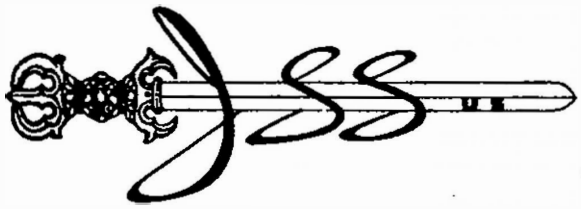
Japanese Sword Society of the United States, Inc.



NEWSLETTER

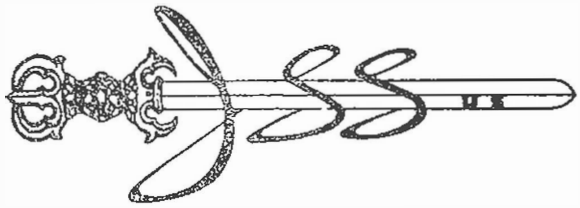
Volume 15 No. 1 January-February • 1983

DR. HOMMA NEW SOCIETY HONORARY MEMBER -

A proposal was made during the last JSS/US officer's meeting in Chicago last October to ask Dr. Junji Homma to accept an Honorary Membership in our society. The proposal was voted upon and unanimously accepted by the attending officers. Dr. Homma was contacted and has accepted this honor. A scroll will be presented to him in the very near future. It states the Society's appreciation for all he has done in his lifetime for the preservation and study of the Japanese art sword. The scroll will be signed by Chairman Peter Bleed on behalf of all the officers and directors. A copy of the scroll appears elsewhere in this issue.

Dr. Homma was Chairman of the Nippon Bijutsu Tōken Hozon Kyōkai (N.B.T.H.K.) until his retirement last year. He was born in 1904 in Sakata-city, Yamagata Prefecture. A graduate of Kokugakuin University, he worked in the section for National Treasures, Ministry of Education, and Tokyo National Museum. He was deeply involved in establishing a committee to screen swords after World War Two in order to save art swords from post-war destruction. It was through the establishment of the official Japanese Sword Appraisal Committee by which most of the master-pieces of Japanese swords came to be protected from destruction.

A long time friend of the non-Japanese collector, Dr. Homma has always urged that the study of the sword be advanced in all countries in order that swords located outside of Japan can be properly preserved and appreciated by all peoples. The publi-cation of the English Edition of the N.B.T.H.K. journal, Tōken Bijutsu is a product of this interest in assisting foreign collector/students. The publication of the beautifully illust-rated Shōwa Dai-Meitō Zufu with an English translation volume is yet another example. The Japanese Sword Society of the United States is most proud to have Dr. Homma accept Honorary Membership.



The Japanese Sword Society of the United States is registered with the State of California as a non profit organization for the appreciation and advanced study of the Japanese art sword and related fields of interest.

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REWARD - $1,000 will be paid by the Society for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of anyone stealing sword or fittings from a JSS/US member, and the recovery of the lost items. Payment will be subject to Officers and Directors approval.

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 accep-ted. 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.

GENDAITO BY HIGO TARO TOMOHIRO AND TADAYSU

by Per Terje Norheim (Norway)

When one is collecting both Japanese swords and Japanese matchlock guns, it is of special interest to find a sword blade which has been forged from a gun barrel. Such a sword was in fact found. Because of this information, which was inscribed on the nakago of the sword being discussed in this article, and because the blade looked quite good even in its scratched state upon its purchase, it was decided to have it properly restored even if it was a modern gendaito. The sword was sent to Kajihara-san who had it put in good shirazaya, gave it a proper habaki, and gave it a good polish.

With good help, it was established that the smith, signing Tadaysu, was still alive and working. He is presently working under the name of Kaneshige Kimura, living in Kumamoto, and is now sixty-eight years old. He kindly answered my inquiries and told me that the man working with him during the time of forging this sword was his brother, who helped him very often. His wife and other relatives often helped him with various things when he made swords during the war years. He well remembered making this particular sword, recalling that it was a 'special order' blade, but the name of the person ordering the blade could not be remembered. The gun barrel which was used for the blade was about 250 years old. He said that he also made swords from other gun barrels, some dating from 150 to 400 years old. This is rather interesting as I have never seen any gun in Europe dating more than 250 years old.

