

Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

Volume 11 No. 1

January - February . 1979

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

TO: JSS/US Membership

FROM: Clarence Siman - Nominating
Committee

Dear Fellow Society Members -

We are pleased to announce the following slate of Officers for the two year term of office 1979-1980. Some of these people bring with them the experience of serving before, while the others bring with them ideas that come with the new. From the six offices we have three previous Officers and three new faces to carry us forth in our endeavors. We hope that you agree with the slate and will make use of these people, as well as your Directors, in making the Society thrust forward in the next two years.

CHAIRMAN.....Dr. Robert M. Lewert
EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN...Dr. Peter Bleed
1ST VICE CHAIRMAN.....John Tischmann
2ND VICE CHAIRMAN.....A. Z. Freeman
SECRETARY.....William Miller
TREASURER.....Ron Hartmann

It should be noted that we received many requests, and word was forwarded to, Dr. Lewert to remain as our Chairman for the forthcoming term, Because of his hard work in directing us towards the shinsa, and many felt that he should have the honor of representing us when we meet with the Japanese, and we in turn would be so honored to have him as our representative and Chief Officer. Dr. Lewert graciously accepted this proposal much to the benefit of all of us and for this we thank him.

(Signed) Clarence Siman

Many thanks to the retiring Officers, Dr. Keith Evans, Ted Wysocky and Richard Mantegani. Special thanks to Rick who has held the office of Secretary since 1975.

No formal "voting" is necessary since the election was by acclamation.



TREASURER'S REPORT -

Cash on hand 1/1/78 \$2,565.22

Income:	Dues	\$3,225.00	
	Supplies Sales	2,391.16	
	Interest (savings acct.)	115.13	
	Total Income	\$5,731.29	\$8,296.51

Expenditures:

Clerical	\$ 477.57	
Secretary	60.00	
Librarian	10.00	
Postage (general)	352.00	
Supplies (for resale)	1,465.31	
Newsletter (gross)	1,424.24	
Bulletin 1977/78 (gross)	783.04	
Dr. Sato memorial gift	86.00	
Token Taikai '79	889.79	
Total Expenditures	\$5,547.95	\$2,748.56

Cash on hand 12/31/78 \$2,748.56

Respectfully submitted,


JSS/US Treasurer

Several of the above items should be expanded briefly in order to give a more clear picture of our report.

The cash on hand at the end of 1978 breaks down to \$359.31 in checking and \$2,389.25 in our savings (daily interest) account.

Since the Newsletter Vol.10 No.6 was late the \$368.67 postage and printing is entered in 1979 and is not reflected in this report. Adding in this amount plus all other general operating expenditures, our per member expenses still fall within the \$10 dues charged, allowing us to continue with our nominal dues fee presently being charged. The additional \$4 dues charged non-U.S./Canada members for air postage greatly assists us in keeping our dues at a minimum.

Expenditures for Token Taikai '79 include the initial \$500 start-up capital (matched by the Token Study Group) which was transferred to the TTK'79 account. The balance of this expenditure is for the mailings and postage of the TTK'79 Newsletter. All of these figures will be reimbursed to us after the TTK'79 is over.

The selling of supplies continues to be popular and although profits are low, the service does assist our treasury. Our biggest profit item is book sales. On other supplies we charge about 8% over cost. This service is carried as a benefit to membership.

SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCES ON THE STUDY OF SWORDS IN MUSEUM AND LIBRARY STORAGE

by Mr. A. Z. Freeman

When you have a small collection of swords, like mine, and the nearest other collector is more than fifty miles away, you cannot expect to see many swords in the course of a week. So it would seem, but seeming can be deceptive, for large collections might be yours--to see--for the asking. If you do as I have done you can see dozens of swords, sometimes with time to study them at leisure.

Several years ago the thought came to me that the MacArthur Memorial Museum in nearby Norfolk, Virginia, must have Japanese swords. I drove there and did in fact find some swords displayed in glass cases. But they lay hidden in their scabbards. A bit put out at not being able to see the blades, I stopped by the director's office and he, a delightful man, received my polite complaint with a question: "Would you like to do something about the situation?" While few museum directors are likely to be as helpful as this one, my first experience started me off museum-hopping. I recommend it to all sword collectors who are presentable, polite, and are willing to write letters.

