

Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

Volume 10 No. 3

May - June 1978

Announcing

The Japanese Sword Society/U.S. and the Token Study Group of Chicago will present a sword Seminar, Exhibition, Shinsa and sword show,

May 23 - 27, 1979

AT The O'Hare Inn

6600 N. MANNHEIM RD.

DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS 60018

The time is upon us to formally announce our plans for the 1979 sword event which will be presented as a joint undertaking by both the JSS/US and the TSG. Future public announcements will be mailed to all known sword collector-students in the form of an "Informational Newsletter" of sorts, so that as many people as possible can be reached and invited to join in this event.

The primary function of the JSS/US will be to present a well organized Meibutsu Room Study Exhibition (an exhibition of select and particularly important swords and sword-art related items). Our society will also present a program of lectures and will have one or more publications available pertaining to this event.

The Token Study Group will present a formal Shinsa under the direction of Mr. Kentaro Yoshikawa. They will also present the traditional sword show for our dealing pleasures. Other activities will also be organized as planning goes on.

Much of the above is explained in the following letter from our society Chairman, Mr. Robert Lewert:

The May 1979 meeting of the JSS/US, Inc. and the Token Study Group of Chicago is coming up rapidly, and we're trying to make plans for an exceptional show. The JSS/US Board of Directors have asked that I, along with Roy Hashioka, John Hanacek, Tom

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Chicago 1979 cont'd.

Buttweiler and John Tischmann, set up a Meibutsu Room and we have started a preliminary survey sending out questionnaires to Officers and about thirty members. We have had a fine response and already have offers of (8) Juyo blades, (6) Koshu, many Green Paper swords, and fine tsuba, armor, and other display material. We have just scratched the surface and already we have material from archaic, Heian and Kamakura periods and more recent through Gendai. Plans are to try to show basic schools in sequence of age with descriptions of each item. We may even have some from the Gunsaulus Collection! There is adequate room, but we are aiming for quality and artistic pieces rather than quantity. We are further limited in that we will try to provide an illustrated and descriptive catalog at the exhibit. We hope to have material from twenty or thirty collections so that it will be representative of fine pieces in the U.S. and not predominantly those from two or three collectors. We have a large display area and expect to show from 125 to 150 exceptional blades. This will have to be selective, in part because we want to have a fine catalog and will have problems preparing text and illustrations.

Another major aspect of the meeting will be a selection of original discussions and lectures, presently being planned by our Executive Vice Chairman, Mr. Keith Evans. A publication of these papers will be presented in printed form either at the program or possibly following the event, via our society Newsletter. The material promises to be fresh and exciting, informative for both the novice and expert collector.

The third feature of interest to all is that the Chicago Token Study Group under the leadership of Mr. Ted Wysocky, has arranged for Mr. Kentaro Yoshikawa to hold a shinsa at the meeting. Mr. Yoshikawa has agreed to bring a team, probably of four, including experts on Tsuba and Kodogu. We must have some advance response on this as well as the Meibutsu Room Exhibition as this will need some funds in advance in addition to our small treasuries to make this possible. Mr. Yoshikawa is a highly respected connoisseur, Director of a sword society in Japan, and a polisher. His expertise is great and his two previous shinsa in Chicago have been great successes. Many of our members have and respect origami from his group.

There will also be a large area set aside for the usual buy-sell-trade type sword show too.

This meeting was initiated more than two years ago and it is your meeting whether you are in Australia, Hawaii, Holland or anywhere in this hemisphere. It's success depends on your response and support since we local people can only act as your aides. With a little help and encouragement, this will prove to be the most outstanding meeting on the Japanese Art Sword ever held outside of Japan.

(signed) Bob Lewert

Chicago 1979 cont'd.

Bob's statement, "It's success depends on your response and support...", can not be over emphasised. Although a formal questionnaire will be mailed out via the public mailing in the very near future, you, as a member of the JSS/US, can give Bob your response now by expressing your interest and by offering your help in presenting this meeting. The following questions can already be answered by most of us:

1. Do you plan on attending this event?
2. Have you any special talents which could be utilized?
3. Will you submit items for shinsa and if so, approximately how many items do you expect to submit.
4. Would you have one or more items which might work in with the Meibutsu Room Exhibition? These items must be of high quality, in polish and well documented. They must be brought to the show by you in time for display and an oshigata with particulars on the item presented presented in advance of the meeting in order to make the illustrated catalogue a reality. Around-the-clock security will be on hand and insurance on the exhibit will be purchased and provided.
5. All of this takes money....will you be willing to send in your advance registration fee (probably around \$50) as soon as it is established? If you are able to provide other financial backing, please advise Bob of this too.

Send your letters pertaining to the Meibutsu Room to: The Shinsa information should be sent direct to Mr. Ted Wysocky,

Any of the above inform-ation which is sent in to the Newsletter will be forwarded to the men involved in the coordination of this event.

Watch for your separate mailing in the very near future. Talk this meeting up and help to promote it's success by stimulating interest! Everyone attending this 1979 event will certainly go home with a greatly enriched knowledge and understanding of this unique art form which captivates all of us....called Tōken!

KNUTSEN REQUEST -

At the conclusion of an article by Mr. Roald Knutsen, which appears in the 1977/1978 society Bulletin (to be mailed out soon), a request was made by the author, a student of polearms. If any of our members owning examples of polearms would send Mr. Knutsen a full size photocopy of their yari, including details of maker, length, hamon, proportional information particularly, it would be greatly appreciated. Send direct to: Mr. Roald Knutsen, Your letters will be most welcome! See your 1977/1978 Bulletin for more details.

- NEW MEMBERS

Our membership continues to grow! Welcome to all of the below new members to our society.

Fisher, G.,
Frankfort, Steven A.,
Uhlig, Herbert K.,
Weber, Fred,
Burawoy, Robert,
Van Heldorf, H.,
White, John,
Doe, Harold,
McCauley, Dan,
Louiselle, Raymond J.,
Imhauser, Carl W.,
Dinwiddie, William J.,
Benedek, David,
Omino, Kiyoharu,
Krivanek, Joseph F.,
Watanabe, Tomo;

Note: The society LIBRARIAN has moved. His new address for book requests is listed below. Mark you records.