One more interesting aspect of this fine gendaito is that it was made in August 1945, the last month of World War Two. The sword was one of "a truckload, dumped by a U.S. Navy ship" and brought to the states by a Navy Officer of that ship. It was brought home along with two other blades including a shinshinto blade and a fine early kotō blade which is presently in Japan receiving polishing. This gendaito has not been submitted to shinsa, and would probably not receive any origami if submitted (since the smith is still living), but it is my opinion that the blade is of the same quality of most shinshinto blades to be seen. The balance is excellent and it is a good representative sword documenting the fact that some smiths managed to maintain the quality of the art even in the last phase of the war.

It would be very interesting to hear from other collectors who have swords forged from matchlock barrels. Send oshigata and correspondence to:

Mr. Per Terje Norheim

SUGATA

Katana, shinogi-zukuri form, koshizori of medium degree, (2.1cm), Medium long kissaki, shinogi-ji of medium width with shinogi slightly raised.

NAGASA

Cutting edge is 66.8cm (standard length for gendaito). Length of nakago is 21.8cm.

HAMON

Ko-choji midare withko-nie and some ashi. Hamon is very alike from one side to the other. The boshi is midare with komaru return.

KITAE

Finely forged ko-mokume, appearing almost muhada (no hada) in places.

NAKAGO

Ubu, tapered with almost no sori, yasurimei are slanting left and are finished of in keisho (full dress) fashion. The overall well-finished nakago speaks well of the care taken by the smiths of this blade.

MEI

(Omote) TANEGASHIMA JUSHIN TETSU TANZO (using iron from a match-lock gun barrel). SHOWA NIJU NEN HACHI GATSU KICHIJITSU (Showa 20th year, 8th month, lucky day or August 1945.

(Ura) HIGO TARO TOMOHIRO/TADAYSU GASSAKU (made together) and KAO (seal).

ALBERT SUMITAKA YAMANAKA

Yamanaka-sensei is dead. The Society has lost an Honorary Member, a founding father, a sensei, an always willing contributor of information. Many of us have also lost a good friend.

The study of the Japanese sword has truly changed my life these last fifteen years. It has been a rewarding change, one full of pleasures derived from learning to appreciate the beauties of the sword and of kodogu. In this course of study, several people stand out as major contributors towards my personal education. The greatest contributor, teacher - sensei - personally, has been Albert Yamanaka. A sense of anxiety with regards to the future is felt - who will take Albert's place - certainly the Society publications will suffer.

Although many of us knew Albert for many years, he was a very private person and little seems to be known of his private life. Albert was born in California some sixty years ago. According to an interview with Albert by Benjamin Vincent back in 1967 (JSS/US Bulletin Vol.7 No.2, p.24) his interest in swords goes back for many years since his father was a collector. While in the U.S.Army after the WW2, he was stationed in Japan. At that time he was accepted as a private student by the famous Honnami Koson and continued to study under his sensei from 1947 to 1950. At the completion of his studies he was awarded the rank of "Ōkuden", the highest ranking of a three-level ranking system which Honnami sensei used. Many of us soon learned to appreciate his expert opinions with regards to swords and kodogu. Albert resided in California after the Army and was one of the founders of the JSS/US. He, along with John Yumoto, gave many hours of lectures to interested collectors in those early days. He moved to Tokyo in the late 1960's and became a sword dealer. It was at that time that he saw his dream for an English language sword book become a reality with the publication of his Nihontō Newsletter. Some business dealing which went sour left Albert with many debts. He was the first to admit being a poor business man, calling himself the "hard-luck kid", but no matter how bad things got for him he was always willing to answer questions and teach. He moved back to live with his father in the country area of Kagoshima this past year. He died on or about January 26th.

We have all lost a good friend.

