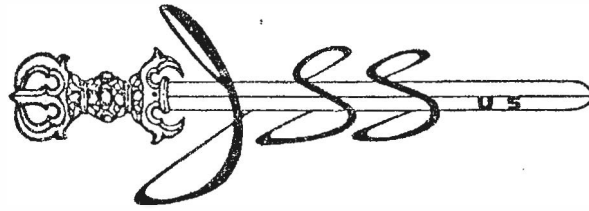


Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

The Official Bi-Monthly Publication of the Society. Membership - \$10.00 Annually

Volume 9 No. 2

March - April 1977

ELECTION OF OFFICERS -

Congratulations to the following members who were elected to office for the two-year term, 1977 and 1978:

CHAIRMAN.....Robert M. Lewert
EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN....Keith Evans
1ST VICE CHAIRMAN.....Peter Bleed
2ND VICE CHAIRMAN.....Ted Wysocky
SECRETARY.....Richard Mantegani
TREASURER.....Ron Hartmann

Our new slate of officers is once again excellent. Under the able leadership of Bob Lewert, we can look forward to further advancing our position in the sword world while gaining recognition as a society devoted to the study and understanding of the sword.

On behalf of the membership, our thanks to the out-going officers for the excellent job they did while in office. Special thanks to Arnold Frenzel for his devoted leadership as Chairman. It was through Arnolds true concern for the society and his many efforts that we were able to prosper, grow, and maintain a place of respect in the world of sword study. Thanks too to Rick Mantegani and Henrick Olsgaard for seeing this election through (even with the problems derived from the treasurer's return address mistake).

The response from the membership with regards to this election was very encouraging with 42% of the ballots being returned. Your interest as a member in such important society functions is truly appreciated.

A LETTER FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN -

The following letter of acceptance has been received from our new Chairman and is hereby presented to the membership.



Fellow Members of the JSSUS:

I should like to express my thanks to all of you for the honor The Society has given me by making me its chairman for the next two years. I am particularly pleased to be involved at this time when the interest in Nihonto is at its peak and when more and more information is becoming available, not only concerning the swords themselves but also their history, techniques of forging and all manner of details concerning kodogu. I continue to be amazed at the expertise of the many members of our society who in the past have contributed to the Bulletin. Their willingness to share their experience and knowledge with us all is unique and assembling it and presenting this obviously, in many cases, has taken a lot of hard work and great scholarship. I feel that our group is rather unusual as it obviously has remained a thriving society in spite of the fact that we are disseminated all over the United States and the world and we cannot have regularly scheduled meetings even of the Society officers. Obviously, the Bulletin and Newsletter keep us together as a group of active students with common interests.

There are two matters for the future in which we can all become involved either individually or as members of our Society. The first of these is the possibility that a formal shinsa will be held in the Chicago area in 1979 in cooperation with the Nippon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai. This is the result of a groundswell of requests from Society members to the directors over the past year. As a result, they have asked me to make preliminary inquiries of the NBTHK to see whether or not from their standpoint this would be feasible and desirable. We are asking Dr. Walter A. Compton to be the honorary chairman of this shinsa session and he has tentatively agreed to do this contingent on the decision of the NBTHK. I have recently had a very nice letter from Dr. Homma indicating that he thinks that a shinsa at that time would be desirable and appropriate and he has said that he will consult with Dr. Sato and the Board of Directors of the NBTHK concerning the possibility of meeting in Chicago the latter part of May 1979. The meeting will be sponsored by JSSUS, Inc., and as soon as anything more definite is known we shall assemble a strong working committee and a formal announcement with details will be sent to everyone we think might be interested in this meeting.

A second point of real interest in the sword world in which everyone can participate individually or as a Society member is the Tatara Project that Dr. Homma and the NBTHK are developing. Some details of this were printed in the last newsletter. It is important that this type of smelting be accomplished before techniques are totally lost. It is imperative to supply present day smiths with material to recreate blades of quality utilizing the ancient techniques and materials necessary to this art form. The project has received considerable support in Japan and Dr. Homma in his letter, has mentioned that he has been receiving contributions from various parts of the world and, of course, one has been sent in the name of the JSSUS. This will be an expensive project and individual contributions of whatever size will be greatly appreciated and significant in its success. I hope many of us will be able to contribute and that in the near future we will be able to see the results of reviving this ancient technique of processing sand rion.

