

Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

Volume 12 No. 6

November-December • 1980

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1981-1982 TERM OF OFFICE

TO THE MEMBERSHIP -

At this past Token Study Group Show held in Milwaukee, the site of the annual JSS/US Director's meeting, I was appointed Chairman of the Nominations Committee for this forthcoming election. In this capacity, I sent a letter to the current Officers and Directors, outlining the need for dynamic, experienced people to lead the Society in future endeavors, because as our records reveal, the JSS/US has grown from some 75 members in 1974 to a current list of approximately 500 members. Obviously we are no longer just another collectors group.

Customarily, the Officers move up one slot with each election, so those serving may one day have the honor of becoming Chairman. Such is the case at this time, with the exception of the Secretary and Treasurer, which over the years have become the stabilizing force of the Society. Therefore, at this time, the Nominations Committee is presenting the below listed proposed slate for your consideration:

Chairman.....Dr. Peter Bleed, Ph.D. - Lincoln, NE
Executive Vice Chairman ..John Tischmann - Minneapolis, MN
First Vice Chairman.....Prof. A. Z. Freeman - Williamsburg, VA
Second Vice Chairman.....C. Neil Keen - St. Louis, MO
Secretary.....William (Bill) Miller - Decatur, GA
Treasurer.....Ron Hartmann - St. Louis, MO

Although the above is not binding on the membership and further nominations will be accepted, the Committee suggests that this slate be approved by acclamation for the following reason.....

The Official Bi-Monthly Publication of the Japanese Sword Society of the U.S./
Inc. Annual Membership \$15 U.S./Canada and \$20 Foreign.

ELECTION cont'd.

Per my letter to the JSS/US "Newsletter" (March-April 1980) four Officers were unnecessarily elected as Directors. To briefly reiterate, Officers have the same voting powers as Directors, plus the additional responsibilities of their respective offices, thus there is no need for them to also be elected as Directors.

Now then, there are four (4) Officers and one (1) Director on the above proposed slate; these four Officers (Bleed, Tischmann, Freeman and Miller) were elected as Directors in the March-April election, therefore should they, as well as the single Director, Keen, be elected this time as Officers, there will be five (5) openings on the Board of Directors. Admittedly this is a bit confusing, however it is the simplest way of putting our house in order.

Instead of asking for nominations to compete with the proposed slate, the Nominations Committee is asking that each of you interested in serving as a JSS/US Director submit your name and a brief outline of your qualifications directly to the Nominations Committee Chairman, Clarence Siman, whereupon these will then be forwarded to the Society Chairman who will examine them and pass them onto the Board with his recommendations for approval.

I would like to add that the Board of Directors, under their responsibilities as directed in the By-Laws MUST fill these openings. Hopefully many of you will want to take an active part in the Society, as there are many exciting projects that need to be explored for the future.

(signed) Clarence Siman
November 28th, 1980

* * * * *

ADDRESSES REQUESTED -

A number of the members have requested that we publish the addresses of the following:

Nippon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai (NBTHK)

English "Token Bijutsu" quarterly costs ¥10,000 plus ¥1,000 for new subscribers (members) or to receive both this quarterly and the monthly Japanese edition, total cost is ¥18,400 annually.

Fujishiro Matsuo

English "Meito Zukan" quarterly in depth sword study publication costs ¥6,000 annually.

The English "Token Bijutsu" quarterly and "Meito Zukan" are musts for any serious student of the sword. The cost of these publications is easily justified by the learning value of them!

NEW MEMBERS - An overwhelming list! Welcome to one and all.

Martin Roettger,
George Yang,
Peter S. Jordan,
Don Walsh,
Ross Mullner,
Peter Cheng,
Edward Nowak,
Clifford A. Moss,
Richard G. Schechner,
Craig S. Rowlen,
Richard Westfall,
Jim Baize,
Phillip Jacobs,
Charles R. Watrall,
James R. Nowakowsk,
Robert J. Milewski,
Robert V. Polansky,
Robert Main,
Raymond Brostowicz,
Toby E. Brief,
Jeffrey Roth,
Paul B. Gutenplan,
Paul A. Hilt,
Jack R. Aron,

W. Frederick Carreras,
Dusty Kline,
Stephen Whittemore,
Aram H. Sevagian,
William S. Williams, Jr.
Donald W. Iaxton,
John C. Hill,
Charles R. Wilson,
Terry P. Lang,
Robert E. Johnston,
John E. Bello,
John E. Thompson,
John S. Chilcutt,
Harry V. Combs,
Carl Bleile,
Toshiaki Takikawa,
Marvin Wolf,
David Linderholm,
James R. Podraya,
Gordon Thompson,
Robert D. Zormeiler,
Heinz Schilken,
Andy Caderas,
Larry F. Giordano,
Peter Newman,

JSS/US OFFICERS/DIRECTORS MEETING HELD -

A very hasty meeting was called on Sunday morning during the Milwaukee TSG show. The minutes of this meeting are as follows:

The meeting was called to order at 10 A.M., October 26, 1980. Peter Bleed, Executive Vice Chairman, chaired the meeting in the absence of our Chairman Robert Lewert. The meeting was attended by Peter Bleed, Ted Wysocky, A.Z. Freeman, Ron Hartmann, Neil Keen, and Bill Miller.

A general discussion followed as to the difficulty of getting the membership involved in projects, publications, educational programs, etc. From this discussion a motion was passed for the creation of a Publications Committee. The committee will consist of three persons plus the editor of the "Newsletter", to be chosen by the Board of Directors. Three projects that will be studied by this group will be a reprint of a publication on Higo kodogu, having the Albert Yamanaka "Nihonto Newsletter" reprinted again, and the printing of a paper on the proper handling of the sword.

The need to act on the upcoming election of Officers was brought up. Clarence Siman was selected to be asked to form a Nominating Committee to supervise our upcoming election of Officers.

There was also a discussion of the possibility of a sword show (JSS/US sponsored) to be held in the St. Louis area. Clarence was to be asked to look into this matter for us. The meeting was then adjourned.

(signed) Bill Miller - JSS/US Secretary

To elaborate briefly on the subject of publications, it was brought out that several publications could be done immediately, without any great hassle. An English translation of "The Sword Mountings of Higo Province", adapted from the "Higo Kinkoroku" of S. Nagaya by Gustav Jacoby (originally in German) was printed in the Society "Bulletin" Vol. 4 No. 1 (1963). This could easily be published in book form, with original plates. The "Nihonto Newsletter" requires only reprinting and binding as permission to reprint this 5 volume publication is already in our hands. A basic pamphlet on how to handle and care for one's sword has been initiated (photographs have been taken) but would require further work writing the text. Considering the importance of this pamphlet, it should receive a high priority by committee.