RCH

SOUTHEAST TOKEN KAI

BIRMINGHAM SWORD SHOW

MARCH 18, 19 & 20, 1983

AIRPORT RAMADA INN
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

BUY & SELL ROOM ● LECTURES ● EXHIBITS

FOR A WEEKEND OF SELLING, TRADING AND BUYING, SWORD STUDY AND ENJOYMENT IN GENERAL, PLAN TO ATTEND THIS SHOW. A VERY ENERGETIC WEEKEND IS PLANNED WITH LECTURES BY SENSEI JOHN YUMOTO. AN EXHIBIT AREA WHICH WILL PERMIT IN-HAND STUDY OF FINE, AUTHENTICATED SWORDS AND KODOGU IS ALSO PLANNED. ITEMS WILL BE DISPLAYED SIMILARLY TO THOSE EXHIBITED AT THE LAST CHICAGO TOKEN STUDY GROUP SHOW. A SPECIAL ROOM WILL BE SET ASIDE ON SATURDAY, MARCH 19TH, FOR THIS PURPOSE. ANYONE WISHING TO DISPLAY AUTHENTICATED ITEMS SHOULD CONTACT PAUL COUCH IMMEDIATELY.

THE COST FOR THE WEEKEND, WHICH WILL INCLUDE ONE TABLE AND ADMITTANCE TO ALL LECTURES AND EXHIBITS, WILL BE $50 (TWO TABLES: $85; THREE TABLES: $110). NON-TABLE HOLDERS WILL BE CHARGED A $20 ADMISSION FEE.

A TABLE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE JSS/US FOR THE PURPOSE OF MEMBERSHIP AND THE SELLING OF BOOKS AND SWORD SUPPLIES. AN AMPLE SUPPLY OF SUCH ITEMS WILL BE OFFERED.

EVERY EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO MAKE THIS SHOW THE BEST EVER HELD IN BIRMINGHAM. TO DO SO, EVERYONE MUST HELP. PLAN TO GIVE YOUR SUPPORT BY ATTENDING AND PERHAPS EXHIBITING SOME SELECTED ITEM FROM YOUR COLLECTION.

FOR RESERVATIONS AND TABLES CONTACT: **PAUL COUCH**

SPECIAL ORDER WAKIZASHI MADE BY
YOSHIWARA YOSHIHITO

Swordsmith Yoshiwara Yoshihito at his forge.

This particular sword was made by the highly recognized modern swordsmith Yoshiwara Yoshihito for Mr. Dave Swedlow of Garden Grove, California. The beautiful hada and the overall classical appearance of this wakizashi attests to the abilities of Mr. Yoshiwara.

The wakizashi is in hirazukuri form with bo hi on each side. The blade measures 33.3 cm and has a sori of 4 mm. It is signed: MUSASHI KUNI JU NIN YOSHIHITO KORE (O) TSUKURU and MR. SWEDLOW (NO) MOTOME NI OZURU. It is SHOWA 52 NEN HINOTO-MI 8 GATSU KICHIJITSU. This sword is rather unique in that it was made on order to fit a fine old koshirae. It is most unusual for such a request to be made and the problem was a difficult one for Mr. Yoshiwara to overcome. Mr. Swedlow has supplied the following explanation of the project as written by Mr. Morihiro Ogawa of the N.B.T.H.K. in Tokyo.

This hira-zukuri wakizashi was made for an existing old sword mounting. Generally, a blade is made first, and then its koshirae is made for the blade in order to have them completely fit each other as a pair. In this case, it is exceptional. The wakizashi was made for the koshirae which had been already made. Needless to say, it is extremely difficult to make a blade which meets a koshirae which was already existing.

It is considered from the shape of the koshirae that it was originally made for a blade which belongs to the Nambokucho period (14th century), or the Momoyama period (16th century), or of the late Edo period (19th century).

WAKIZASHI cont'd.