At Norfolk, by the way, I found myself going over forty swords, cataloguing them, and re-arranging the display cases the better to show off the more interesting blades there. Apart from the swords I had the chance to study, I formed friendships giving great satisfaction.

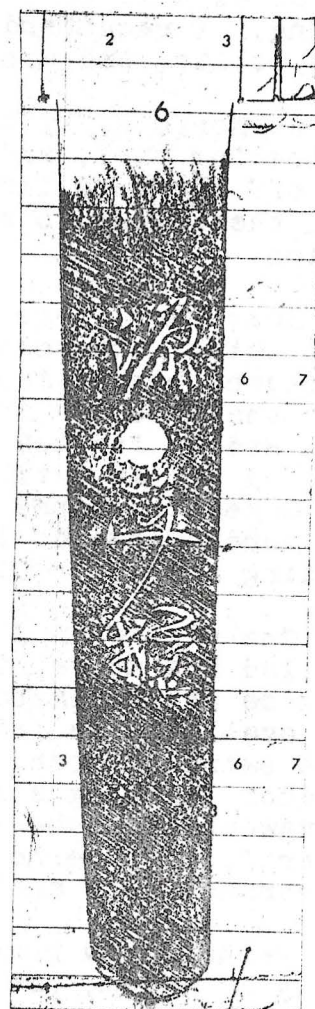
Some very large museums might be difficult nuts to crack, you might think, and some are, no doubt. But when I wanted to see some Nambokucho blades from Bizen at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts I wrote there to ask if I could. In fact, Morohiro Ogawa was working there and he invited me down from my summer home in Maine to see some. I sat at a table and inspected a lovely Kagemitsu and two by O-Ganemitsu, once Ogawa had determined that I was sword-worthy. Many hundred swords lie there, off Huntington Avenue in Boston, awaiting the admiration of the enterprising collector.

One time when I was attending an historical convention in Chicago I called the appropriate curator at the Field Museum to arrange to see some of the tsuba there. There was not much time, but in the time available he led me through a display case that disguised a great swinging door; we found ourselves in the cast-iron stacks, the door swinging silently shut behind us. There I looked at dozens of drawers of tsuba--before they had been cleaned by an unknowing "expert". I have no doubt that another call or letter would gain me entrance once again.

Perhaps you have the catalogue of the tsuba in the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. A couple of years ago, before the catalogue appeared, I wrote there for an appointment to see their

swords, of which I had heard. Permission granted. When I arrived I found a typical situation: the collection was mostly in storage, no detailed catalogue existed, and the curator was willing cooperative, and quite hazy about tsuba and samurai swords. We passed through the labyrinth--all museums are labyrinthine--and came to rest before cases containing the few swords owned by the Peabody Museum. Again, the curator was willing to let me examine the swords, and again he wanted information about them. Another worthwhile afternoon.

Bowdoin College, in Brunswick, Maine, has on its lovely elm-shaded campus the Walker Art Museum, and in that choice little museum you will find a few swords, some fine tsuba, and, incidentally, a number of beautiful pieces of Chinese and Korean porcelain. Again, the director had no satisfactory catalogue, so I found a table with good light, placed my uchiko and hammer to hand, set up a few reference books, and began a delightful few sessions. Here is a nakago-oshigata of one item there; is it genuine? Either way--and I think it is--I had the chance to study it and its fellows at leisure. (See Yamura Masao oshigata below)