MINUTES cont'd.

The Society translation of the fine book "Tantō" will very soon require reprinting. With the reprinting of the Japanese book of plates available once again, our translation will be in demand no doubt. Although some corrective editing is required, along with typesetting or at least retyping into a format to match size and format of the book of plates, this too can be done with a minimum of effort.

Last but not least, we should venture into new areas too. One of these areas would be the translation of selective articles and books to assist our studies. Steven Winkley has offered his services to us, giving us first chance to contract for his work. (Steven is a student of the Japanese language and wishes to do extensive work in the area of translating). Although he has been contracted to do a few small translations for our publications, more extensive money outlay should have the approval of our new Publications Committee. Although many members have offered their services with regards to translations, it is felt that to really get into extensive and significant works, we must approach such translations (books or extensive articles) on a paid, contracted basis. True, it takes money, but it will also get done on time and be made available now when we need such research material.

Obviously, this formation of a Publications Committee is a pet project of mine and the importance of it's formation can not be stressed too much. We need english language material now. Our obviously growing membership demands research material in our language. A thoughtful selection for the proposed Publication Committee will assure us of achieving this goal.

NL editor

EDITOR'S COMMENT -

A flyer, on JSS/US letterhead, announcing the existence of our Society and membership availability, was placed in the initial 800+ sold copies of THE SAMURAI SWORD: AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE, on my request. This action was done by me without clearance of any Society Officer or Director. Although my intent was to promote the Society, giving those interested a direction to follow if they decided to further their sword studies, and was not intended as an indorsement of the book a number of people feel that the flyer did serve as "an implied indorsement". Furthermore, they have expressed their opinion that placement of such a flyer should had required Board approval first. The decision to ask that this flyer be included in this book was a spur-of-the-moment one, and mine alone. Apparently poor judgement on my part, I apologise to anyone offended or mislead by my actions. A letter has been mailed to the author of this book saying that this flyer not be included in future copies of this book when they are sold unless asked to do so by the Society board of Directors.

Ron Hartmann - NL editor

BOOK REVIEW -

THE SAMURAI SWORD: AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE by Gary D. Murtha, HSM Publications, Independence Missouri, A review by Peter Bleed.

Americans have adopted several approaches to collecting Japanese swords. We all know for example, "hustlers" who base their collecting strictly on the profit motive. Then there are the "continual novices" who deny any real knowledge even though they may have assembled superb collections over several years of study and thought. One of the most common and characteristic American collector type is the "intellectual" who, in addition to collecting, tries to assemble and broadcast information about Japanese swords. Thus motivation can be seen in the JSS/US Newsletter and Bulletin and in the many other books, catalogues and essays American collectors and collecting groups have published. This same intellectual urge also seems to have led to the publication of THE SAMURAI SWORD: AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE by Gary Murtha. This volume shows us that a sincere interest in swords is not enough. No matter how much we respect the artistry and social significance of Japanese swords, we cannot contribute to their understanding without knowledge and serious research.

On the surface, THE SAMURAI SWORD is a handsome well-produced volume. It has an attractive dust cover, a sturdy hard binding and 127 large (8½" x 11") well-printed pages. On closer look, though, the book becomes less impressive. There are, in fact, only about 23 pages of text and these are printed in needlessly large type so that they take more space than they really require. Twenty-four full-page black and white photographs are devoted to blade and tang pictures. Although we are assured that the blades illustrated have been "documented when possible" the items shown are a mixed bag at best. What is of importance here is that many of the photos are virtually useless for study. Details of blade shape, hamon, and inscriptions cannot be seen in many plates because the photos are either poorly taken or poorly printed.

The most impressive portion of the book are the 31 pages of full color photos of sword fittings. The items shown are of good quality, but again, this section has technical problems which reduce its utility. Several of the plates are so fuzzy that they cannot convey the detail they should. The 16 pages of fine tsuba are the best part of the book. These plates are mostly well-done and they show some fine guards. Each plate is accompanied by a detailed caption. My concern about the fittings section is that, given the simplistic content of the rest of the book the rich detail of the captions will be useful only to more advanced collector and may tend to confuse the beginner.

I applaud Gary Murtha's goal of offering a book which "strikes a balance between the simplistic and the technical." He starts with the assertion that very little has been written in English about Japanese swords but he does not use information which is available. His book has many shortcomings and instead of helping the average or new collector, I fear it will confuse or misinform him.

REVIEW cont'd.

First, there are errors scattered throughout the book. The "peaceful reign of the Tokugawa clan" did not occur during the Heian period. The Koto period, as accepted by todays sword scholars around the world, did not end in 1500. Ayasugi hada doesn't look anything like the drawing on page 16. In the blade plates tachi are consistently labeled katana. This list could go on.

Secondly, the book presents many misconceptions or at least incompletely explained statements. I really don't think it is anywhere near accurate to say that "99% of all big makers" are fake. Are the only flaws to worry about reshaped tips, chips, and the "crack or split in the tempere area?" Shouldn't forging flaws and fukure be at least mentioned? Is it really fair to tell the novice that oil of cloves, kleenex and "powder (limestone)" are what it takes to clean a blade? Is it wise to group swords in no particular order because grouping by age or school would show patterns which have occasional exceptions? Is it better to deny that patterns exist or to try to and explain that patterns do exist, with exceptions. Again, the list could go on.

Third, the book is not written or organized to be understandable. It is written in a cryptic style so that it reads like a Zen riddle. Beyond that many terms in the book are used without being explained or defined. For example, on page 15 something is labeled Yasurime but this term (like many others) is not in the glossary.

This brings up my last and most serious criticism of this book. It fails to show the new collector how to go on, how to get more (and better) insights and information on the sword. In several places Mr. Murtha advises consultation with experts, serious study, or use of reference works. Nowhere, though, does he tell the new collector how to do these things. Mr. Murtha offers no discussion of useful references or bibliography. The chapter on "How to Collect" has hints on how to talk old soldiers out of their souvenirs, but no mention of membership in groups like the JSS/US or buying by auctions or from dealers (which is very strange in light of the fact that the publisher of this work is one of the country's major mail order antique arms dealers).

