor's note - As an after-thought, the below oshigata has been included to further illustrate the reverse KUNI. This is a KUDAYARI made by the same GENZAEMON NOBUKUNI (Oei). It has JSS/US papers.

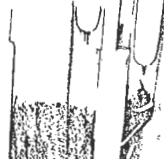




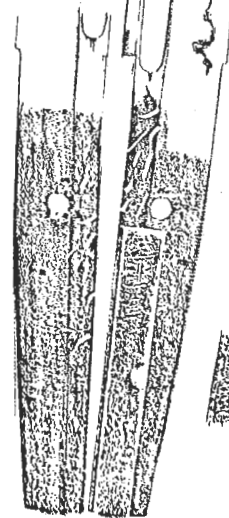
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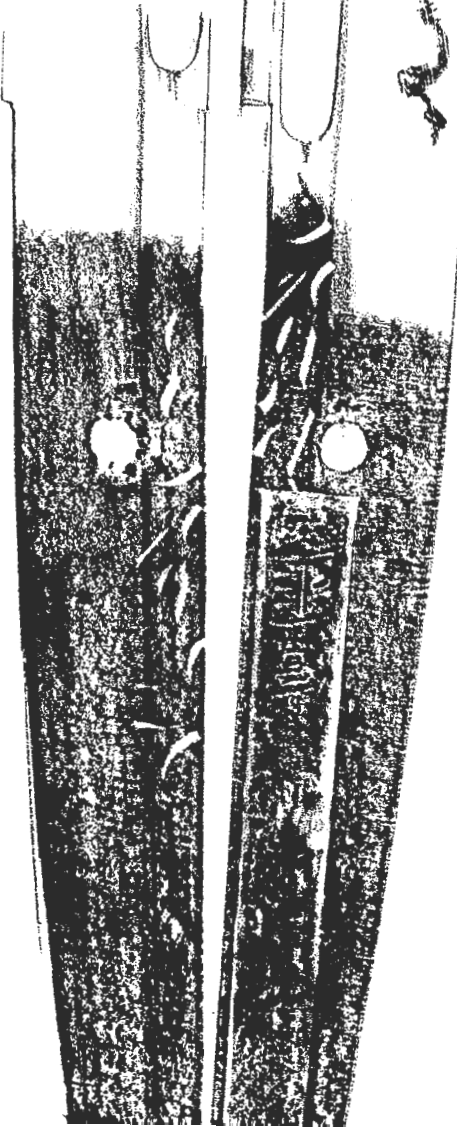
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Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a name or title, located at the bottom of the page.



## JSS/US LIBRARY RELOCATED -

For the past six years Jim Mitchell has generously served as the society librarian and caretaker of our books. Several weeks ago Jim expressed a desire to step down from this position and that the job and the many library books be transferred to some other willing soul. Since then the transfer has taken place and at present the society library is in the hands of the NL editor. This is a temporary arrangement only.

The library duties were offered to and accepted by Howard Sloan of St. Louis. Due to Howard being out of commission at present (he was recently hit by a car!), he will not assume his duties until after the first of the coming year. With this in mind - UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE - direct all library correspondence to Ron Hartmann

Many thanks to Jim for his years of work as our librarian! Jim has also donated several books to the library at this time and for this too we give him our thanks. An up-dated library list will be issued as soon as an inventory can be made.

## NEW SOCIETY ARMOUR ADVISOR

Our new member, Mr. Louis Chappellear (NL-V8N4), is deeply involved in the study and collection of Japanese Armour. Upon learning of his expertise in this field an inquiry was made to see if he would serve as advisor to our membership. Mr. Chappellear promptly said yes to this service. Therefore, we can now direct inquiries from our members directly to: Louis Chappellear - Questions should be restricted to identification and research (not dollar appraisals). We are very grateful to him for providing us with this service.

It should also be mentioned at this time that Mrs. Chappellear (Kei Kaneda Chappellear) is the co-author of MON: THE JAPANESE FAMILY CREST by Hawley and Chappellear (available W. Hawley, \$17.50 plus postage). A related article on the development of the mon, also by Mrs. Chappellear, is included in the TOKEN TAIKAI '76 book of lectures. These studies of the mon are a byproduct from the researching of armour signatures by the Chappellears.