Howard Sloan,

A REQUEST FROM JOHN YUMOTO -

In a letter recently received from John, he asked that the following request be printed:

"Wanted - Artistic or dressy cane, as I feel I have to depend on one in my future. 33" length. Please let me trade with set of fuchi/kashira or menuki of my choice for it."

John has been recovering rather well but he does need some assistance apparently, in his walking. I am sure someone can come up with something unique for this request. Please contact:

Thank you

BIRMINGHAM SUMMER SWORD SHOW -

The Birmingham summer show has been moved up to July 14th and 15th and will be held at the Rodeway Inn, I-65 and Oxmoor Road as in the past. Fees are \$15/table or \$5 admission for non-table holders. Please reserve tables in advance as there is generally a large group to be accommodated .

Send your reservations to:

This event is always well attended and an enjoyable weekend. The date came up rather quickly but it was moved up from its usual schedule so as not to conflict with the east coast seminar in August. To assist the organizers of not only this show, but all such shows, please send in your advance reservations. This is a great assist in making such shows a well planned success!

SWORD SYMPOSIUM -

The New England branch of the JSS/US is planning an elaborate sword study weekend, to be held at the Sheraton Hotel, Hartford, Connecticut the weekend of August 18th, 19th and 20th.

There will be sword and fittings study seminars, book displays, Secret Sales Shop, Exhibition Area, Cocktail Parties.....and a host of other activities. Registration Fee: \$50/person or \$90/couple prior to June 15th, or \$60 per person after this date. Contact:

Plan to attend as this promises to be not only a learning weekend, but also a fun one. Bring the wife or girl friend as they will certainly enjoy the social end of things, if not the study sessions.

BOOK REVIEW -

The Newsletter has been given the opportunity to review the soon to come "Question and Answer" book, to be published by Nihonto Kemma, Ltd., of Denton, Texas.

The book promises to be an interesting one and is aimed primarily at the novice collector. Many basic (and typical) questions are presented and are answered rather thoroughly which will prove a great help to most newer collectors. Many of these questions are of the nature covering topics usually learned about through conversation between collectors and seldom learned from the usual sword books. Call them "experience answers" if you wish. The book is recommended and being a nominal price, can easily be had by everyone.

For ordering or for further information, contact: Nihonto Kemma Ltd., . Price is \$4.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling. Allow 60-90 days delivery.

Nobukuni Yoshimasa I

Private Collection

Oshigata by Gary Haulman

TYPE AND SHAPE: Ko-wakizashi of hira-zukuri shape. Ithori mune

HAMON: Small notare, midare, komidare. Formed of nie. Hamon has deep ashi and some sunagashi.

BOSHI: Komaru sagari with a slight doubling on both sides.

JIHADA: Itame

NAKAGO: The tang is ubu and futsu shape. File marks are yokoyasuri and the tip is kurijiri. There are three mekugi-ana.

DIMENSIONS: Length 32.4cm Width 0.6cm

HORIMONO: Ura:Remains of an engraving of Fudo

Omote:Remains of an engraving of Bishamonten

INSCRIPTION: Omote:Nobukuni, Shōkoku Yamato Uda-gori Takamatsu Shō ju

(Native Province, Yamato Uda County Takamatsu town lived)

Kyo Nidai Ge Kyūshū Jūdai

(The second generation (Nobukuni) of Kyoto (Yamashiro prov. who moved to Kyūshū Island (I am) the tenth generation.

Ura:Yoshimasa Gojūnana Tame

(Nobukuni) Yoshimasa age 57. For

Tsuda Uji saku kore nari

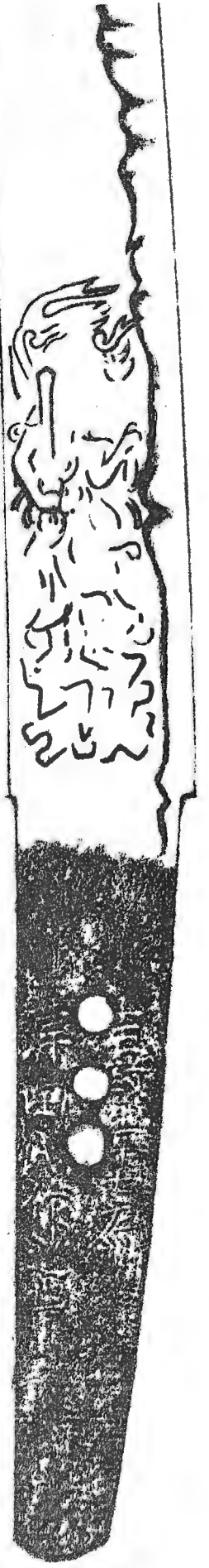
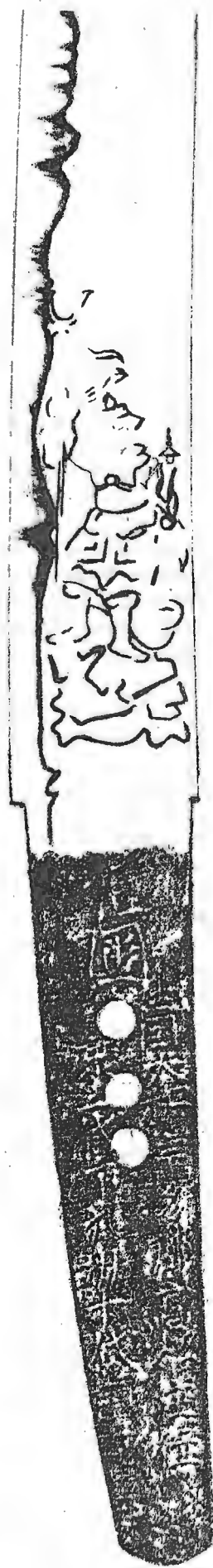
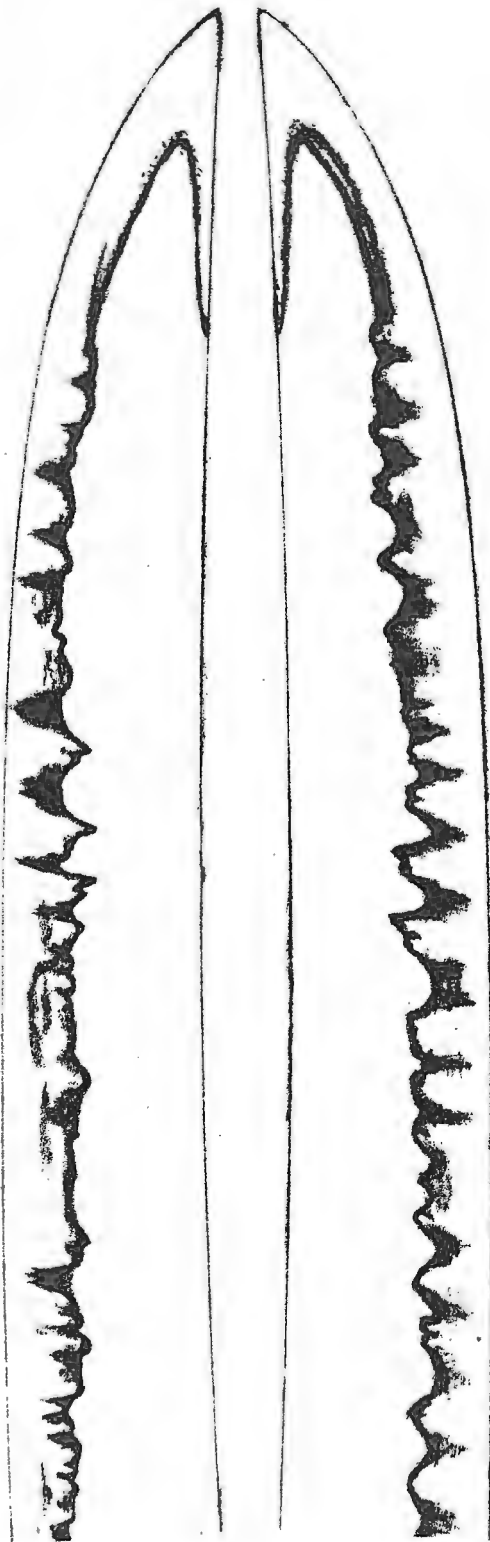
Mr. Tsuda.(I) made this (blade)