Yamaura Masao c.1857
Tanto 10" Hirazukuri

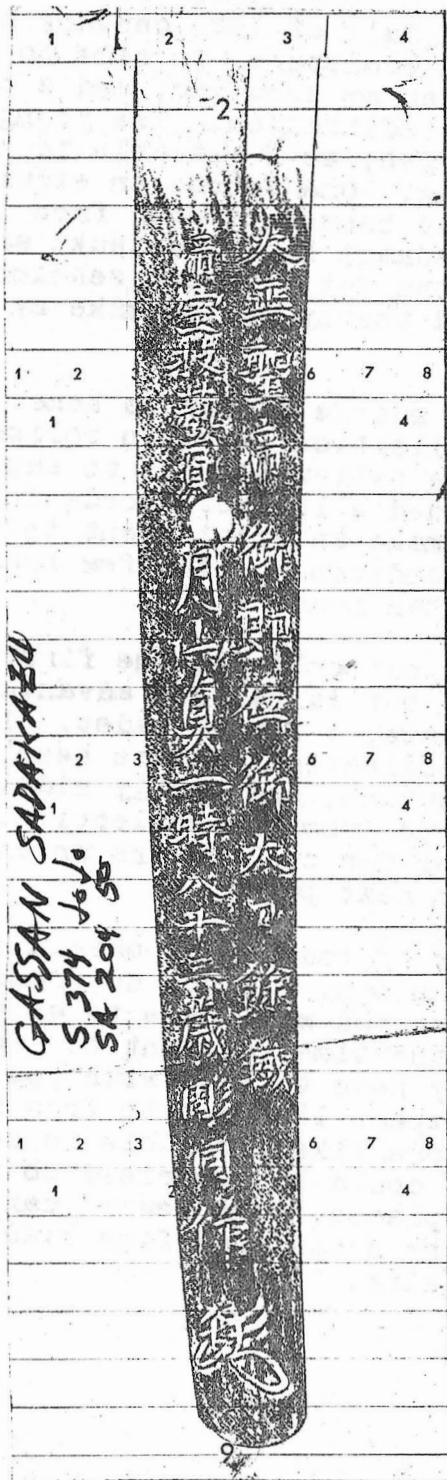
This past summer duty called me to England, to Cambridge University. Never to let an opportunity slip by I wrote the director of the Fitzwilliam Museum there for permission to view the few swords I had discovered to be in the collection. Crusty at the upper reaches, officialdom seems to grow more human down the line. The two men at the sword-viewing level proved entirely cooperative. Again, I threaded through reaches of the museum forbidden to those who fail to ask, past great cases full of 18th century porcelain, Venetian glass, and ghastly small sculpture, to come to rest at a comfortable table, north light over my shoulder, and a cart filled with twenty swords waiting for my admiration. The young keeper lacked information about his charges, so I was able to help out on that score as I enjoyed my morning. One sword, an exquisite small Ei-Roku wakizashi by Sukesada, had been separated from its koshirae, living in a shira saya while a tsunagi kept its tsuka and saya together. I was able to re-unite the set. In two sessions there I was all the items of interest and thereby helped make my visit to Cambridge wholly satisfactory.

In early autumn I visited a museum closer to home. The Smithsonian Institution has a good collection, most in polish, and it has one of our most knowledgeable fellow-members to supervise them. George Phebus has already published a list of swords in his care with the cautious invitation to make an appointment to see them. I did, and George came through handsomely. The few hours available were hardly enough, but better than none.

Most recently, I visited my old college, the first visit in ten years. The VMI Museum is small, but it has the advantage of a tireless director and her associate, a former cadet. The VMI swords are, like those in most collections I have seen, a mixed bag --some clunkers, a couple of beauties, and mostly middle-grade. Here is an oshigata from one sword from the collection. Doesn't it stimulate you to start looking for collections around home? (See Cassan Sadakazu oshigata on next page)

I have given you the flavor of some of my museum experiences--you might be moved to try on your own. If you do, remember that most museums are under-manned, so you will have to write for an appointment well in advance of the time you want to visit. Some responsible person will probably have to stay with you while you study the swords, after all. Expect little help from a catalogue or museum personnel--you will more likely be able to help them in describing what they have. You could be surprised to find good swords in small out-of-the-way places. The reward can be great, for you will be able to study the occasional fine blade and kodogu at your leisure, so be enterprising.

Gassan Sadakazu oshigata



FUJIWARA YUKINAGA KATANA
oshigata by Wes Walker

TYPE & SHAPE- Katana of shinogi-zukuri
form. Shinto period (1658).

HAMON- Suguha.

JIHADA- Itame-masame.

BOSHI- No turn back.