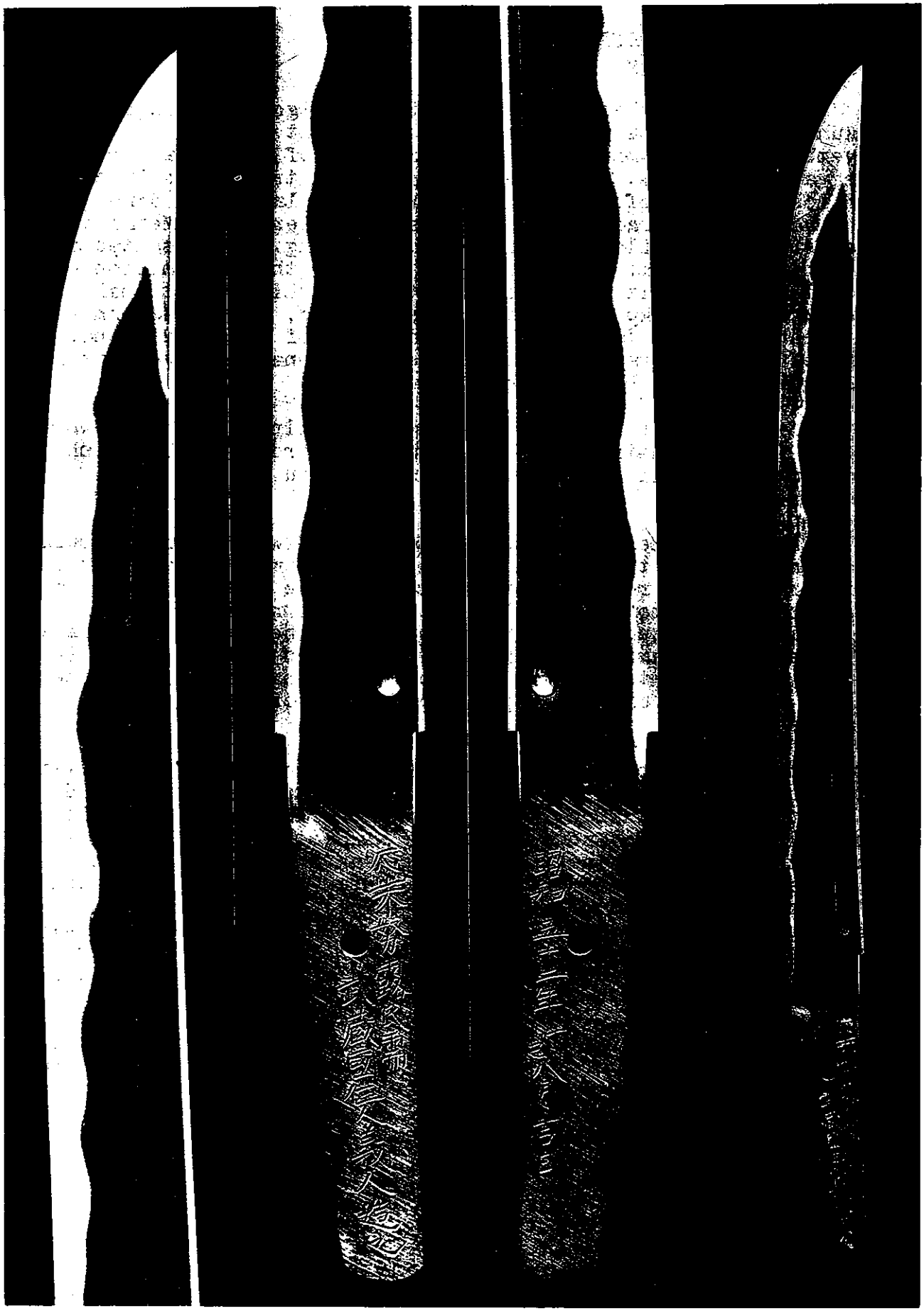
This wakizashi made by Yoshiwara has a slightly broad width and a shallow curvature. The forging surface (Kitae-hada) exhibits a wood grain pattern (Itame-hada) combined with a burl wood grain (Mokume-hada). The tempering line (Hamon) is a shallow undulating pattern (Asai Notare) of nie grains mixed with a zigzag pattern (Gunome) and sweeping lines of nie (Sunagashi). The tempering line at the point (Boshi) is an irregular pattern (Midarekomi) with brushed lines of sunagashi (Hakikake) and a long turn-back (Kaeri). The overall characteristics carry a strong resemblance to Sa Yasuyoshi who was a great master in the Nambokucho period. Also, the quality is as superb as the work of Yasuyoshi.