SCHOOL: Chikuzen Nobukuni 1650-1750

Some of the koto-Nobukuni line of Yamashiro province moved to Kyushu Island when the civil war ruined Kyoto in the Mid-Muromachi period. Their later generations flourished there until the late Edo period. Yoshimasa in the shinto period was one of the representative smiths of their line. All of the smiths signed Nobukuni _____. The following are some of them, Nobukuni Yoshimasa, '' Yoshimasa II, '' Yoshisada, '' Yoshikane, '' Shigemune, '' Yoshishige, '' Yoshisuke, '' Yoshikatsu. They worked in Itame, Masame. Komidare, Gonome-Midare, Notare-Midare.

REMARKS: It has been determined by Dr. Fukunaga at Birmingham, who rated it at excellent, first generation. Also a letter and oshigata sent to Yazu Kizu netted the same results. He is listed in Hawley's book as Yo274 rated 40KC.

REFERENCE: Nihonto News Letter by A. Yamanaka and a letter from Mr. Yazu Kizu.



The following article is a reprint from one of our past issues of the society Bulletin. It is in reference to the terms discussed (referring to cutting ability of a blade) in the article on Fujishiro Shinto/Koto volumes, March-April Newsletter Vol.10 No.2 page 9.

THE CUTTING EDGE OF THE KATANA

BY ALBERT YAMANAKA

ALL SWORD COLLECTORS HAVE AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER WONDERED HOW KEEN A JAPANESE BLADE IS. THIS IS NOT CONFINED TO COLLECTORS ONLY, BUT ANYONE WITH CURIOSITY, ESPECIALLY AMONG WESTERNERS, SINCE THEY SEEM MORE CURIOUS THAN ORIENTALS IN THIS RESPECT. AS WE ALL KNOW, THE KATANA WAS MADE FIRST AS A WEAPON, AND FOR THIS REASON ITS PRIMARY PURPOSE WAS TO CUT, AND THE FINER THE CUTTING EDGE THE BETTER IT WAS AT THE TIME WHEN IT WAS ACTIVELY IN USE.

THERE ARE WRITTEN RECORDS OF THE CUTTING EDGE OF KATANA CLASSIFIED BY THEIR KEENNESS, AND IN JAPANESE THEN CALLED "WAZAMONO." THE COMMON TRANSLATION GIVEN IN THE DICTIONARY IS "FINE SWORD," HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT SEEM TO GIVE THE EXACT CONNOTATION. WAZA TRANSLATED ALONE MEANS ART, WORK, DEED OR DOING. MONO IS TRANSLATED AS THING, MATTER. AND SO THE COMBINATION OF THE TWO WILL BE "DEED OF A MATTER" OR KEEN BLADE.

IN THE OLD TEXTS WE ARE TOLD THAT A GOOD WAZAMONO IS THE RESULT OF THE UTMOST CARE IN TEMPERING AND FIRING. THERE ARE VARIOUS TYPES OF KEENNESS AS FOUND IN TESTING: SOMETIMES A BLADE RUNS THROUGH AN OBJECT (MAN'S HEAD) AS IF CUTTING THROUGH WATER; IN ANOTHER INSTANCE IT WILL GIVE A VIBRATION THROUGHOUT ONE'S ARM IN THE PROCESS. ALSO IT GREATLY DEPENDS ON THE OBJECT ONE IS CUTTING, AS AN EXAMPLE, CUTTING THROUGH A MID-SECTION OF A MAN 15 - 23 YEARS OF AGE GIVES A RELATIVE FEELING OF SOFTNESS, DUE TO THE BONES NOT HAVING HARDENED, AND THEREFORE THIS WILL NOT PROVE THE TRUE KEENNESS OF THE BLADE. THE ULTIMATE IN A FINE CUTTING EDGE IS DETERMINED BY CUTTING THROUGH A MAN BETWEEN 30 - 50 AT THE MID-SECTION IN THE OGESA FASHION, A MAN WHOSE BONES ARE HARDENED, AND IF THE BLADE RUNS THROUGH FAST, THEN THE BLADE CAN BE CLASSED "SAIJYO OWAZAMONO."