So many members of this Society have greater experience and expertise than I, that I hope that you will truly feel free to write to me with any advice and suggestions to benefit the Society and what we might together do to strengthen it in the future and enhance our knowledge in our field of common interest.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Lewert

JSS/US TATARA PROJECT DONATION -

During the Birmingham Sword Show last February, several members had expressed a desire for our society to make a donation towards the NBTHK Tatara Project (ref: NL V9N1). To do this, the first step to be taken was to make a Proposal to our Directors suggesting such a donation. The following Proposal was therefore put together and mailed to the society Directors on or about March 14th along with a request for their approval or disapproval of the Proposal. The Proposal read as follows:

PROPOSAL: That the JSS/US donate \$300 from the society treasury for presentation to the Tatara Forge Project of the NBTHK. The donation would be given in the society name and would not be connected with the tsuba drawing proposal of John Yumoto. (The drawing is intended as an inticement to individuals for making personal donations.).

It was most heartwarming to receive the unanimous approval of all Directors for such a donation, along with comments praising this token gesture of support for the project. Upon receiving approval a check was acquired in the amount of ¥83,449 (\$300) and mailed to our Chairman. He in turn mailed this check, along with the following letter (on JSS/JS letterhead) to Dr. Junji Homma, Chairman of Nippon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai. The letter read as follows:

Dr. Junji Homma, Chairman
Nippon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
Token Hakubutsukan-nai
4-25-10 Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku
Tokyo, JAPAN

Dear Dr. Homma:

As an expression of support and best wishes of the members of the JSSUS, Inc., for the success of the Tatara Project of the NBTHK, the Board of Directors has asked me to forward to you this donation of ¥83,449. Our society is not large and our treasury is very small so we are limited in our financial efforts but not in our enthusiastic support. We are all looking forward with great interest to hearing of your progress as the project develops.

With best personal regards,

Sincerely,

Robert M. Lewert
Chairman, JSSUS, Inc.

The following letter was recently received in response to our Tatara Forge Project donation. As to Dr. Homma's request to learn more of our organization and our present workings, a sampling of our publications will be sent to NBTHK post haste.

April 11, 1977

Prof. Robert M. Lewert
Chairman
Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.

Dear Prof. Lewert:

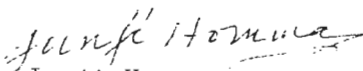
We thank you very much for the donation of ¥83,449 from the members of the JSSUS, Inc. We were very much impressed by your thoughtful and cooperative activity for the Tatara project. Please send all of your members our sincere gratitude and best wishes.

As you may know, we conduct an annual contest of making Japanese sword every spring. This spring, about 160 swords have been submitted to the contest, from which we have found out that we have a lack of iron materials of good quality (Tamahagane) for making swords. It is hoped, therefore, that we will succeed the Tatara project and will obtain Tamahagane. The initial Tatara furnace will be built by this fall, and a firing will be started in November. Next spring, we will be able to meet good swords which will be made of the new Tamahagane.

Incidentally, we would like to know about your Society, the JSSUS, Inc., such as the location of the office, the members and Directors, activities of the Society, and the like.

Again, many thanks for your kind donation.

Sincerely yours,


Dr. Junji Homma

/tm

Encl: Receipt

ST. LOUIS JAPANESE GARDEN OPENING

Japanese Ambassador Fumihiko Togo, Consul General Sumiya of Chicago, a host of national, state and local officials will attend formal ceremonies May 5th marking the dedication of Seiwa-En, the "garden of pure, clear harmony and peace" at the Missouri Botanical Gardens located in St. Louis, Missouri. The \$1,200,000 Japanese garden, spanning 12 acres including a 5 acre lake, will be the largest of its type in North America. Designed by Koichi Kawana, Professor of environmental design at UCLA, and inspired by the St. Louis JACL, the garden culminates years of effort by many toward ensuring the authenticity and originality of the project.

One May 8th an elaborate JAPANESE FESTIVAL DAY will be presented by the St. Louis JACL group, featuring demonstrations and exhibits of Japanese culture. Again this year, local members of the JSS/US will participate by presenting an exhibit of fine swords and armour. Our exhibit last year was very well received with much interest being shown by those attending. A larger crowd is expected this year and it promises to be a most interesting and enjoyable event. Anyone near St. Louis should plan to attend this unique celebration.