If someone asks me to suggest references which will give their initial collecting direction and guidance, I will continue to suggest the works of Yumoto, Robinson, Hawley and Inami Hakusui along with membership in a productive Society such as the JSS/US. Mr. Murtha offers an accurate appraisal of his book when on page 83 he writes, "These ramblings may tend to confuse the new collector."

HOLDING THE KATANA TSUKA

by E. P. Nowak

Editor's comment: Mr. Nowak submitted this article for our interest in hopes that it will give us a deeper insight into understanding the 'entire' sword. He expressed his hope that the article be fitting the "Newsletter" in that it is a "martial arts" type article, and has offered to do future articles on the various aspects of swordsmanship if the membership wishes. RCH

The purpose of this article is to introduce you to the Yagiyu Ryu Shin Kagā Ryu method of holding a katana. It is my wish to share with you the knowlege of the sword I learned while studying the art of Aikido for the past four years.

The tsuka of a katana, for this purpose, should be at least two and one half fists in length. This length is to provide a counter balance to the blade and to facilitate the act of cutting. A grip with the hands touching would result in very poor balance with a blade of considerable length. The longer the tsuka, and grip, the easier the act of cutting gets.

Now, having a katana at hand, place the kashira in the heel of the left palm and encircle it with your little finger tightly. This is done to aide the grip by preventing the tsuka from slipping out of your hand while thrusting. This, effectively, makes your entire left arm part of the thrusting sword. It also greatly increases the power of the thrust. Here in the western world we hold objects mostly with the thumb and index finger, ala Emily Post. In the eastern world they hold by using the little finger and palm more than the index finger. This eastern method is the correct choice for holding a tsuka. With the kashira encased in your palm and little finger, move your left index finger's big knuckle to the top of the tsuka. The index finger should be loose. The right hand grasps the tsuka in a like manner with the index finger's knuckle close to the tsuba. The reason for having the index finger's big knuckle on top of the tsuka instead of holding it like a baseball bat, is because we want to cut, not hit. This is why we carve turkey with our index finger on top of the blade of the knife. There is very little cutting power with a baseball bat grip. Try cutting butter with it.

Your wrists are now in a rather awkward, but correct, position. This is similar to the style used to push a heavy object, like an automobile. The angle of the wrists facilitates the act of cutting, which is a forward motion. Cutting is not pushing but they both are forward movements.

By closing the little finger and relaxing the index finger, you have a "closed palm". This "closed palm" is the secret to many martial art techniques, both with and without weapons. It increases your grip strength by giving more and closer contact.

HOLDING cont'd.

You now have the basic grip for a katana. One final point, hold tightly with the left hand and loosely with the right. The left hand holds the sword firmly while the right guides the blade. Once you familiarize yourself with this it becomes like second nature and not awkward at all.

I have shown you the Yagiyu Ryu Shin Kagā Ryu method of holding a katana. There is much more involved with swordsmanship than the placement of the hands, like body position, weight distribution and a relaxed mind. But, this technique will introduce you to each individual blade. It will allow the life or energy, of each, to be felt. This is a means of appreciating a blade other than strictly as an art object.

* * * * *

BIRMINGHAM SWORD SHOW -

The next sword show on the schedule will be the Southeast Token Taikai show in Birmingham, Alabama. Dates for this show are the weekend of February 14th/15th. More on the show and what is planned for it as information becomes available. If confirmation of these dates is desired, contact Paul Couch

LONDON SWORD SHOW TO BE HELD -

The Tōken Society of Great Britain has announced plans for their first Japanese sword Convention in the United Kingdom. It will be held on the 21st of March 1981. The convention will be held at the Mayfair Hotel, Berkeley Street, London.

The convention will be in two separate but adjoining sections; one room to contain swords, armour and fittings from various private collections. Members will be on hand to discuss, explain and advise on various aspects of the art. A second room will be for dealers who specialise in Japanese arms and armour. Approximately 20 tables will be there exclusively for sword related items.

For further information or dealers tables, contact Mr. C. Allen,

In a letter from Mr. Clive Sinclair he mentions that the show will not be as ambitious as American shows as this is their first attempt, but hopefully it will be the first of many. It will be interesting to have some reports on the success of this venture for the "Newsletter". Apparently sword shows as we Americans think of them do not exist outside of our country (recalling Mr. Han Bing Siong's report on Token Taikai '79). It would be interesting to present an Americanized show abroad with many tables of swords for exhibit and for sale. This convention seems to be planned as a modified or conservative form of our type of show. We wish the organizers great luck in their venture!

TOKEN STUDY GROUP SHOW HELD -

The 13th annual TSG sword show was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin the weekend of October 24th. The show was very well attended and made for an enjoyable weekend for all, although many expressed a desire for the location to be moved back to Chicago next year. Unfortunately the planned exhibit area did not take form due to a lack of assistance. A very fine lecture on Namban influence in sword fittings was held one evening, the lecture being presented by Mr. Charles Watrall of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. The lecture reflected the fine research put into it and was of enjoyable interest to those who took the time to listen to it. Although an abundance of items was available for purchase, it seemed that general quality was lacking and little interest was shown in kodogu in general. Perhaps this is a sign of the times?

The TSG must be complimented on their efforts to up-grade the show by providing a booklet on sword handling along with a cloth for handling the blade. Show "rules" were also handed out which included such things as "all items must be priced", and in this case it seemed only the "dealers" broke this ruling. The effort to improve the show in general worked in part, and many people commented on the "effort". Hopefully this will be a first step towards the up-grading of all sword shows in the future, in a diplomatic and reasonable manner.

The JSS/US held a very hasty and brief Officers/Directors meeting on Sunday mid-morning, the results being printed elsewhere in this "Newsletter".

Again, our thanks to the TSG for proving all of us with a fine weekend of swords, a practice which we hope will continue for many years to come.

BOOKS TO BECOME AVAILABLE -

About a year ago Tom Buttweiler purchased the remaining stock of the book, "Token Taikai 76 Book of Lectures" from the Northern California group. With Tom's sudden death last month an inquiry was made as to the disposal of this supply (since our supply has been depleted). A phone call from Tom's son Rob assured us that the Society will be allowed to purchase this supply (a fine book and a must for every library). Along with this publication, a supply of several other reprinted publications will also become available. Watch the "Newsletter" for the availability and cost of these publications.

A new supply of Fujishiro's 2-volume set of books is on its way from Japan. Fortunately, Mr. Fujishiro allowed us the same fine discount on his books plus we apparently got our order in prior to a substantial postal rate increase in Japan. Therefore, the cost of our new books will remain at \$90/set. (No further word has been received from Mr. Pepin as to the availability of the english translation of this set of books).