OGESA CUTTING IS EXECUTED BY RUNNING A BLADE DOWN FROM EITHER THE LEFT OR RIGHT SHOULDER ON AN ANGLE TO THE OPPOSITE SIDE RIGHT BELOW THE CHEST. THESE TESTS WERE CONDUCTED ON PRISONERS WHO WERE TO BE EXECUTED BY BEHEADING OR BY OTHER METHODS, AND AFTER A MAN WAS BEHEADED A NUMBER OF OTHER CUTS OR STROKES WERE MADE WITH DIFFERENT BLADES FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF TESTING THE CUTTING EDGES OF KATANA. IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT NOT ALL SAMURAI COULD AFFORD TO HAVE THEIR BLADES TESTED; ONLY MEN OF HIGH RANK OR THOSE WITH INFLUENCES WERE ABLE TO AFFORD IT.

YAMADA ASAUEMON IN 1806 OR THE SECOND YEAR OF BUNKA WROTE THE KAI HO KEN-JYAKU, WHICH DEPICTS HIS FEATS, TESTS, AND RESULTS OF THESE TESTS HE MADE. YAMADA WAS ONE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIONERS OF HIS TIME FOR THE BAKUFU, AND IS KNOWN TO HAVE TESTED NUMBERS OF BLADES. AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER ONE COMES BY A BLADE WITH A RECORD OF THESE TESTS INSCRIBED IN GOLD ON THE NAKAGO. IT USUALLY GIVES THE DATE, THE CUTTING METHOD, AND THE TESTERS' NAMES.

YAMADA TELLS US THAT IF THE BLADE DOES NOT HAVE "MEAT" AT THE CUTTING EDGE, THE CUTTING EDGE WILL BE FINE; HOWEVER, CHIPPING WILL RESULT. CUTTING THROUGH A SOFT OBJECT WILL CREATE NO PROBLEM; HOWEVER

IN CUTTING A HARD OBJECT, CHIPPING WILL INVARIABLY OCCUR, IN WHICH CASE IF THE CHIPPING IS TOO SEVERE, IT WILL RENDER THE BLADE WORTHLESS -- NOT USELESS, BUT WORTHLESS.

IF THE CUTTING EDGE HAS TOO MUCH MEAT, IT WILL DULL THE BLADE, THEREFORE A BLADE MUST HAVE MEAT AT THE JI OF THE HAMON, AND THE HASAKI MUST BE THIN, WHICH THEN WILL BRING ABOUT A TRUE KEENNESS. IF THERE ARE NO NIE IN THE HAMON, THE CUTTING EDGE IS POOR; HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH THE YAKIBA MIGHT BE VERY NARROW, IF IT HAS NIE, IT WILL CUT.

A NUMBER OF THESE EXECUTIONERS WHO TESTED BLADES AND WHO INSCRIBED THEIR TESTS ON THE NAKAGO ARE LISTED BELOW BY PERIOD:

NAKAGAWA SAHEITA	KEICHO & GENWA ERAS
YAMANO KAUEMON NO JŌ NAGAHISA	KANEI
MIYAI ROKUBEI NO JŌ SHIGEYORI	KANEI
KANEKO SUKE NO JŌ	KANEI
MURAI TOUEMON	MANJI
YAMANO KANJŪRO HISAHIDE	KANMON
YAMANO KICHIZAEMON HISATOYO	TEIKYO & GENROKU
SHIBAZAKI DENZAEMON MASATSUGU	KANMON
ONUMA JINZEMON MASASHIGE	KANMON
YAJIMA SHŌBEI	KANMON
MAEJIMA BANUEMON TOMOTSUGU	KANMON
OGAWA HACHIROUEMON SHIGEHARU	KANMON
KUWAYAMA TANGO NO KAMI SADAMASA	KANMON
KUMADA TOBEI TOMOYASU	KANMON
ŌKAWA HACHIUEMON	KANEI
MATSUNAMI TOKIUEMON	EMPŌ
TOMITA YAICHIZAMON NOJYŌO SHIGETSUNA	EMPŌ & TENWA
SUGIZAKI MATAZAEMON SHIGESADA	TENWA
SUGIZAKI SHINUEMON NO JŌ MORISHIGE	TENWA
MATSUNAMI SHIROEBEI	EMPŌ
OKAMOTO KATSUUEMON	TEIKYŌ
NEZU SABURŌBEI NO JŌ MITSUMASA	GENROKU
HATTORI KANUEMON	GENROKU
NARITA IUEMON	GENROKU
INOUE BUNHICHIRO KATSUZUMI	KYŌHO
MAJIMA SADAZAEMON	KYŌHO
KATADA KANDAIYU	KYŌHO
SANO BANNOUEMON	KYŌHO
KURAMOCHI TAKEUEMON	KYŌHO

YAMADA GENZO	GENBUN
YAMADA ASAJEMON	GENBUN
SUDO GODAIYU MATSUZUMI	TEMMEI
YAMADA GENGORO	TEMMEI
YAMADA ASAJEMON YOSHIMUTSU	BUNKA
IMAI UMON NOBUYORI	BUNSEI
KOMATSUBARA JINBEI YOSHIMASA	BUNSEI
YAMADA GONNOSUKE YOSHITAKA	BUNSEI
IGA SHIROZAEMON	TENPO
YAMADA GOSABURO	KOKA
YAMADA ASAJEMON YOSHINORI	KAEI
YAMADA YOSHITOYO	ANSEI

FOR THOSE WHO COULD NOT AFFORD TO HAVE THEIR BLADE TESTED BY THE ABOVEMENTIONED EXECUTIONERS, THE COMMONLY PRACTISED METHOD FOR TESTING WAS TO USE AN EMPTY RICE BAG, MADE OF STRAW, AND FILLED WITH THIN BAMBOOS ABOUT THE SIZE OF A MAN'S THUMB, SECURED TIGHTLY WITH CORD, AND THEN WETTED DOWN. THIS IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN THE NEAREST THING COMPARABLE TO A MAN'S MID-SECTION. IN TESTING THE BLADE ON THIS MAKIWARU OR THE BAMBOO FILLED STRAW BAG, ONE MUST BE EXCEPTIONALLY APT IN HIS SWORDSMANSHIP, SINCE IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CUT THIS DOWN. WHEN A NOVICE TRIES IT, HE INVARIABLY CUTS SMALL PORTIONS OF THE STRAW, AND IN DOING HE EITHER WILL BEND THE BLADE OR BREAK IT IN TWO.