## TOKEN STUDY GROUP SWORD SHOW - (October 16th and 17th in Chicago)

The annual sword show of the Token Study Group will again be held in Chicago at the O'Hare Inn. This year's show promises to be of the usual high quality and should not be missed. This year, John Yumoto will be present and will conduct a lecture followed by a question and answer period. The JSS/US will again be well represented and will try to hold a meeting during this show weekend.

For further information: Contact Ted Wysocky,

# A Short Annotated Bibliography for Beginning Collectors of Japanese Swords

by Arnold Frenzel.

## I. Introduction:

The Society has received various requests for a reading list that would be useful for new collectors. The following is an attempt to meet that need which is particularly pressing now in view of the rapid increase in our membership in the last several years. This list is selective as any such effort should and must be, and in the selection process it reflects the inclinations and interests of the writer. The goal has been to be of help to the beginning collector and to put the sword in a somewhat broader context than most lists of this sort. The reader can go at once to the material narrowly based on the sword, or, if he wishes perspective, he can also go to the broader contextual material.

The following material is almost all in English, and the references are to things that are in print or only recently out-of-print. My own library contains hundreds of books, monographs and periodicals. Most are in Japanese, many are next to impossible to find and very expensive, however I do not think it is necessary for a beginning collector to have such a library. A very great deal can be learned from carefully selected English language material. When a collector is no longer at the beginning stage, and that can come very soon, then that is the time to begin to invest heavily in excellent Japanese language materials with their fine illustrations of *kitae*, *hamon* and *nakago*. Of course if you read Japanese much of this is rather irrelevant.

Much of the material listed below as background you can get from or through your local bookstore and library. At the end of this bibliography I have listed a number of book dealers. The Society has a small library from which books can be borrowed by members. For details, write Ron Hartmann. I would be happy to give access to my library through Xeroxing to any member.

Finally, I realize that many members are very interested in the fittings of the sword, particularly *tsuba*. Limitations of space has precluded inclusion of that sort of material here except incidentally. For bibliographical material on *tsuba* see my "Some Thoughts on Beginning the Collection of *Tsuba*," Bulletin of the JSS/US, Vol. XI, No. 1 (Dec., 1973), pp. 5-17.

## II. On Collecting:

Kawabata, Kazuo, "The Collector and His Motives," in Young, Martin W. Asian Art: A Collector's Selection. (Cornell University, 1973), 14 pp. The psychology of collectors and their underlying motives. Bibliography.

## III. Background:

1. Herrigel, Eugen. Zen. (McGraw-Hill, 1964), 124 pp. Combines his famous "Zen in the Art of Archery" and "The Method of Zen." A classic translated from the German and about the pre-war experiences of a seeker in the active practice of Zen.
2. Sansom, G. B. Japan: A Short Cultural History, rev. ed. (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), 558 pp. Probably the best short history of Japan. Rather than being a mere chronicle of battles it stresses the underlying social relationships from pre-history through the Tokugawa period. Maps, line drawings, chapter notes.
3. Suzuki, Daisetz T. Zen and Japanese Culture. (Bollingen Foundation, 1959), 478 pp. A superb book by the foremost interpreter of Zen and its cultural and artistic impact on Japan. It includes extensive material on the relationship

between Zen and the samurai, Zen and swordsmanship, etc. Many excellent illustrations. Bibliography.

4. Warner, Langdon. The Enduring Art of Japan. (Grove, 1958), 113 pp. A nice summary introduction to Japanese art by periods. Written by a renowned "old China hand" and Harvard Fellow. Includes a chapter on folk art. 92 plates, bibliography.

5. Watts, Alan W. The Spirit of Zen: A Way of Life, Work and Art in the Far East. (Grove, 1958), 128 pp. A condensed but very readable book by a well known student of comparative religions. Plates, glossary, bibliography.

6. Yanagi, Soetsu. The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty. (Kodansha, 1972), 230 pp. While not strictly "folk art," Japanese swords are also something other than the usually artificial creations of "fine art" as that term is usually understood, even in the Far East, although it has become fashionable in recent years to talk of Japanese swords as if they were fine art objects per se. These swords are first of all the products of craftsmen, and while they can additionally be thought of as fine art objects, it is a necessary condition that all swords worthy of the name be products of good and honest craftsmanship. Yanagi was the founder of the Japanese folkcraft movement and he writes with great knowledge of what Japanese aesthetics and craftsmanship in combination really means. Within this section I cannot recommend this book and that by Suzuki too highly. Many plates, some in color.