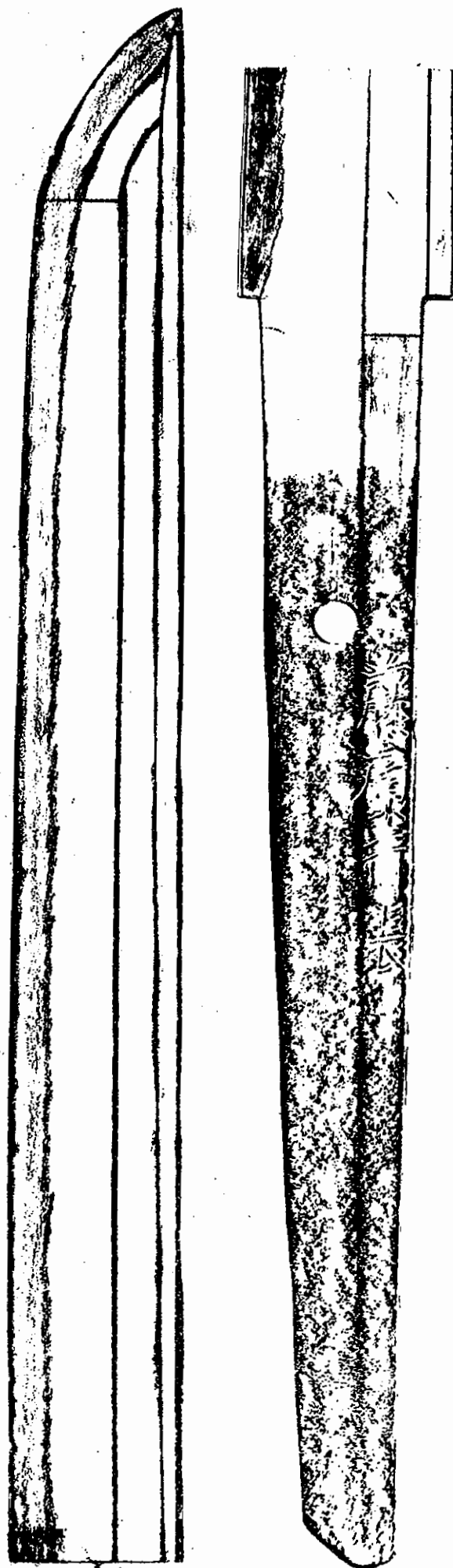
NAKAGO- Ubu. Tang is in original shape.
File marks are yokoyasuri.
(horizontal) Signed FUJIWARA
YUKINAGA.

LENGTH- 75.2 cm

SCHOOL- Bungo Takata. This smith rated
Chu (no) Jo Saku is considered
one of the best of his school.

SHARPNESS- Yukinaga's blades were judged
by Yamada Asauemon Yoshimutsu
(Yamada was a famous swordtester)
to be yoki wazamono (sharp).

REMARKS- Bungo Takata blades have a good
reputation for holding up well
in combat. They were very sought
after in times of war. Even as
late as WW1 Japanese army officers
preferred to carry Takata blades
whenever they could obtain them.



BUY-SELL-TRADE COLUMN -

This column is offered to the membership, free, as a place to advertise for specific needs. Ads should be kept brief. Send ads to NL Editor.

- WANTED: Information on swordsmiths MAGOROKU (Hawley MA2a,b) and KANEFUSA (Kall27). Contact: Ron Buckles,
- WANTED: Fuchi-Kashira boxes, new or used. Need several. Contact: Phil Davis
- WANTED: Copy of "Nippontō, Art Swords of Japan - The Walter A. Compton Collection". Must be in good condition. Send price to: Robert Masamori
- WANTED: Complete koshirae with or w/o tsunaki. Condition is important. Contact: Newsletter Editor.

INFORMATION REQUESTED -

Robert Masamori has come across a rather interesting small tantō and is looking for available information on the smith. The mei is "MITSUKANE" and is very difficult to see. An oshigata is at right. The blade is mounted in formal black lacquer aikuchi style with quality same. Nagasa of 5.94" (4.9 sun). Hirazukuri form. Either takeno or uchi-sori w/ furisode nakago. Ubu. Ihori-mune. Ko-mokume or ko-itame hada and a narrow suguha hamon w/ko-midare mixed in. Bob is looking if any oshigata references on MITSUKANE, specifically RAI MITSUKANE, the man he thinks this might be. Send your reply to Robert Masamori

PROPOSED ENGLISH EDITION OF "TOKEN BIJUTSU"

The NBTHK recently mailed a questionnaire (to all members?) requesting the interest of collectors in subscribing to an english version of their society publication, "Token Bijutsu". This edition would be issued four times annually, would be selected articles from their monthly edition, and would cost ¥10,000 a year (\$50US /-). Anyone not receiving this questionnaire can do so by contacting the Japanese Sword Museum (NBTHK), 4-25 Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan, Attention: Mr. Morihiro Ogawa. This publication will be a great assist to all of us unable to read Japanese. The amount of interest shown may also open up the way for easy shinsa services from NBTHK in the future.