UP UNTIL AROUND THE 1680's, EVEN THOUGH THE TOKUGAWA WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE BROUGHT PEACE TO THE TINY ISLAND EMPIRE, THERE STILL PERSISTED AMONG THE SAMURAI CLASS WHAT IS KNOWN AS TSUJI-KIRI (TSUJI MEANING STREET CORNER AND KIRI MEANING CUT OR KILL) DONE LATE AT NIGHT. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE TSUJI KIRI WAS TO TEST THEIR BLADES. DURING THE PRE-TOKUGAWA PERIOD WHEN WARFARE WAS PLENTIFUL AND A SAMURAI COULD ALWAYS COUNT ON COMBAT FOR THE TESTING OF HIS BLADE, IT WAS NOT NECESSARY FOR HIM TO HAVE OTHERS DO IT FOR HIM; HOWEVER, ONCE THE TOKUGAWA TOOK THE DICTATORSHIP AND STARTED RULING WITH AN IRON HAND THIS NO LONGER WAS POSSIBLE, SO THAT UP UNTIL ABOUT THE GENROKU PERIOD, TSUJI-KIRI WAS QUITE COMMON. IT WAS BETTER FOR THE SAMURAI TO KNOW HOW THE BLADE CUT BY TESTING IT HIMSELF, RATHER THAN HAVE SOMEONE ELSE DO IT FOR HIM AND TAKE HIS WORD FOR IT. GOD HELP LATE STROLLERS OUT FOR A WALK. IT IS RELATED THAT THE THIRD SHOGUN IYEMITSU, WHO WAS EXTREMELY FOND OF EVERY KIND OF ART OF SELF-DEFENCE OR OF DESTRUCTION, PARTICIPATED IN THIS GRUESOME SPORT OF TSUJI-KIRI. BEING A SHOGUN, ONE CAN IMAGINE THE NUMBER OF SUBJECTS WHICH WERE OFFERED FOR HIS BLADES.

IN THE RECORDS OF BLADE-TESTING, THERE ARE OMISSIONS OF KOTO; THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED, SINCE KOTO WERE VERY HIGHLY TREASURED. AND IN LOOKING THROUGH THE LIST IT IS NOTICEABLE THAT THE BLADES MENTIONED ARE PRACTICALLY ALL SHINTO. WHEN THEY ARE KOTO, THEY ARE USUALLY LATER KOTO.

GASSAN SADAKATSU DAITŌ

oshigata by Dr. Keith Evans

Form: Made in KOGARASU MARU ZUKURI

Length: 68.5cm

Nakago length: 20.5cm

Width: 1.9cm

Nakago sori: 0.2cm

Thickness: 0.7cm

Sori: 2cm

The nakago is ubu (tang in original form). The mune of the blade is maru (rounded form) as shown on the oshigata.

Signature: (omote mei) - Nengo Showa 18, A lucky day in August of 1943. Respectfully made by Gassan Sadakatsu - kao.

(ura mei) - Made to the order of Sugimura Michitaro, President of the Treasury, to be the Protector Sword of the Osaka Mint.

The hada is AYASUJI HADA (Gassan hada) with much ji-nie (surface nie).

The hamon is komidare of konie (small nie), running back and forth into the ayasuji hada.

The boshi is kaen (flame shape) with suguba kaeri (straight turn-back).

The sashi komi polish is the blades original polish.

Nakago yasurimei (file marks) are kessho suji kai (full dressed slanting left). There is one mekugi-ana (hole) and the nakago saki is kuri (chestnut shape nakago end).

The blade has superbly cut naginata hi (grooves) with auxiliary shinogi hi.

Remarks:

Gassan Sadakatsu was the son of Gassan Sadakazu, the most famous smith of Meiji Period. Upon Sadakazu's death in 1918, Sadakatsu became the Premier smith of Japan, Swordsmith to the Emperor Hirohito.

The JSS/US Library contains an interesting brochure, written in the 1930's and offering swords made by Sadakatsu in either Bizen or Soshu style.

Sadakatsu cont'd.

Sadakatsu continued the distinctive "Gassan hada" and superb horimono techniques and also passed these on to his students, the most famous of whom was Takahashi Sadatsugu of Shinkaku Island, the first modern smith to be named Living National Treasure.

Sadakatsu died in 1945 and his son, Gassan Sadakazu, himself a Living National Treasure, continues the superb workmanship of the Osaka Gassan School.

A mate to this sword is pictured in the Osaka Taikan. Dated in the same year and of identical design, it must have been one of several made for the same order. It is usual for the best sword of several made at the same time to be delivered and the others either sold or destroyed, depending on their quality.

This made-to-order Gassan Sadakatsu daitō was liberated from a Tulsa, Oklahoma gun shop in 1961!

Editors note:

The brochure which Keith refers to in the society library is from the "Nippon Toh of T. Nagahara & Co., for the Society for distributing Gwassan's sword."

In this brochure, it advertises that one could order a sword made by Gassan Sadakatsu with delivery three months after ordering. The sword was mounted and the mounts could be in either "warrior style" or "court style". The blade had horimono put on it. The order would include uchiko, oil, etc., plus a sword bag, storage box, sword stand...all of excellent quality. Charges in full for your own personal sword? ¥2,000 or about \$1,000US! The date of this brochure is not known.

NIPPON TOH (Japanese Sword)

made by Mr. Gwassan Sadakatsu, the world-famous swordsmith in Japan.

1. **Means of Temper:** Ayasugi Secret or Masamune Secret according to client's taste.
2. **Length:** About 2 shaku 3 sun (Approximately 70 centimeters)
Finest quality and beautiful decoration with scabbard, pedestal, and other accessories.
3. **Delivery:** Within three months from the date of our acceptance and we have no stock, all swords being to order.
4. **Total cost:** Yen 2,000.00 (Two thousand Yen about £ 200-0-0 or \$ 1,000.00) per piece of one kind as per the photograph on the reverse side of American or European ports.