Surprisingly, this wakizashi seems to have been made just for the koshirae previously described. Both articles make a good match and become a perfect fit for each other. This means that Yoshiwara has a prominent art and technique of sword making.

Yoshiwara said, "It was the first trial for me to make a blade which should meet an already-made koshirae. I needed about one year to think about and study as to what should be made. I was very much pleased to have succeeded at the first trial."

The Chinese characters of "Sue-Do-Ro", meaning Mr. Swedlow, which are seen on the tang, were first written by Dr. Kanzan Sato, a great connoisseur of the Japanese sword and then engraved by Yoshiwara. The meaning of these letters is that a good life comes after a hard work and effort.

Our thanks to Mr. Swedlow for supplying the Society with these photographs and particulars pertaining to his beautiful sword. Mr. Yoshiwara must be commended on his great efforts to carry on the art of sword making with such devotion. Below are a few more photographs of Mr. Yoshiwara at work.



YOSHIWARA YOSHIHITO WAKIZASHI
dated Showa 52 (1977), August

NINGEN KOKUHO EXHIBITION
By J.L. McElhinney

An exhibition of works by artists designated "Ningen Kokuho" by the Japanese Government opened at the Boston Museum November 3rd to commemorate the reopening of the Asian Arts wing at the Museum. The exhibition, which travels to Chicago and Los Angeles before closing in May, displays work done in a variety of traditional media such as Ceramics, Metalwork, Lacquerware, Textiles, Paper and Woodworking. Represented are the artists that have been singled out for the recognition of excellence implicit in the disignation of "Living National Treasure" since the disignation was created, by the Government of Japan, in 1955 to foster the endurance of the traditional arts of Japan by recognizing the best personal achievements in these disciplines by contemporary artists.

Of particular interest to the membership will be the work of the Tsuba-ko Mitsumasa Yonemitsu and Swordsmiths Takahashi Sadatsugu, Miyairi Yukihira, Gassan Sadakazu and Sumitani Masamine.

The late Yonemitsu was represented by two beautiful tsuba made in the Higo tradition of Iron with Nunome overlay in gold. This artist, who recently passed away at the age of ninety four, was born in Kumamoto Prefecture (the modern name for Higo no Kuni) and worked in the Higo style and the artistic footsteps of Hayashi and Kamiyoshi. He was designated Ningen Kokuho in 1965. Also of interest was a display showing the various steps in the technique of Higo-zogan from rough forged plate to the finished Tsuba.

The first Swordsmith to be designated Ningen Kokuho, Takahashi Sadatsugu was represented by a tachi made in Bizen style and a copy of Meibutsu Hocho Masamune with horimono of Tsume with Sukashi-gomabashi. Sadatsugu was a student of the first Gassan Sadakazu during the last years of Gassan's life and continued his training under the tutelage of Gassan Sadakatsu. Sadatsugu was known to have enjoyed mastery in all five "Gokaden" with special expertise in Bizen style. He is famous, like many artists who worked with the Osaka Gassan group, for outstanding Horimono. He was made "Ningen Kokuho" in 1961 and passed away in 1968 at the age of sixty one years.

Miyairi Yukihira, who died in 1977, became Ningen Kokuho in 1963. His work was represented by two swords done in the Mino tradition, one being a Tachi and the other a hira-zuzkuri Wakizashi, possibly a copy of Shidzu work. These swords possessed a quiet and dignified beauty that many of the other swords in the exhibition lacked in favor of elaborate horimono.

Gassan Sadakazu (Sadaichi) is perhaps the best known living Japanese swordsmith. As the head of the Osaka Gassan school and grandson of the great Sadakazu who worked during Meiji and Taisho, he represents a famous family known for artistic excellence since late Shinshinto days. He is known also beyond the realm of the Japanese public and sword enthusiasts abroad due to his appearances on such television programs as "The Ascent of Man" and a recent National Geographic special devoted to Ningen Kokuho. Gassan"s work in this exhibition is comprised of

three swords. The first is an impressive Yari which is a copy of the Yamato Kanabo "Meibutsu Nihongo no Yari" made in the Yamato style and displaying a spectacular Shin no Kurikara horimono. (See Nihon no Meiso, plate 1 for the original Kanabo Yari and plate 71 for the Gassan copy). Next is a Soshu style tachi with an Ume no ryū horimono and a very lively hada. Finally, there is a katana diaplaying the famous Gassan Ayasugi hada again decorated with beautiful horimono. This sword shows a Tamaoi-ryū on the omote. (Unfortunately, there is no way to see the blades from both sides. While well displayed, the blades do not offer the intimacy of an in-hand viewing). The exuberance of Gassan's work offers a good counterpoint to the restrained feeling in Miyairi's work.