BUY-SELL-TRADE COLUMN -

This section of the "Newsletter" is offered as a FREE service to the membership, providing an opportunity to advertise for specific needs or available items for sale or trade. Ads must be kept short and to the point. Business ads will not be allowed. All ads should be directed to the "Newsletter" editor.

- FOR SALE - Katana, 28 3/4" blade signed: Bishu Osafune Sukesada and dated 1502. Iron fittings. Contact: Mike Cobb,
- WANTED - Wakizashi or Tantō by Bizen Sukekane, shinshintō smith. Contact: Ray Deadman,
- WANTED - Broken or cracked blades, needed for experimental purposes. Will pay \$10/pound. Contact: Bill Trevino,
- WANTED - Books: "Primer of Japanese Swords" by Robinson, "Japanese Swordsmiths", 2-volumes by Hawley. Contact: Harry Jamison,
- WANTED - Daitō or wakizashi, furnished or shirazaya, as a "study piece", poor or fair condition. Contact: Craig Bird,
- WANTED - Wakizashi by YOSHIYUKI, Mutsu no Kami Yoshiyuki. Hawley #Y0665 son of Yoshikuni. Pay cash or trade swords, armor or fittings. Contact: Rick Mantegani,
- WANTED - Wakizashi by Edo Mizuta KUNISHIGE (KU578) and daitō by Hizen TADAYOSHI 8th (TA 149). Contact: Robert Masamori,
- WANTED - Iron sukashi tsuba of good quality. Cash or trade. Contact: Bob Benson,
- WANTED - Menuki of plain shakudo, tachikanagushi fittings or any early, quality kodogu. Contact: NL editor.
- WANTED - Information on the swordsmith (gendai/modern) named TSUKAMOTO IKKANSAI OKIMASA (mid Showa era). Member wishes other oshigata and general research on smith. Contact: Carl Veen,
- FOR SALE - Naginata shaped wakizashi, 16" blade, signed: FUYU HIRO SAKU. Partial mounts, no tsuba, menuki, habaki. \$275 plus postage, 5 day return privilege. Contact: Gil Novak,

BUY-SELL-TRADE cont'd.

- WANTED - Perhaps a hopeless search but...a tachi stand is thought to had been accidently sold several years ago in the Findlay, OH area. Black lacquer/mother-of-pearl inlay. Keepsake item. If anyone suspects that they know of this item, contact: Dale McGoon,
- WANTED - Blade by Mutsu no Suke HIROMOTO (HI176 and HI312), also signed Koyama HIROMOTO, Oshu HIROHIDE, Oshu KUNIHIDE, Koyama Munetsugu. Cash or trade. Also interested in research gathered on blades from your collection (not particularly for sale). Contact: Mr. P.T.Norheim,

TO NEW MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY -

Considering the great number of new members who have joined us this year, perhaps some words of advice are in order to better assist them in their sword studies.

One of the most basic things one must learn, if serious sword study is one's goal, is to learn basic sword nomenclature. All sword books, lectures, etc., if at all advanced will use the proper Japanese names for the parts of a sword and sword make-up. There are any number of charts to be found by which to learn these terms and just a little study will teach them to you. To further aid in this learning of proper terminology (and understanding these terms) the "Newsletter" will attempt to not only use these terms, but briefly explain them in English by enclosing an explanation in parenthesis after usage of the Japanese term. Notice how this has been done in the oshigata articles contained in this issue. New collectors often ask why should they learn these Japanese words. As one's study progresses it quickly becomes obvious that a single Japanese word labels a particular characteristic for what it is, whereas trying to explain it in English would confuse the student and often not be clear in our language. So do your homework, pay close attention when a term is used and explained, and your knowledge will quickly grow.

Another idea along these lines, to not only teach terminology but assist in proper pronunciation too, would be to have some tapes available in our library. Actually "hearing" a Japanese member "speak" the term would greatly assist the new collector.

One other area for basic study would be to learn to read sword inscriptions. The Society offer a brief paper on this subject which explains step by step how to attack a signature. Learn to read at least basic signatures. It is not hard to learn.

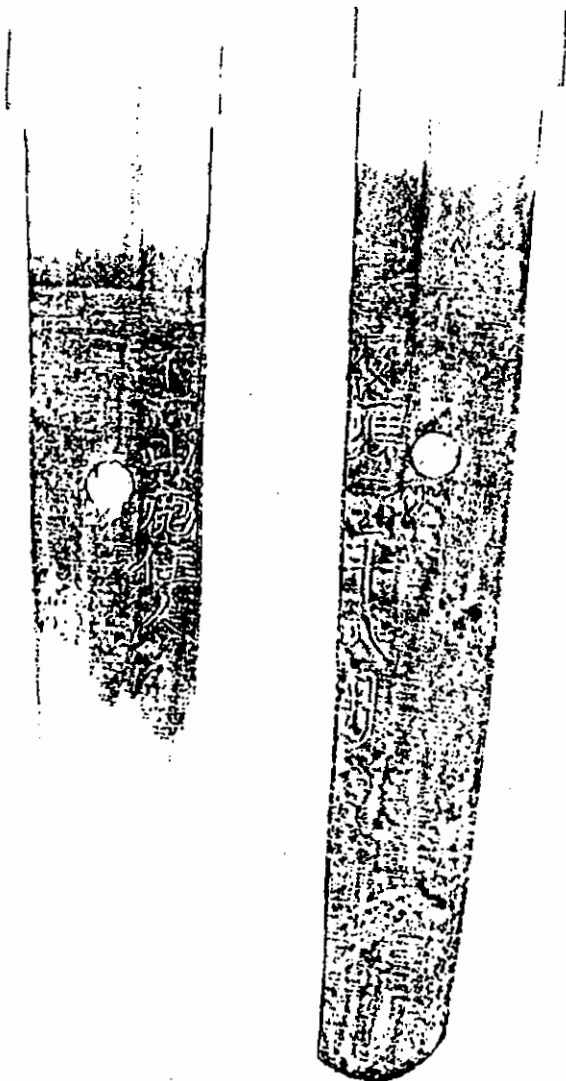
Of course the most important step is to learn to understand what is "good" in a sword and what is "not good". This is not an easy step but can be learned (at least basically) by closely studying oshigata of excellent swords and reading study material closely. Of course one of the best methods here is to study fine examples in hand. Never pass up a chance to study a fine sword in hand!