#### IV. Tool Books:

1. Koop, Albert J., and Hogitaro Inada. Japanese Names and How to Read Them: A Manual for Art-Collectors and Students. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), 552 pp. About 2/3'rds devoted to a stroke counting method of reading the kanji characters; others on the kana, numerals, dates, names and titles, etc.
2. Papinot, E. Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Japan. (Tuttle, 1972), 841 pp. A wealth of information on families, the mon, locations, historical incidents, etc.

#### V. The Sword: (English language)

1. Caldwell, Randolph B., ed. The Book of the Sword. (Token Kenkyu Kai, 1972), 157 pp. This volume contains the lectures given at the first North American shinsa held in Dallas in 1972. It is a wide ranging and rather original collection on such topics as pre-historical swords, the rice economy, sword shapes, tsuba, ret tempering and similar "tricks," tsuba, sundry observations, the economics of the sword market, and Ko-Bizen blades. Bibliography.
2. Compton, Walter A., et al. Nippon-To Art Swords of Japan: The Walter A. Compton Collection. (Japan Society, 1976), 134 pp. This is an outstanding and readily available volume issued in conjunction with the recent showing of some swords owned or previously owned by Walter Compton. Introductory essays by Drs. Homma and Sato, as well as Dr. Compton. An informative introduction to Japanese swords by Morihiro Ogawa is also included. It contains a complete description of every piece in the catalog along with superb photographs of 38 pieces. Numerous plates and line drawings.
3. Dunn, Roger, ed. Token Taikai '76 Lectures. (Northern California Japanese Sword Club, 1976), 191 pp. The lectures given at the most recent shinsa in San Francisco. These lectures nicely complement those given in Dallas, and a number are good examples of the scholarship towards which North American collectors are now inclined.



4. Hawley, W. M. Japanese Swordsmiths, 2 vol's. (Hawley, 1966, 1967), 756 pp. Most of these volumes are devoted to an alphabetical list of the vast majority of smiths that have worked, along with varying amounts of detail on each including one estimate of the relative standing of each. The second volume contains much useful information of kitae and hamon characteristics of about 2500 smiths, descriptive definitions and illustrations, a glossary, bibliography, etc. This set is more or less indispensable.
5. Inami, Hakusui. Nippon-To: The Japanese Sword. (Cosmo, 1948), 222 pp. Since reprinted, and while hardly flawless, it is an interesting and usefully organized treatise. It contains a fairly good but general discussion of the five traditions and shinto swords. Many illustrations.
6. Joly, Henri L., and Hogitaro Inada. Sword and Samé. (Holland Press, 1975), 209 pp. This is a translation of two early Japanese works and it is full of sword-lore that while dated is not found elsewhere. Photographs, line drawings, etc.
7. Martin, Frederick C., and Robert E. Haynes. Arms and Armor of Ancient Japan: An Historical Survey. (L.A. Municipal Art Gallery, 1964), 64 pp. A loose-leaf exhibition catalog that is insufficiently known and appreciated. It contains a nice introduction on swords by period, model technical descriptions, many photographs and line drawings. The tsuba section is a masterpiece of pithy but authoritative commentaries on the major groups. Glossary, bibliography.
8. Robinson, B. W. The Arts of the Japanese Sword. (Tuttle, 1970), 110 pp. A good general treatise on swords and their mountings. 108 plates.
9. Robinson, B. W. A Primer of Japanese Sword-Blades. (Paragon Book Gallery, 1955), 95pp. An excellent, and for me, an indispensable handbook that combines in one volume a section on nomenclature and definitions, an organization of schools by period and province, and an alphabetical list of the major swordsmiths along with a measure of their relative standing. There are also line drawings and a table of the most frequently used characters. This book should not be confused with Hawley's "Japanese Swordsmith Groups," which, while useful, is much less comprehensive. Within this section I consider this book the most useful.
10. Smith, Cyril Stanley. A History of Metallography: The Development of Ideas on the Structure of Metals Before 1890. (University of Chicago Press, 1960). See, Ch. 6, "The Japanese Sword."
11. Suzuki, Katei. Tanto. (English translation). (JSS/US, 1973), 86 pp. A fine introduction to tanto and a description of works of the major smiths. Particularly valuable in that tanto have no fixed relationship to a smith's longer sword techniques. The original Japanese volume is out-of-print at the moment, and while it's plates add something, this volume can stand alone in translation. Copies are available through the Society.
12. Yamanaka, Albert, Nihonto News-Letter, usually monthly from Jan., 1968 to July, 1972, about 40 pp on average. This remarkable undertaking contained serialized sections dealing with sword history and terminology, sword groups by province and period, famous blades, etc. A wealth of information and particularly on the many individual groups and leading smiths within them. In my opinion the most important work ever available in English. About 94% complete it ceased publication due to lack of support! It was my original intention to give details as to cost and address so that interested persons could write to Mr. Yamanaka for complete sets. He however informs me that