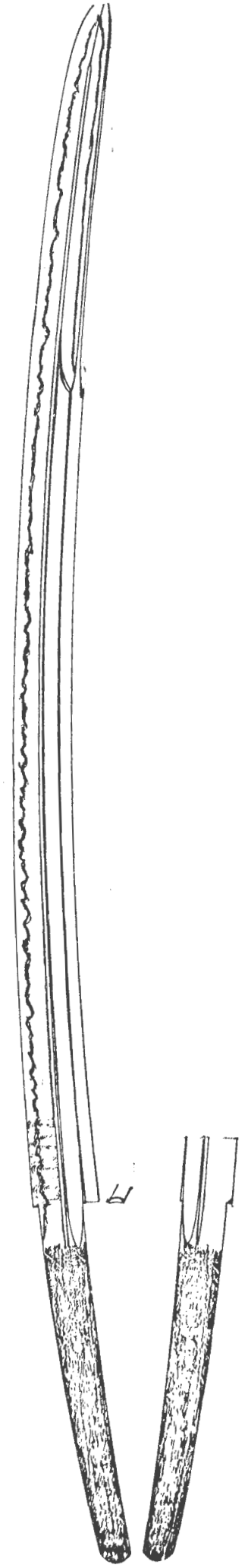
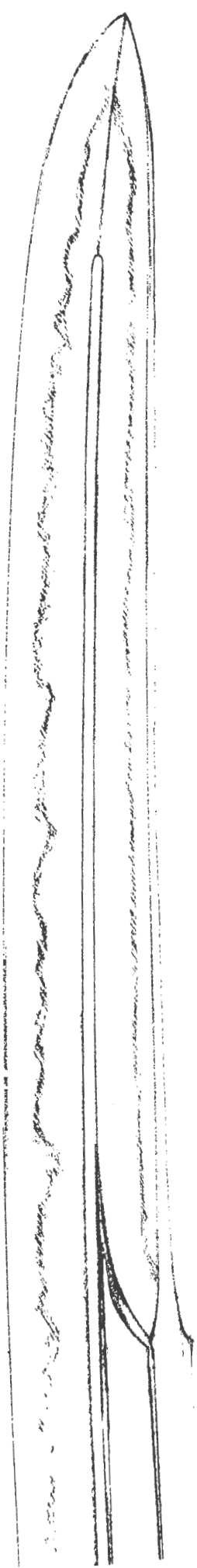
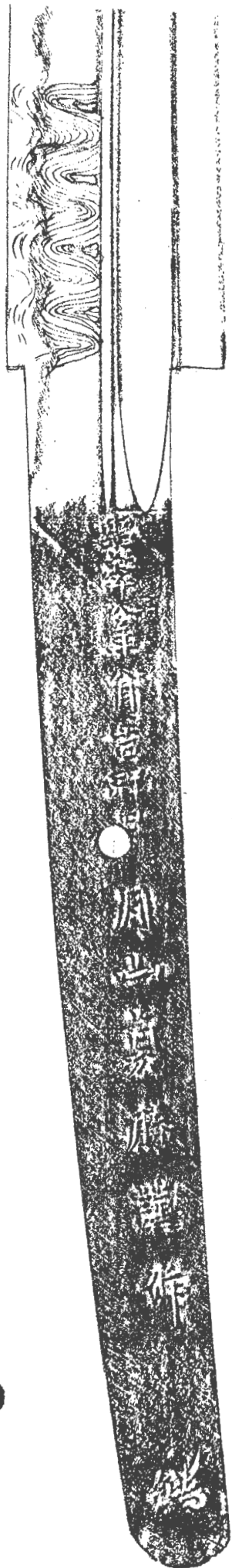
For further particulars please apply to

T. NAGAHARA & CO.,

For the Society for Distributing Gwassan's Sword.

11, Kitahama, 5-chome, Higashi-ku,
OSAKA, JAPAN.

CABLE ADDRESS
"SOONERBEST"
OSAKA
ALL CODES USED



SESHUTSU YOSHINAGA

oshigata by
Andrew Quirt

Katana signed: SESHUTSU
JU YOSHINAGA SAKU

Shinogi-zukuri form (with
ridge line), high shinogi
(raised ridge line), hira-
niku (well rounded "meaty"
blade), ihori-mune (two
sided mune), naka-zori
(medium curve), a short
chu-kissaki (point).