"ARTS OF ASIA SPECIAL EDITION -

The November-December 1980 issue of "Arts of Asia" magazine is devoted to things Japanese, and in a round-about way relates to our area of collecting. Our Mr. Wiest has a most interesting article on sake cups amongst the many other articles. Anyone interested can order an individual copy, or subscribe to the magazine by contacting Arts of Asia, Suite 1309 Kowloon Center 29-39 Ashley Rd., Kowloon, Hong Kong.

INTERESTING MEI -

Carl Imhauser of Little Rock, Arkansas sent in the following inscription found on one of his swords. The sword is a 15" shinogizukuri wakizashi. Carl would enjoy hearing from anyone who might have heard of such an inscription or who might have some thoughts on background.



- 1 - "Fubu" (not)
 - 2 - "bo" (forget)
 - 3 - "yama" Mountain
 - 4 - "roku fumoto" or "san roku" (foot of mountain)
-ju nin (1856).

不 ①
忘 ②
山 ③
林 ④
鹿
住
人

ATTRIBUTED BIZEN SUKEZANE OSHIGATA

JŪYŌ TŌKEN NADO ZUFU - Vol 1 plate 6 (reprinted with permission)

STYLE - Tachi, shinogi-zukuri form (with ridge line) slight sori (curvature), chū (medium) kissaki (point) of ikubi (stout) form.

MEASUREMENTS - 2.26 shaku (68.5cm), Sori 8 bu + , Motohaba 1.06 sun, Sakihaba 8.4 bu (.84 sun), kissaki 1.3 sun, nakago 5.7 sun.

KITAE - Itame (wood grained appearance), slightly rough but with ji-nie (surface nie crystals) and midare utsuri (irregular utsuri or illusion of reflection above hamon).

HAMON - Ō-chōji (clove shape) with kawadzunoko-chōji. (an excellent example of kawadzunoko-chōji or "tadpole" chōji is found on the frontal oshigata of ura side about one inch up from the bottom of the oshigata. There is gunome yakiba (peaked pattern) mixed in with chōji. There is wide nioi (mist-like crystals along the tempered area) and very fine nie (fine larger crystals).

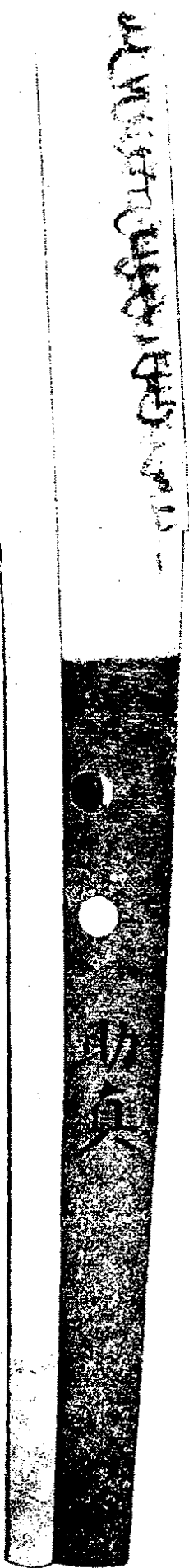
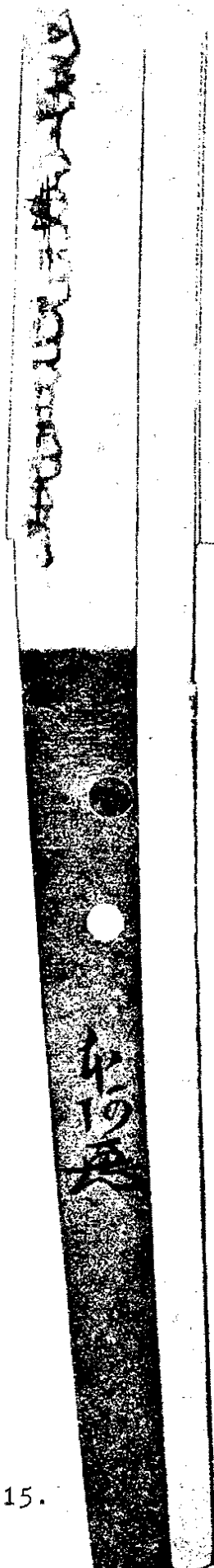
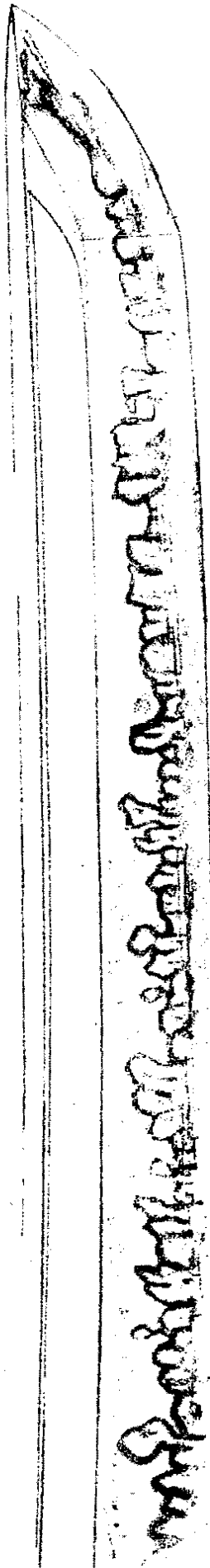
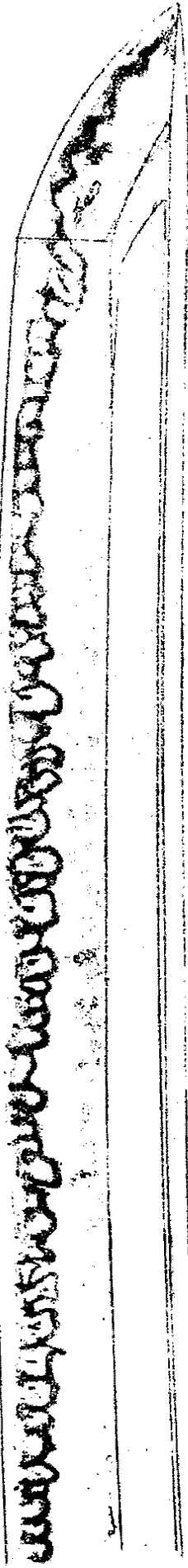
BŌSHI - Midarekomi (irregular pattern); on omote side the point of the boshi is pointed and on the ura it is komaru (small rounded).