there is only one set left and that an agreement could be worked out between Mr. Yamanaka and the Society for us to have copies reproduced and sold to the membership. That could only be done if there is sufficient interest. Would those who have a firm interest in acquiring a set please notify Ron Hartmann. It is understood that an expressed interest is of course subject to cost, and as soon as we have data on the number of sets that would be desired we can get a cost estimate and proceed further.

13. Yumoto, John M. The Samurai Sword: A Handbook. (Tuttle, 1958), 191 pp. By the dean of American sword scholarship. This still useful book contains a glossary, bibliography, relative ratings of smiths, a section of sword periods, nomenclature, care and maintenance, etc.

#### VI. The Sword: (Japanese language)

Fujishiro, Yoshio. Nihon Toko Jiten (Koto-hen, and Shinto-hen). (Fujishiro Shoten, various years), 619 and 492 pp. While dealers can supply many books in Japanese with fine illustrations, this is the only one I could recommend for beginners. I consider it the most useful and comprehensive of them all, and it is the book that almost all collectors turn to first. The volumes contain plates illustrating authoritative nakago of the major and most of the intermediate level smiths in all the major historical periods. Temper lines are frequently illustrated along with the boshi, as well the Nengo period, province, alternative signatures, relative ratings, etc. It is the expectation of the Society that the written portion of the plates- the volumes are entirely plates- will eventually be translated either by the Society or an individual.

#### VII. Societies:

In addition to the JSS/US the following organizations should be of interest. There are other groups, primarily in Chicago and San Francisco, that are active, however to the best of my knowledge they publish only infrequently or never and hence are of minor interest to collectors in other locations.

1. British To-ken Society, H. M. Hutchinson, Secretary, 141 Nork Way, Banstead, Surrey, England.
2. Nippon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai (NBTHK), 4-25-10, Yoyogi, Shimbuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan.
3. Japanese Sword Club of Southern California, Willis Hawley, Secretary-Treasurer, 8200 Gould Ave., Hollywood, California, 90046.

#### VIII. Book Dealers:

The JSS/US has no financial interest in the sales of any of the following dealers, and while I believe them all to be responsible firms, no particular dealer is recommended relative to the others.

1. Alan Bale, 46 West Close, Ashford, Middlesex, England.
2. Willis Hawley, 8200 Gould Ave., Hollywood, California, 90046.
3. Paragon Book Gallery, Ltd., 14 East 38th, New York, New York, 10016.
4. C.P.J. van der Peet B.V., 33-35 N. Spiegelstraat, Amsterdam, Holland.
5. K. E. Skafte, DK 4800, Nykobing Falster, Danmark.

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## UNDERSTANDING NIE AND NIOI

(Part three of a series on understanding nie and nioi,  
as compiled by Ron Hartmann from Nihonto Newsletter)

### NIOI

If one were to look at NIOI and NIE steel crystals through a microscope one would find that they are about the same, the only differences being that the NIE pebbles or crystals are much larger than those of the NIOI. NIE can readily be seen with the naked eye whereas NIOI being very small, the individual pebbles are not visible to the naked eye.