SWORDSMITH

YAMASHIRO PROVINCE

RAI SCHOOL 来一門

Reprinted from "Nihonto
Newsletter", Sept. 1968
A. Yamanaka

Reprinted with permission

RAI KUNITOSHI 来 国 俊

worked in Yamashiro Tradition

ca. Shoo Era 1288 - 1293

正 応

Tachi

- Shape: of the earlu Kamakura Period in Torii Zori with the Sori made a little shallow. The width of the blade, the Shinogi and the Kissaki are all made Koroai, that is 'about right' for the size.
- Carvings: are usually very rare, however Bo Hi and Futasuji Hi are seen on occassion.
- Hamon: the width of the Yakiba is made narrow and in Nie, the pattern is in Suguha Hotsure with Kochoji Midare and Komidare mixed. The Nie and th e Nioi, clustering together forming Ashi, are found all along the blade. Inazuma and Kinsuji are common and Nijuba is also found at times.
- Boshi: Komaru with slight Kaeri, Yakizume or Kaen resulting from Nie Kuzure.
- Jitetsu: is very fine in Ko Mokume Hada with Masame Hada mixed in.
- There are Ji Nie which result in Chikei in places.

***** Niji KUNITOSHI's Hada does not have Masame, whereas

Rai KUNITOSHI's works do. *****

RAI KUNITOSHI 来 国 俊

Tanto

Rai KUNITOSHI is regarded as one of the masters of making Tanto and there are great numbers of KUNITOSHI's works remaining today.

The balance of the Tanto is very well done, that is the width of the Yakiba, the Shinogi and the width of the blade are all made "Koroai", that is in proportion

to the size of the blade.

This proportion is also included in the Hada, that is the Hada is made to balance with the blade.

Shape: is made in Josun and in Hiratsukuri Takenoko Zori.

There will be Hiraniku. The Mune is made in Gyo or in Shin no Mune.

Carvings: Typical Yamashiro style carving of Suken on the Omote and Gomabashi on the Ura. On occasion carvings made inside the Hi will be found.

Hamon: The width of the Hamon is made narrow in Chu Suguha Hotsure with Komidare mixed in and there will be an abundance of Nie all along the length of the blade. Midare will be seen on some Tanto.

Boshi: usually in Komaru with slight Kaeri.

Jitetsu: Very finely worked steel results in Ko Mokume Hada with a lot of Ji Nie, and Chikei in places.

Nakago: is made long. Some will be in Furisode.

There will be Niku and the tip is made in Kurijiri.

The file marks will be in Kiri and the signature is signed or inscribed in three characters near the Mekugi Ana.

***** It should not be forgotten that the RAI blades always will have the RAI JITETSU showing. *****

RAI KUNIMITSU 来 国 光

worked in Yamashiro Tradition

and in Early Soshu Tradition

ca. Kagen Era 1303 - 1306

嘉元

Tachi

This smith is popularly regarded as one of the better of the Rai smiths.

There are great many of this swordsmith's works remaining and from these we see that there are distinct styles made during various phases of his life and they can be divided into three stages.

One: made in the Tachi style of the Mid Kamakura Period of the Yamashiro Tradition,
Torii Zori but with a Saki Zori emphasised a little.

The width of the blade is a little narrow, but will have Hiraniku.

Kasane is thick and the Kissaki is made small and short.

The Hamon is in Nie and in Suguha Choji Midare with Nie and Nioi Ashi.

Two: Tachi style of the Late Kamakura Period with the Sori made shallow.

Hiraniku will be lacking. The Kissaki will be made long. Kasane is made
" Koroai ".