HORIMONO - Bō-hi (wide groove) on both sides and kakitoshi or chiselled-through nakago. (Any blade which originally had hi or grooves, if shortened, appears like this blade with kakitoshi. If this is not so...if indeed, the hi stops above the mekugi-ana (peg hole)...then you must suspect that the groove was added much later.)

NAKAGO - O-suriage (greatly shortened). Tip is kiri (cut straight). There is slight sori (curvature) and yasurime (file marks) are kiri (straight across). Two holes, one which is plugged. Inlaid in gold on the haki-omote SUKEZANE, and on ura is HONNAMI with kao or trade mark of sorts.

EXPLANATION -

Sukezane was one of the greatest masters of the Fukuoka Ichimonji school of Bizen Province in the mid-kamakura period. Amongst the smiths from this school Yoshifusa, Norifusa, and this Sukezane are the three foremost smiths, known for their most extravagant and lively yakiba (hamon). Sukezane was also expert in making blades with ko-nie (small, crisp nie crystals). This blade was shortened and identified by Honnami Mitsutada (Kōchu), and has been inlaid in gold to state this. There is no doubt that this blade was the work of Sukezane. Furthermore, it is in excellent condition. This blade was one of the important treasures of the Ōkubo family, who were the lords of the Odawara clan.



HASEBE KUNISHIGE OSHIGATA

JŪYŌ TŌKEN NADO ZUFU - Vol.1 plate 5 (reprinted with permission)

STYLE - Wakizashi, Hirazukuri form (flat without ridge), mitsumune (three-sided mune or back edge), mihaba wide (from mune to cutting edge), kasane (thickness) thin, sun-nobi (longer than average), with slight sori (curve).

MEASUREMENTS - 1.13 shaku (34.2cm), 1.4 bu sori, 9.8 bu motohaba
1.6 bu Motokasane. Nakago 3.1 sun + with no sori.

KITAE - Itame (wood grain hada) near the yakiba (edge of tempered area) and slight masa grain (straight) near the mune. It has ji-nie (nie crystals over the blade ji or surface) all over the blade, and has yubashiri (bands of hard temper).

HAMON - Midare with gunome (irregular with rounded peaks). There are many ashi (nioi or fine crystals wisping down from the roots of the gunome), yō ("footprints" within hamon or tempered area), tobiyaki (areas or spots of nioi above the hamon) and there are ko-nie (crisp, small sized nie).

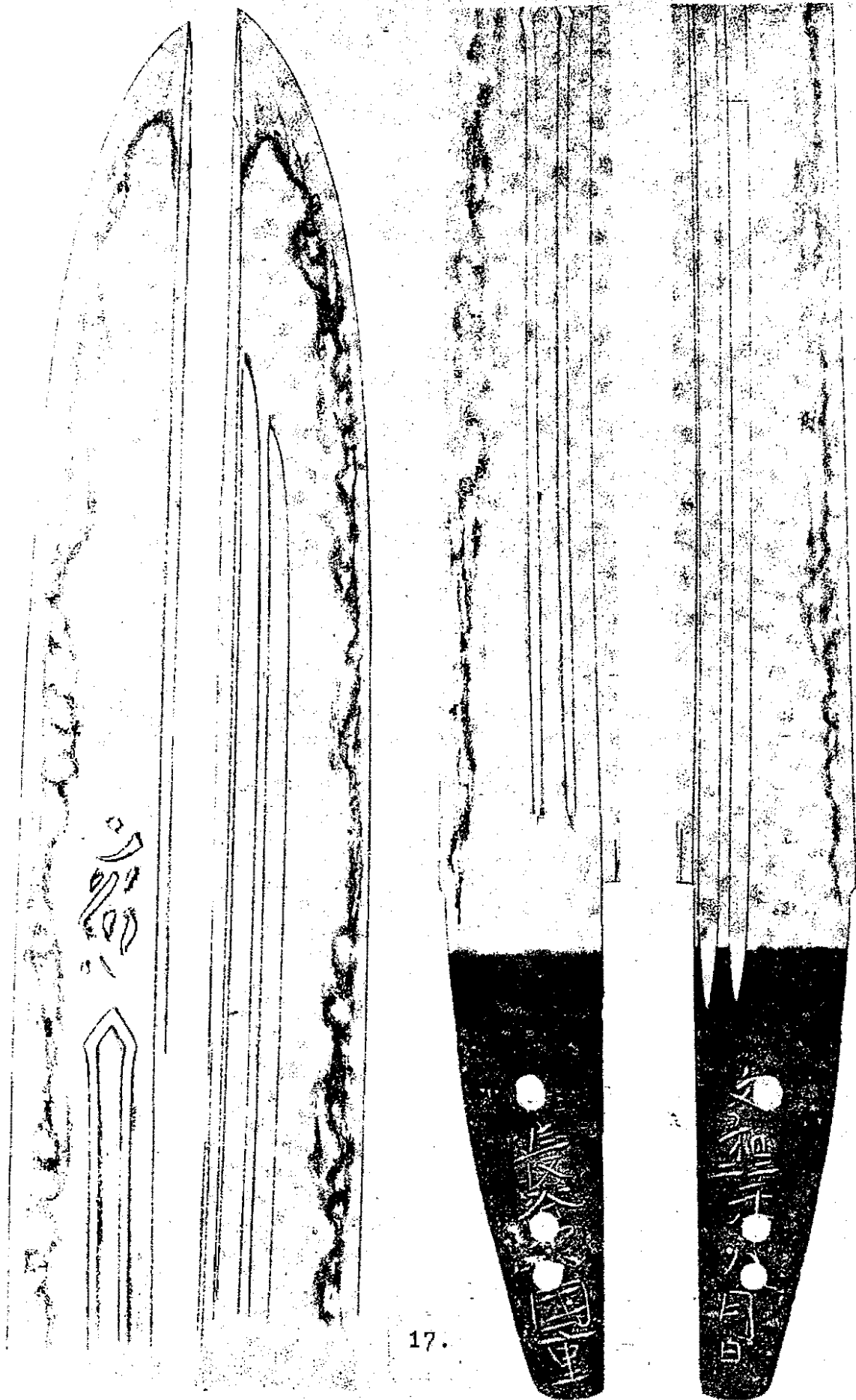
BŌSHI - Wavy and hakikake (sweeping strings of nie), maruku-kaeru (rounded turn-back).