Nioi, like nie, comes in all forms; some are made deep and some are made not so deep. The term "deep nioi" refers to the width of the nioi (nioi line) being wide, whereas shallow or "not so very deep" refers to the nioi being made very narrow. Those made in O-midare or Choji Midare are usually made very deep, the width of the nioi being made wide. If the nioi width is made wide and in O-chojimidare, various colors within the nioi can be seen and then that blade will be, without a doubt, a good one.

The swordsmiths who made their blades in nioi are the smiths from Bizen Province, Fukuoka Ichimonji smiths, Mitsutada and Nagamitsu of Osafune, Morie of Hatakeda, all have this vast changes within the nioi. In the works of smiths from provinces other than Bizen, there are Sanjo Yoshie and Gojo Kuninaga of Yamashiro Province, as well as Ayanokoji Sadatoshi, Rai Kuniyuki, Niji Kunitoshi, who all made their hamon in the Bizen style such as O-chojimidare, ko-chojimidare, or suguha chojimidare and all with very deep nioi. Especially nie will be clustered around the nioi to form various "workings" such as kin-suji and inazuma. However, even though the hamon may be made in O-midare if the nioi is narrow or shallow, then there will be a certain amount of "hard" hamon. This is not very well thought of, as those found on such blades as the late Seki blades.

Nioi is found at the edge of the Hamon. Some works, the yakiba having crumbled, still will have nioi and in some cases, the nioi will be very deep, however, this deep nioi is of the type of nioi which is called TSUKARE NIOI or NIOI SHIMI and can be included in nioi which are not considered to be good. As for nioi shimi, if one should carefully look at the steel in the immediate area, one will notice that that part of the steel has an indentation which means that that part of the steel has been ground off in excess as compared to the other part of the blade and consequently nioi shimi will be found in such areas. (See reference to niejimi, part two NL V8N4)

Bizen Kunimune made two types of swords; one in narrow suguha kochoji komidare with ashi and the other in the typical Bizen style of wide choji midare in which case the nioi shimi if found in areas, but in Kunimune's case the nioi shimi is not the result of steel having

NIOI (cont'd.)

been overly ground off and it is the result of a defect in tempering. Therefore, nioi shimi is not the same in all cases. The width of the nioi in Bizen blades such as Ichimonji or Osafune Mitsutada or other smiths have very deep and wide nioi at the edge of the hamon, however in the case of such works as the Aoe blades and Ugai blades where the hamon is made in suguha fashion, the width of the yakiba being narrow, the nioi is also made narrow and therefore such nioi cannot be generally compared with the type of wide O-choji midare.

The nioi as seen on blades of Kanesada and Kanefusa of Mino Province whose hamon are worked in Gunome choji are made in what is called NIOI GUCHI SHIMARU meaning that the nioi is made very tightly and not in the loose and flowing Ichimonji style. The nioi in such cases are made according to and in comparison with the hamon, that is, the type of nioi found on Ichimonji would not be right on a gunome of Kanesada.

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UCHIKO KITS -

A new supply of uchiko kits (sword care kits) has finally been ordered and is expected to be delivered soon. Through the kind assistance of Mr. Morihiro Tanobe, NBTHK Secretary, we are now able to order the same fine quality boxed uchiko kits as sold by NBTHK in Japan. These kits are made by Mr. Katsuhisa Ōta of Tokyo. Mr. Ōta has agreed to sell us these kits at a wholesale price in order to assist our sword society. We will sell these at \$9.00 post paid which is only slightly over our cost (including postage). This new price will be reflected on the supplies list which will - eventually - be sent to you.

Perhaps a word about our "supply service" would be in order at this time. A small inventory will be carried of basic sword needs and will be made available to members as a membership benefit. Please do not over-order on these items so that everyones needs can be taken care of without our carrying a large inventory. We do have items from time to time which are very profitable - books are one such item - so feel free to order to your hearts content on these items. It is these profitable sales which have put our treasury into the black once again! Items like kits, oil, ink stones, etc., are sold only slightly over cost.

LEWERT NOTES AVAILABLE -

The notes compiled by Bob Lewert on the first (5) volumes of NIHON TŌ TAIKAN are available from the NL for \$10.00 (a profitable venture). The notes on the last (2) volumes have not been completed at this time, to answer the inquiries which have come in on this.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE -

The next NL is due about the end of November. Please have all material intended for this issue in to the editor a week in advance of this time.

RON HARTMANN