The Hamon will be in Nie and in Chu Suguha Hotsure or Chu Suguha Hotsure
with Komidare and with Ashi. Nijuba also will be found and on occasions
Hiro Suguha with Komidare and the Nie in such case will have a "blotched"
effect in places.

Three: Tachi style of the Yoshino Period in Torii Zori with the Sori made shallow.

There will be Hiraniku and the Kasane will be thick and the Kissaki will
be made long.

The Hamon will be "Koroai" and in Nie in Midare or in Notare Midare and
the Nie will have a "blotched" effect in places.

There will be a Midare in the shape of Hako Midare around the Monouchi area.

Carvings: are made in Bo Hi or Futasuji Hi.

Boshi: are mostly made very deep and in Komaru with the Kaeri following the
line of the Komaru, though in certain works the Kaeri will be made
deep. Yakizume will be seen on some works.

Jitetsu: the steel is very well worked with the grain resulting in Ko Mokume Hada
and with Ohada showing in places.

An abundance of Ji Nie forms into Yubashiri in places and Chikei as
well.

In places, there will be steel which will appear as though it was
'over worked' and there will not be life in the steel in these areas.

*** This is not to be confused with the Rai Jitetsu or the Shingane ***

In these areas the Ko Mokume Hada will look drab.

Nakago: The inscriptions are usually carved small on Tachi.

RAI KUNIMITSU 来 国 光

Tanto

There are a great many different styles of Tanto made by KUNIMITSU.

One: Josun in Hiratsukuri and in Takenoko Zori. Hamon in Chu Suguha with Ko Nie, the steel is a beautiful Ko Mokume Hada.

Two: Hiratsukuri Chukan Zori with Katana Hi or Suken and Gomabashi or Bonji carvings. Hamon will be in Nie and in Chu Suguha Hotsure or Chu Suguha with Midare or in O Midare in which case the Nie will be very 'rough'. There will be Ashi from the Nioi and the workings from the Nie leaves a great deal to be enjoyed.

Three: Made in Hiratsukuri Sakizori with the length being made a little longer than the above two mentioned, though the workings of the blade itself are about the same as the above two.

Four: Hiratsukuri Sunnobi, the Tanto shape of the Yoshino Period. The Hamon will be made in Chu Suguha Hotsure, the Bashi will be made in Komaru. The steel is made exceptionally fine and they will be in Ko Mokume Hada.

Five: will be those made in Shobu Tsukuri as well as in Unokubi Tsukuri.

The Nakago of some of these works will be made in Tanago Bara style whereas others will be made long with the tip made broad or in Furisode.

The inscriptions are made in three characters around the Mekugi Ana area and some will be inscribed with dates.

SPECIAL ITEMS THIS ISSUE -

An up-dated Membership Roster is attached to this issue of the NL and reflects our evergrowing membership. To date we have over 350 members and a number of new international members.

An up-dated Supplies List is also enclosed. The prices have gone up thanks to the dollar/yen ratio. Important: Because of back surgery and following recuperation, no supply orders will be filled until around mid March since I will be out of commission until that time.

Our society Librarian, Howard Sloan, has made up an up-dated Library Booklist and this too is enclosed. Remember that books are available for your use on the condition that the borrower pays the postage and insurance costs. Send all book requests direct to Howard.

TOKEN STUDY GROUP ANNUAL SHOW -

To allow for vacation scheduling it is mentioned at this early date that the annual TSG show will again be held at the Ramada-O'Hare in Des Plaines the weekend of October 5th, 6th and 7th, this fall.

TOKEN TAIKAI '79 -

The second mailing "Newsletter No.2" containing up-to-date info on our May event has been mailed out. Anyone not having received this mailing should contact the JSS NL Editor immediately. Response to TTK'79 is picking up and the Committee wishes to thank all of those who have been thoughtful enough to send in advance registration and shinsa estimates.