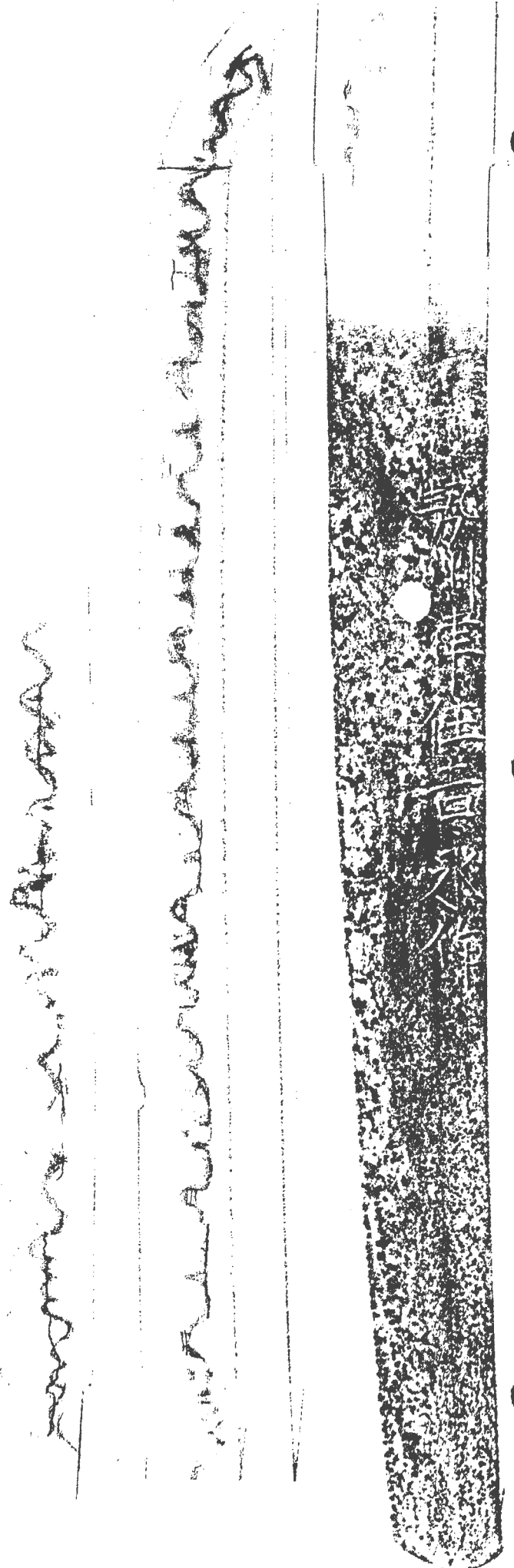
Blade length: 69.4cm

Steel is a tight itame
hada (wood grained) with
ji-nie (surface nie) and
chikei.

The hamon is a wide gunome-
midare with some choji,
ashi, yo, profuse ha-nie,
sunagashi and kinsuji (both
long and short.)

Comments: Yoshinaga
lived 53 years, 1832
- 1885. He was a
member of the Gwasan
Sadayoshi school, as
was the better known
Gwasan Sadakazu. His
first signature was
KAGEMUNE.

Although the books do
not rate this man very
highly, if this blade
is any indication of
the quality of his work
then he is very under-
rated and is worthy of
more recognition.



STOLEN SWORDS -

The following article was sent in to the Newsletter by Mr. Richard Hayashi, society Director, as a report on what has been done to counteract the sword theft trend of late. The article is a report from the Hokubei Mainichi Newspaper of San Francisco.

NEW YORK (Yomiuri Shim-bun) — The Japanese police and New York City police are conducting a joint investigation into the theft of over 100 precious objects of Japanese art stolen in New York and then smuggled back to Japan for sale.

According to New York police, a group of men one night in early March burglarized the house of Bumpei Usui, 77, a Japanese-American businessman in New York, and a well-known art collector, and stole 65 Japanese swords worth several hundred million yen.

This was the second robbery for Usui, who also had seven Japanese swords worth Y20 million stolen from him last year.

New York police have also learned that more than 100 ancient Japanese art works have been stolen from a museum and art dealers in New York recently.

The police suspect that these art works have been stolen by a gang that specializes in such thefts and sells the works to art lovers.

Through their liaison with Japanese police, it was recently learned that some of the stolen swords were sold to a dealer in the Kanto district (in Japan) in early April.

New York City Police then officially asked, through the Japanese Embassy in the US and the Foreign Ministry, for the National Police Agency and the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to investigate the crime.

Japanese police complied with the request and formed a team of detectives to specialize in this case.

Japanese police believe that one or more Japanese experts on art must have served as accomplices because most of the stolen works had very high artistic value.

They also suspect that there is a ring of Japanese buyers for the stolen art objects seeking to cash in on the boom in ancient art these past few years.

The US and Japanese investigation authorities have begun surveillance at the customs houses in New York and at Haneda and Osaka airports.

A number of the society members have been approached by the FBI and asked to "be on the lookout" for these and other stolen swords. There has been some talk about setting up a society "hot line" on any suspected tips, but no more has been heard about this idea. From the looks of things, the authorities have the situation well in hand. Apparently the "word is out" and lets hope that this will be enough to stop the fad of stealing art objects for quick cash!

Word has reached the Newsletter that the Baltimore sword show was "watched" and that due to the close checking by the Japanese Police in Japan, many buyers were very careful with what sword they purchased during the show. As the above article says, it is an international effort....lets hope it works.

A REMINDER ABOUT AVAILABLE BOOKS -

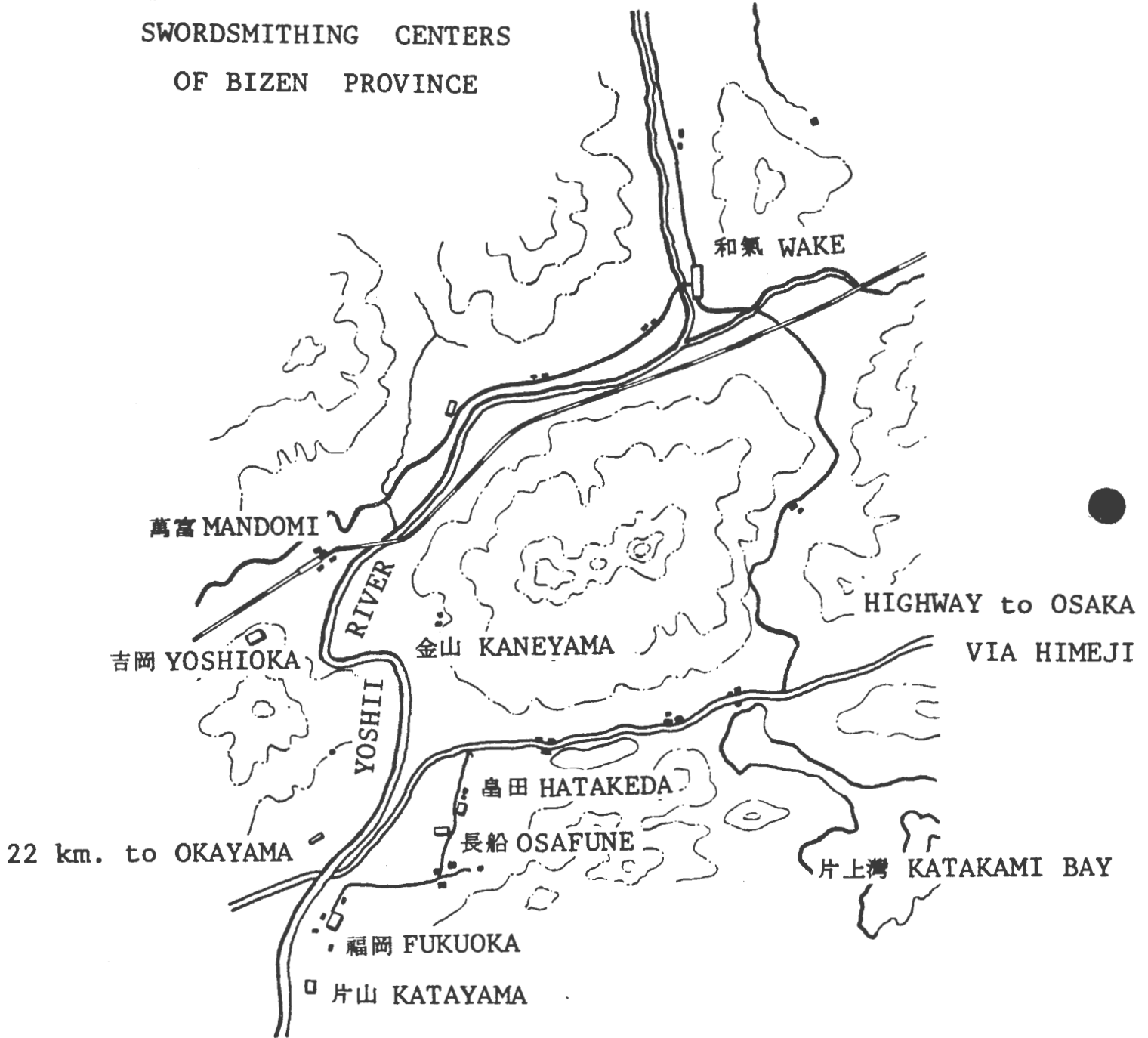
The Peabody Museum catalogue, "Japan, Day by Day" has sold rather well and a new supply has been ordered. Description of this book was in the last Newsletter. It can still be ordered from the society (Newsletter Editor) for \$8.00 post paid.