HORIMONO - Sanscript (religious character) and ken (ken sword) symbol, soken (or simple ken-like groove) on omote side (outside when worn); ura side (inside of blade when worn) has a pair of hi (or grooves), chiselled part way into the nakago, called kakinagashi.

NAKAGO - Ubu (original, unaltered). Funagata (rounded bottom). Machi (notch) is slightly advanced, end is kurijiri (evenly rounded), sori (curvature) is none. Yasurime (file marks) are kiri (straight across) and there are three mekugi-ana (mekugi or peg holes). There is a five-character signature right in the middle of the nakago with date of Bunwa 4th on ura side (1355 date).

EXPLANATION -

Hasebe Kunishige was considered one of Masamune's ten famous students, and it is said that there is a blade by Kunishige dated in the Jowa Era (1345 of Northern court era). However, that blade is still under investigation therefore the oldest blade by Hasebe Kunishige is believed to be this one. This wakizashi is in good condition and is excellent work, and unmistakably the work of Hasebe School. The characteristics of the Hasebe School, with regards to the wakizashi are: The mihaba is wide and the blade is slightly longer than others; The kasane is thin and has a slight sori. These characteristics apply not just to Hasebe-den but are typical of hirazukuri wakizashi of Namboku-cho (North/South court era). The yakiba of this blade is similar to that of Soshu-den of this era, however, the boshi is not sharp-pointed but is rather rounded. This is a characteristic of Hasebe-den compared to Hiromitsu and Akihiro os Soshu. This hada is also a characteristic of the Hasebe school. (Note that in the date, the year "four" is inscribed "two and two" as the sound of the word for "four" is like "death" so many smiths avoided using the word "shi" or "four".



KANESADA OSHIGATA

JŪYŌ TŌKEN NADO ZUFU - Vol.1 plate 10 (reprinted with permission)

STYLE - Tachi, shinogi-zukuri (with ridge line), ihori-mune (two-sided back edge), chū-gissaki (medium sized point).

MEASUREMENTS - 2.33 shaku (70.6cm), sori 7 bu, motohaba 9.8 bu, sakihaba 6.6 bu, kissaki 1.06 sun, nakago 5.15 sun.

KITAE - Itame hada (wood grained appearance on surface) but almost masame (straight grained). There is ji-nie (surface nie crystals), and appears shirakeru (whittish?).

HAMON - Notare (undulating pattern) mixed with gunome (pointed or mounded pattern). The nioiguchi (edge of yakiba/nioi line) is not very distinct. There are ko-nie (small nie crystals).

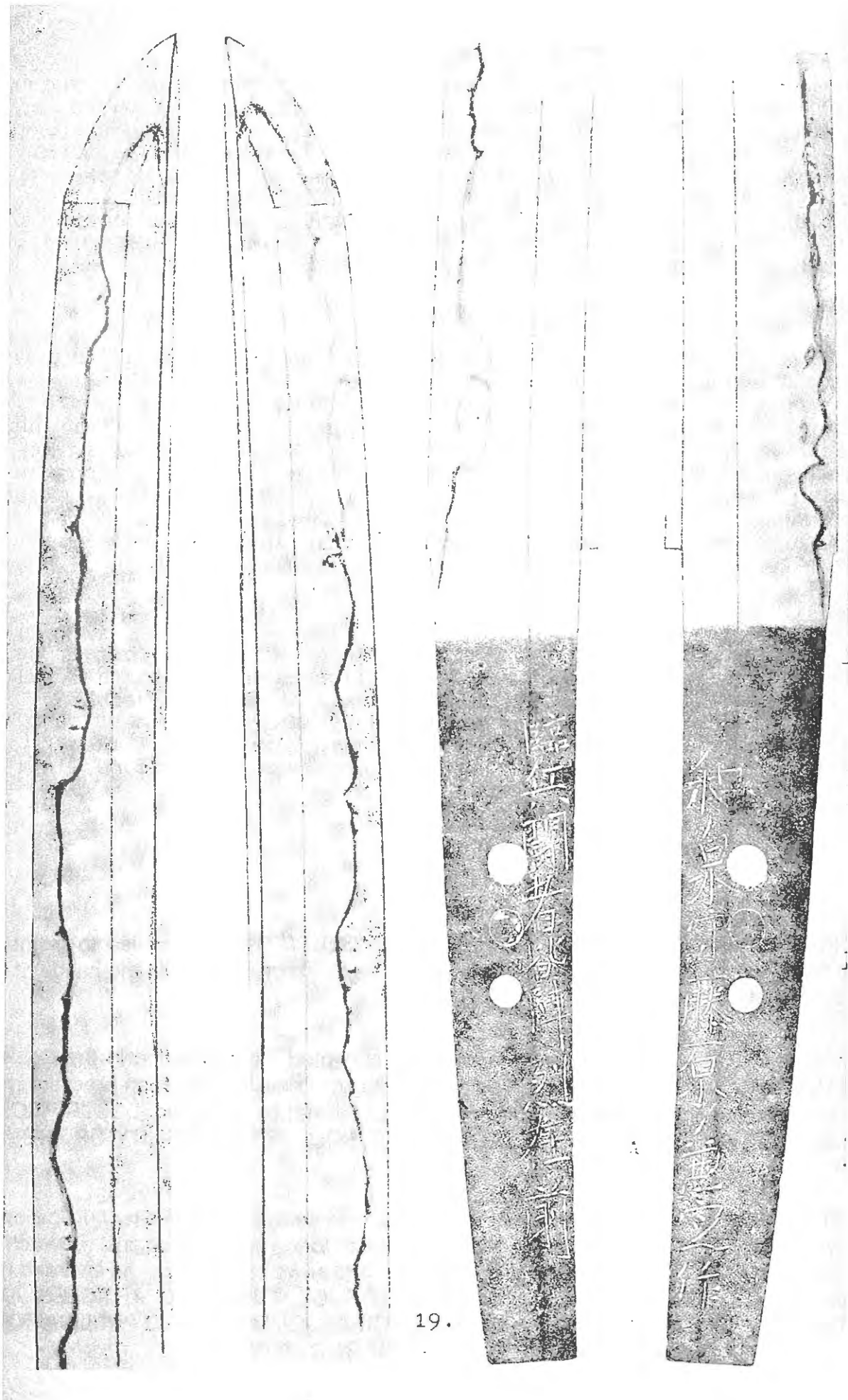
BŌSHI - Slightly waving, and at the tip hakikake (swept in nie).