NEW MEMBERS -

We are happy to welcome the following large list of new members to our society:

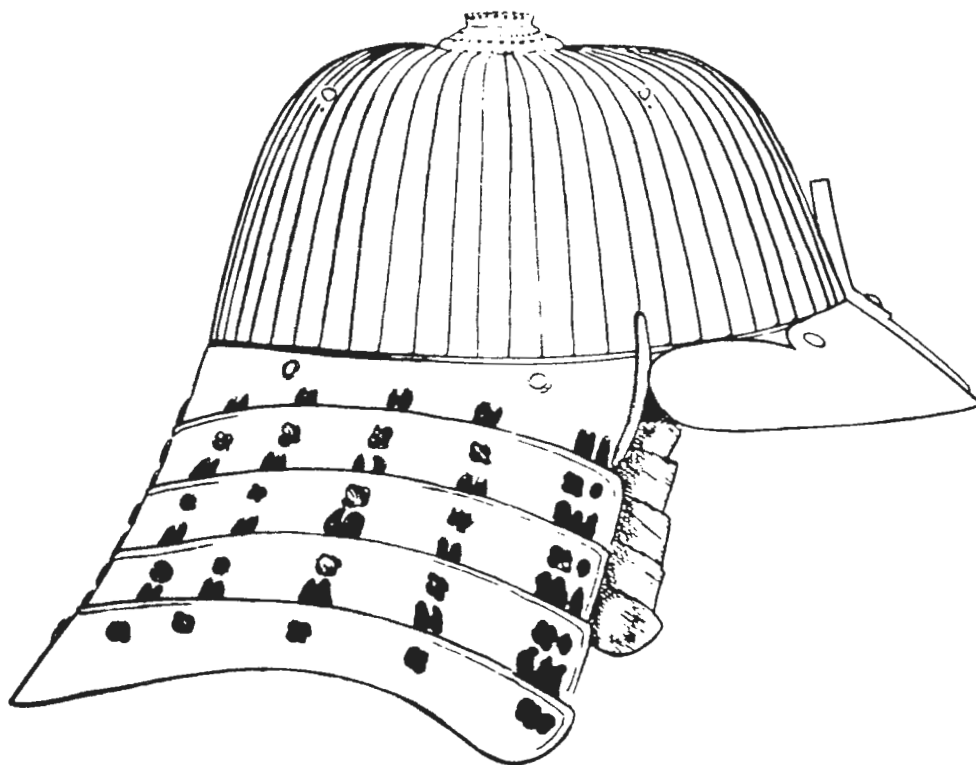
Mrs. Frederick O. Thompson -
Robert J. Nelson -
Walter Buecher -
J. Honnorez -
Lee A. Jones -
Gerald B. Alferes -
P. H. Stephens -
Christopher P. Leung -
Frank Seki -
Jan Dotzler-Dunn -
Joseph A. Kocjan -
53092 Carol Ann Phillips -
Harry D. Wright -
Alfred J. Cohn -
Bill Trevino -
L. Glynn Acree III -
Mary Antil -
Alvin A. Shaw -
K.E. Skafte -
Roger B. Thorin -
George E. Welch -
Jerold B. Millendorf -
Lawrence P. Richards -
Robert Savoie -

ARMOUR RESEARCH PAPER DEVELOPING -

Our armour advisor, Louis Chappelear, is presently working on a paper dealing with armour and armour makers signitures. He has asked that we mention this in hopes of acquiring examples from the membership. Any member who has a signed helmet in his collection and would like to have it included in this paper can do so by sending Lou a side view photograph of the helmet (see example below). The photograph does not need to be perfect since the line drawing process does not demand perfection. A rubbing or picture of the signiture would be great, but if unavailable an english translation of it is sufficient for this paper. Lou points out that the owner does have a rubbing of the signiture, it would be an excellent opportunity to have it authenticated. Of course untranslated signitures are also welcomed and translations will promptly be furnished.

The format for this paper is pictured below:

SAOTOME IYEHISA



早 Sa
し oto
女 me
家 Iye
久 hisa

This helmet is signed "SAOTOME IYEHISA". The signiture is bold and distinct in the fashion of the Saotome. The russet iron bowl is composed of flattened "S" shaped plates and is in an excellent state of preservation. The shikoro is laced in dark blue silk. This helmet is part of an armour which once belonged to the Maeda family.