John Yumoto has advised us that the book, "Tōsō Soran", by Dr. Kazutaro Torigoye (and in english!) will definitely be ready about the end of June. Those who sent John a SASE will receive particulars at that time. Anyone who may have overlooked this offer should see page 19 of the last Newsletter. Send John a SASE marked "Mr.T's book" and he will advise you of price and availability as soon as these details are firm.

REFER TO THE 1977/1978 BULLETIN -

This map was received too late to include in the article on Shinto Bizen Osafune smiths which was presented in the annual Bulletin. Perhaps the map will be of interest since some of these villages were discussed in that article. (Map from John Yumoto)

**SWORDSMITHING CENTERS
OF BIZEN PROVINCE**



FOR SALE/WANTED/TRADES -

A free advertising column for members in need of locating specific items (motif, etc.) or who have limited items for sale.

- WANTED - Tsuba Geijutsu by Dr. Kazutaro Torigoye; Token Kino Meisakushu. Contact: Ruth Schneidman,
- WANTED - Iron tachi or Handashi fittings, odd pieces or sets. Prefer plain iron with no inlay but will take any. Will pay cash. Contact: John A. Frost,
- WANTED - Fine mounted tantō, cash or trade. Contact: Alfred J. Cohn,
- WANTED - Fittings with Fukurokuju theme. Good condition only. Also mumei katana. Contact: Don Hill
- WANTED - Wakizashi tsuba, dragon-fly motif, silver on iron or iron sukashi. Send photo to: Robert Masamori
- WANTED - Blades by gendai smith KANENAGA (Teruyama Fujiwara Kanenaga). Worked in Sagami and other provinces. Mei usually has statement "motte Taisabi-ko". Write: Gordon Bailey
- WANTED - Blades by Dohi Shinryo (SH-474). Contact: Bob Luchini,
- WANTED - Mempo and tsuba. Will trade. Contact: Allen Feldman,
- WANTED - Mokume (grained) tsuba. Contact: Bill Miller, 2094
- WANTED - Hizen Iyojo Munetsugu daitō; 2nd or 3rd generation Osaha Yoshimichi daitō. Write:
- FOR SALE - Kiya Oshigata. Contact: Blix Winston (above).
- FOR TRADE - 1st rate Kaga (inlay) tsuba. JoJo saku papers. Will trade for 1st rate yari, naginata (in polish) or set of Shinto/Shinshinto Taikan. Contact:
- WANTED - Tsuka, habaki, kodzuka, Kogai and also Showa blades. Send price/info to: R. Mangrum,

MEITŌ ZUKAN -

The new Fujishiro publication, Meitō Zukan, showing celebrated blades with english explanation of what it is, has been mailed (first quarterly issue of 10 oshigata). Mr. Fujishira has sent more sample pages for our use so anyone wishing a sample should contact the Newsletter. Details on price also accompanies the sample sheet.

PRESSURE SENSATIVE OSHIGATA PAPER -

A reminder that we do have ample supply of the special pressure sensitive paper (without chart grid) which makes such excellent oshigata. Order direct from the Newsletter. Price is \$6.00 per roll or \$16.00/three roll orders. Foreign members wishing air mail delivery should add \$1 to their order. U.S. funds only please.

SWORD OIL SUPPLY -

Our supply of 100cc bottles of sword oil has temporarily been depleted. Please hold off on future orders until a new supply is announced in the Newsletter.

1978 SOCIETY BULLETIN -

This years annual Bulletin (called 1977/1978 issue) has been mailed to all members. Anyone not receiving their issue within two weeks should write and a new copy will be sent. It should be noted that foreign copies were sent via 1st class, so please allow four to six weeks delivery on these.

FUTURE PUBLICATIONS MATERIAL -

In a letter from John Yumoto recently, he once again mentioned his willingness to serve us via articles, questions answered and discussed, etc. It seems that few people take advantage of this teaching opportunity in that John says he received few if any such inquiries. May I suggest that we take John up on his kind offer, and at least make some suggestions for articles to be presented in our papers. The society publications are always crying for fresh material and this is our chance to benefit from a true expert of both swords and fittings, and to gather material for our papers. Very often we all become caught up in the race to find as many nice swords as fast as possible and perhaps make a buck too. Let us all stop and think once that we must have "learning" too if we are to appreciate and understand what we are collecting. Write John and make some suggestions as to topics which would make good articles. John will certainly appreciate your interest and we will all benefit from your inquiry.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE -

The next Newsletter will come out around the 1st of August. Please have all material intended for that issue into the Editor at least a week ahead of that time.

RON HARTMANN