One area needs mentioning here perhaps...as a reminder... The Meibutsu Room Committee intend to set up this exhibit as a good representative display of the finest items selected from all the membership's collections. Since a catalogue is to be prepared in advance of the event, naturally time is hurting and any items which are felt to be of high quality, authenticated, in good polish, and appropriate for this exhibit should be offered to the Committee now without further delay. A good oshigata (or photograph) with all key measurements and descriptive data must be in hand quickly if the item is to be included in the catalogue. The Committee is trying to see that the exhibit is 1st rate and that the catalogue is equally 1st rate and saleable. To assure this they need your cooperation and prompt "today" supplying of information. Obviously not all items submitted will be used but the Committee needs enough items so that they can be selective. Speaking as one who knows, it is a warm (and somewhat ego building) experience to have your "pride and joy" exhibited in this type of highly selective display...an honor a fine item deserves!

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - The next issue is due out around the first week of April. Please have all information into the NL Editor no later than 3/24 so that the mailings can be put back on an early schedule. Mail all material to: Newsletter Editor:

All these items are offered to Western collectors. They will not be offered for export to Japan until 60 days after this advertisement appears.



If you are looking for specific items or for items of recognized schools or time periods, please send a detailed want list. Want lists will be satisfied before items are advertised.

A group of original JSSUS BULLETINS, consisting of the first five publications of the Society. Vol.1#1,2 Vol.2#1,2 Vol.3#1 These are the original and quite rare since the original Society consisted of five members. Total 189 pp. \$55.00

TSUBA WAX 3 1/2" tin of special tsuba wax. \$7.00/tin

THE ARTS OF THE JAPANESE SWORD by Mr. Charles Watrall. Catalogue of an exhibition of swords & fittings held at the Norman Mackenzie Gallery Regina Canada April, 1974. Litho. cover by J.R.Cowin 16 pp. 62 entries. 9 ill. Autographed \$5.50

ARMES JAPONAISES by R. Burawoy. Exhibition catalogue of Japanese armour, swords and fittings held at the Burawoy Gallery Paris, 1977 A beautiful book showing the best works in French collections Fr. Eng. Jap. 80 pp. 137 ill. 74 col. Soft cover ed. \$10.00
Available Mar. 1979. Hard cover Auto. Ltd. \$27.00

BOOK OF THE SWORD Hard cover Reprint is now being shipped. We have added 28 pp. of original oshigata from blades in Western collections This has increased the cost to \$15.00. Orders postmarked before Mar. 15, 1979 will be shipped at the old price. \$12.00

TOKEN TAIKAI is almost out. Ordered before Mar. 15 1979 \$6.00
After Mar. 15 If available \$10.00

JAPANESE SWORDS By Lyman Phil. 1892 Soft cover Reprint 38 pp. \$3.00

Very early KO-GOTO MENUKI Chinese Sages seated among flowers Black Shakudo with tiny golden dots. Magnificent menuki \$225.00

MINO MENUKI Very early Edo Period. Gold & Shakudo long eared rabbits among flowers. Very good open work. Exc. Con. \$135.00

KOZUKA KAGA-GOTO Early-Mid Edo. Cricket on smooth ground. Very well detailed (female). Flush inlay in two color Gold Excellent condition Quality work \$245.00

TONTO TSUBA Shakudo Moku shape with Boars-eyes. Spring flowers in Gold Silver & Shakudo on very fine Nanako. 6.1 X 5.6 cm. \$85.00

Wakashi Tametsugu Ko-Uda, O-Suriage Mume; Shinogi-Zukuri, Shin-no-mune, Torizori; Itami-Masame; Notare-Gunome with Sunagashi, Chikei, Kinsuji, Ashi; Bohi-ni-Tsurehi; 40.8 cm. long, 2.7 cm. wide, 0.5 cm. thick; Perfect polish, Shirasaya. An absolutely first class blade \$1750.00

YARI signed Shimosaka Tadachika, Hawley # TA3. 24 cm. Ubu Needs polish. Triangular shape, Flame groove \$225.00

All items are guaranteed to be as described with three day inspection allowed, postage paid to buyers. I will gladly accept trades. My interests are good Daito, Nagamaki, early (pre 1600) fittings, individual books or entire libraries on Japanese Swords.

Thomas B. Buttweiler
COLLECTOR OF FINE JAPANESE BLADES

If you have any good swords, fittings, or books that you wish sold in the Western market I would be happy to offer my services on a purchase or commission basis. Any transaction will be handled with the utmost discretion.

OF SWORDS OF SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC OR ARTISTIC MERIT
EARLY SOFT METAL TSUBAS AND MENUKI