The Authors collection

THE TWO SIGNATURES OF TEIMEI

by Dr. Keith Evans

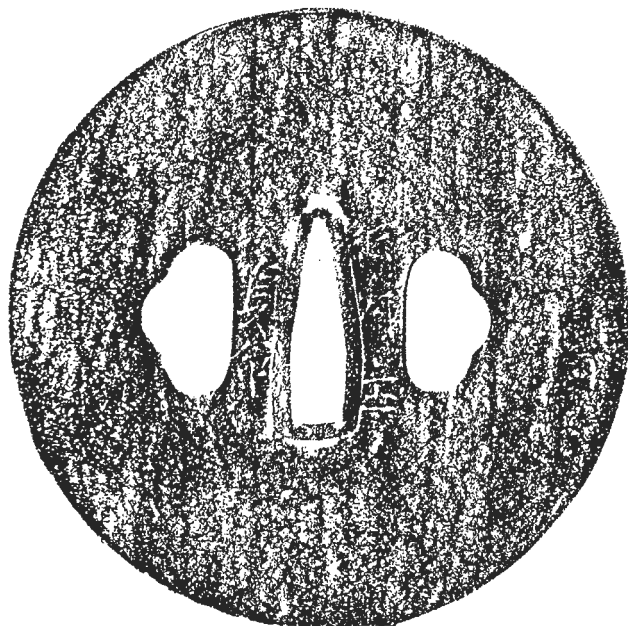
TEIMEI was a tsuba maker of Kii Province (modern Wakayama). His teacher was the famous KAWAGUCHI HOAN, who was from Owari Province and himself a student of NOBUIYE. Therefore, it is natural that Teimei work should reflect the tradition of the iron tsuba masters of the 16th century.

HOAN settled in Kii Province in his late years, dying there in 1613 A.D. TEIMEI was a student in HOAN's mature period, and his iron shows high skill in forging, being very dense and pure-ringing.

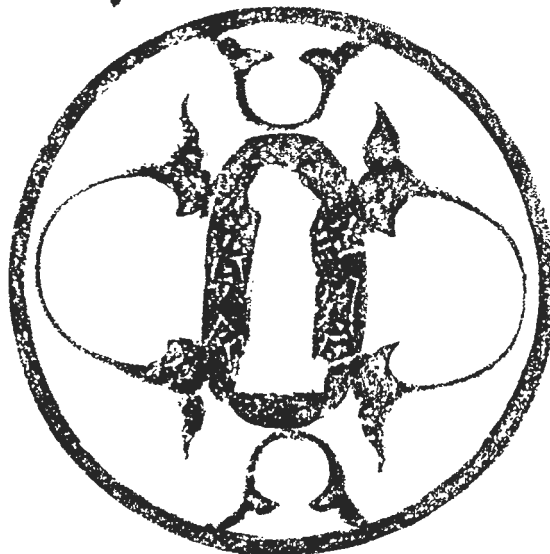
These two oshigata show not only the two signature styles of TEIMEI, but also a very diverse style concept.

It is generally agreed that there are two generations of TEIMEI, both working in Kisshu. TEIMEI's style is usually large open-work design and the rim has a square edge.

Editors note: Keith has asked that we invite similar articles from the membership - swords, tsuba, helmets - anything with a good mei. Anything along these lines would greatly help us all in our studies.



貞命



貞命

SUPPLY LIST ADDITIONS AND CHANGES -

Please make the following changes to the society supply list which was included in the November-December 1976 NEWSLETTER (new members since 12/1/76 had this list included with the intro data).

Price changes: Uchiko pom-poms.....new price \$2.50
Brass hammers.....new price \$2.50
Small oil.....new price \$2.00

A new supply of uchiko and brass hammers has been received but our cost (thanks to customs duties) has forced this price rise. Actually, these new items are of much better quality and well worth the slightly higher price.

New items (add to your list):

A quantity of the PRIMER OF JAPANESE SWORD-BLADES, B.W.Robinson -1955, has been purchased and are now available from the society. This is a highly recommended little primer and contains a wealth of basic information on schools and smiths. Price \$6.00

For those wishing record sheets, typed and punched sheets are now available. Although my personal format - it works well and does force one to note all the characteristics of a sword. A space for oshigata is also incorporated into the format. \$2.25/50 sheets

As a reminder to our foreign members, please make all payments via international check in U.S. DOLLARS PLEASE. Such checks are easily obtainable at any large bank in your country. Thank you.