NAKAGO - Slightly suriage (cut off) with tip in kiri (straight cut). Nakago has slight sori (curvature) with sujichigai yasurime (slanting left file marks). Three mekugi-ana (holes) with one plugged. Full signature (mei) on sash-ura and on omote there is a nine-character poem. (Editor's comment: this is unclear to me and should be simply signed on omote and poem on ura).

EXPLANATION -

This a representative blade of the so-called "No-Sada" smiths. In the Seki school of Mino Province, there were a few smiths in the Muromachi Era having the title of Izumi (no) Kami and using the "No-Sada" character. It is not clear which belongs to which generation or their relation to each other. However, one uses the Eisho Era (1504-1521) in dating. The so-called "No-Sada" smiths are very famous for their skill and this particular blade is outstanding among those made by these smiths of similar name because it has a beautiful jigane (forging) and the nioi-guchi (nioi line along the yakiba) is uniform and sharp. We believe that it is a representative work of the "No-Sada", which in the remote past was valued as a very sharp blade. The meaning of the nine-character poem is not very clear. However, a similar poem has been used even in the Shinto period.

There are many Kanesada in the Seki School and the Province of Mino. Some of the, however, used a different character for "sada". The upper element of the "sada" was common to all the Kanesada; These smiths, however, used a character in which the lower element looks very much like the character "kore", the other reading for which in this particular case is "no". (see Yumoto's book p.125, last character). So the group of smiths who used this type of a signature in their writing of Kanesada is called "No-Sada".



UKIYO-E SOCIETY OF CANADA -

Many of our members have expressed an appreciation in the collecting of Japanese woodblock prints. Although not sword related, these charming works assist in building an understanding of Japanese art and have proven to be a pleasing diversion from sword study. The "Newsletter" has been notified of the formation of the Ukiyo-E Society of Canada, for the study of woodblock prints. Membership is sought and information can be gotten by contacting: Ukiyo-E Society of Canada,

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY PROGRAM -

In the latest issue of the National Geographic magazine, it was announced that one of their special television PBS pro-grams for this season will be a special named "Living Treasures of Japan". It is assumed that this program is a take off of the article by this name which appeared in the September 1972 issue of National Geographic. If so, perhaps we will see some footage showing Gassan Sadakazu (Sadaichi Tsukiyama as the article called him) working at his forge. This PBS television show is to be aired February 11th, 1981 according to this announcement. Mark your calendar and watch your local TV schedule.

A HAWAII SHINSA COMING? -

In the end page of the Christie "Kotetsu" auction catalogue, mention is made of a "sale..in conjunction with an international sword shinsa to be held in Honolulu Hawaii in June-July 1982". Nothing other than this has been heard by the "Newsletter" and it is hoped that if such an undertaking is planned that the organizers would let them be known. Can anyone shine some light on this for us?????

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - The next issue of the NEWSLETTER will be mailed to members during the first week of February. All material intended for inclusion must be in the hands of the editor at least ten days prior to this week.

ADVERTISING POLICY - Paid advertisements will be accepted for publication in the Society NEWSLETTER. Ad contents must be restricted to services and items for sale. High-pressure type ads and ads not befitting the format of the NEWSLETTER will not be accepted. DESCRIPTIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS OF ITEMS ADVERTISED ARE THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ADVERTISER.

ARTICLE POLICY - Articles of a research nature are of course always welcomed for publication in the Society journals. The Society will pay a \$25 Honorarium to the author of original research or reporting articles when of sufficient stature. Brief articles and news items will not be awarded this Honorarium but are nevertheless solicited. CONTENTS OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES AND AUTHENTICITY OF ILLUSTRATED ITEMS IN THE SOCIETY JOURNALS AND PUBLICATIONS ARE THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHORS OF SAID ARTICLES.

.....
K. E. SKAFTE • NYKOBING F. • DENMARK



REG. TRADE MARK

Specialist Bookseller for Japanese Arms&Armor
For some time now I have the pleasure of being a member of the JSS/US and study eagerly the always inspiring Newsletters. In consequence my interest for especially Sword Furniture has grown - and so has my stock of books about it.
So, when adding our stock of good literature on Blades and Armor, I think we are well equipped to meet fair wants from any collector anywhere.
Our latest catalogue is yours for the asking.
Best regards until next yours SKAFTE

.....
FOR SALE: "TAGANI NO HANNA" (Quintessence of Chiselling Art).
A complete set of 4 Taikan sized volumes with illustrations of some of the best tsuba and small fittings in Japan. Originally published in Japan in 1901. Reprinted in 1972 in an edition of 500 copies, by the late Dr. Sato Kanzan. The reprint has hand made brocade covers and gold edged pages. In addition there are 2 "companion" volumes of similar size and binding printed in 1973 containing illustrations of additional tsuba and small fittings. All 6 volumes, postage paid, price: \$2,250. Will trade for swords or tsuba. Call or write: Charles G. Ross,

F O R S A L E

Over 40 Japanese swords - send \$1 for list.
Write: Fredericks

MEIBUTSU • TTK'79

THE 2ND PRINTING OF THE TTK'79 MEIBUTSU ROOM EXHIBIT CATALOGUE IS NOW AVAILABLE. CORRECTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AND ANOTHER FULL-LENGTH OSHIGATA (#32) HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE PUBLICATION. PLACE YOUR ORDER TODAY!
U.S./Canada \$11.00 - Foreign \$12 (\$14 via air). All orders in U.S. Dollars please. Order direct from the Newsletter-

YŪSHŪTŌ ZUROKU

The Nihon Token Hozonkai (NTH) is the oldest Historic Japanese Sword Society in Japan. Its origin dates back to the Meiji period around 70 years ago. The NTH is an International Society recognized throughout the world.

"Yushuto Zuroku" is NTH first volume of the Society's best Oshigatas collected throughout its 109 meetings held since 1960. This excellent reference book is the first volume of a complete series to be published. The complete series will become the largest Japanese Art Sword book collection with English translation.

This limited edition of "Yushuto Zuroku" is now being offered to serious and discriminating collectors. The book is handsomely hardbound and contains 277 pages. The volume contains 150 life-sized Oshigatas superbly reproduced and is accompanied by a complete volume of English translation.

This edition is available in limited quantities and will soon become a sword collectors limited edition. It is a very understandable reference book that all serious collectors should not be without.

This volume is being offered to collectors for \$135.00 - California residents please add 6½% sales tax. Postage included. Please allow 10 to 15 days for delivery.



CALIFORNIA .

U.S.A.