AS A SUGGESTION -

One of the most handy little booklets to have as part of ones basic sword library is a sword monograph entitled: HONORARY TITLES USED BY SWORDSMITHS, by W. Hawley. Very often a blade is suriage and only the smiths TITLE is remaining, or perhaps a particular name contains an unreadable character but the title can be read. This small monograph lists each title by province and then lists all the men who used that title, narrowing ones search down to a few men. A very helpful aid to have. Available @ \$1.50 / 20¢post from Willis Hawley,

MEMBERSHIP LIST CORRECTION -

Three members were accidentally omitted from the last roster. Please add their names and addresses to your list.

R. B. Caldwell,
Louis Chappellear,
Ray Macy Jr.

Mistakes and deletions, address changes, etc., should be brought to the attention of the NEWSLETTER as soon as they are noted. Please help in keeping our books up-to-date so that everyone receives all the mailings due to them.

MOMOGAWA NAGAYOSHI

oshigata by Andrew Quirt

TANTO, mumei, attributed to
MOMOGAWA NAGAYOSHI

PERIOD: Early Nambokucho

FORM: Hiradzukuri, mitsumune, thin
blade with hira-niku.

LENGTH: 9 sun 1 bu

HAMON: Suguba-komidare with some
gunome. Profuse ko-nie.
Kinsuji and inazuma. Ni-juba.
Extreamly active hamon.

JIGANE: Mokume and masame mixed,
tending to ayasugi near
the hamon. Slightly midare
utsuri reflections. Ji-nie
and Chikei.

HORIMONO: Deeply cut double grooves
on each side.

COMMENTS:

This blade is believed to be by first
generation Momogawa Nagayoshi, a
student of Kando Toshinaga. Nagayoshi
worked in Echigo Province, and the
workmanship of his blades is similar
to that found in Ko-Uda. This tanto
is rather narrow for Nambokucho period
blades.

RATING: NBTHK Green Papers

GENEALOGY:



WANTED AND FOR SALE ITEMS - (A service to our members)

- FOR SALE: Kotō Daitō, mumei, needs polish. No menuki - other furniture present. Iiato quality. \$75 plus postage. Contact: Mel Oka,
- WANTED: Complete set of Nihontō Newsletter by A.Yamanaka; Shintō Taikan; Arts of the Japanese Sword by Robinson, 1970; TANTO by Suzuki. Contact: Charles G. Ross,
- WANTED: Swords by Musashi Taro YASUKUNI. Other signitures of this smith are Iota HIROSHIGE, Bushu YASUKUNI, Yamamoto YASUKUNI, and BOKUYU. Any sword by the SHITAHARA school (also called SHIMOHARA). Contact: Bob Benson,
- WANTED: Fine quality Shintō daitō, ubu and of high quality. Will pay top prices for such quality blades. Contact: Dave Pepin,
- WANTED: The Boston R & D Aboratory Library is searching for an original copy of the book, A METALLOGRAPHIC EXAMINATION OF SOME JAPANESE SWORD BLADES, published by the Italian Metallurgical Society, Milano, 1957.

SWORD QUIZ PROPOSED -

Our new Executive Vice Chairman Keith Evans, has offered to start a sword quiz section for our NEWSLETTER. He has offered to handle all of the correspondence and do the tallying, etc., in addition to presenting the sword and then critiquing the answers. Keith's intent here is to guide us into more scholarly pursuits and such a sword quiz will certainly force us to study and to use our library books. The quiz will appear in a future issue of our paper.

ST.LOUIS SWORD SHOW -

There has been several inquiries as to a St.Louis sword show as was held last year. It seems the MACA Gun show (which we joined for our show last year) has scheduled their show for the 4/23-24 weekend this year. It was felt that this was much too close to the Birmingham show and because of this, no formal plans for us were made. As it stands, no show plans are scheduled for us until TSG Chicago show.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - The May-June issue of the NEWSLETTER will come out about the 1st of June 1977. Please have all material intended for that issue into the Editor no later than the last week of May.



RON HARTMANN