In 1981, another swordsmith was elevated to the status of Ningen Kokuho; Sumitani Masamine who, like Gassan, was represented by three blades. Like Gassan, one of them was a copy of the Yamato Kanabo Yari mentioned before. Having these two yari in the same room with each other provided a rare opportunity to compare the workmanship of two great crafstmen. Masamine is known to specialize in making copies of famous blades. One such copy is undoubtedly the most unusual blade in the show. It is a copy of the kiriba Chokuto "Seven Star Sword". This sword (the original) dates from the Nara period and is kept at the Tenno-ji in Osaka. Although I have never seen the original, the Masamine replica displays a coarse hada and a feeling of directness in the execution of the kin-zogan decoration on the blade that I would expect to find in it. The last example is a Tachi made in Bizen style with O-choji hamon and an active and beautiful ji displaying a fine Itame-hada and Utsuri. This dignified Tachi, which possessed a powerful shape reminiscent of late Kamakura works, and decorated with onl Bo-hi seemed to exhibit more variation in the forging and tempering than one is accustomed in seeing in even the best Gendai-To and avoided the feeling of muji-hada or grain forged so tightly as to be nearly indistinct. This was a drawback, for me, in the examples by Sadatsugn.

Anyone who is interested in swords should be sure to see this show, but not simply to see the examples of the swordsmith's art that are included there. One should go because of the overall context that is created by the presence of so many diverse examples of the traditional arts of Japan, by artists who have, in recent times, made outstanding contributions to the survival of excellence in these forms. To go merely for the swords would be a mistake because of the rare chance this exhibition offers to reveal the lively interrelationship between all the various disciplines represented within the matrix of Japanese artistic tradition. Students of Nippon-To will discover that a greater fluency and appreciation for Japanese Art, en toto, will benefit their appreciation of the arts related to the Japanese sword.

Finally, this show should prove to silence those boors who swagger about at gun shows running down Gendaito categorically, saying that blades made during the modern era are of no value compared with those of the past and dismiss Gendaito out of hand. This exhibit demonstrates that, while the functional usefulness of the sword had vanished, the artistic values of the swordsmith

remains very much alive. Now we can look upon Gendaito as a full fledged aspect that, with Koto, Shinto, and Shinshinto, comprises a rich and varied tradition within the history of Nihon no Bijutsu.

A fine catalogue of the show is available in softcover for $19.95. This is a high quality publication with full color plates of every object in the show. Swords are illustrated with high resolution black and white photographs. Given what $19.95 can buy these days, this book is more than worth its price. Exhibition dates' Boston M.F.A.- Nov. 3, 1982 to Jan. 2, 1983, Art Institute of Chicago - Jan 29, 1983 - March 20, 1983. Japanese American Cultural Community Center, L.A. April 5 to May 1.

(Editor's comment - The following article is entitled the same as the previous article but covers more the sword forging aspect of the exhibition.)

NINGEN KOKUHO AT THE BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

by Craig A. Bird

It is a rare opportunity for a student of Nihontō to witness the creation of a sword in the United States. Even rarer is seeing it done by the greatest tōshō alive, the Living National Treasure Gassan Sadakazu. Such was the case for those who were fortunate enough to be able to visit the Boston Museum of Fine Arts between November 3rd and November 21st, 1982. In coordination with the Ningen Kokuho (Living National Treasures) Exhibition one of the worlds greatest living tōshō was forging swords in the Museum courtyard, this was none other than Gassan Sadakazu.

The original intention of Gassan Sadakazu was to forge one blade from start to finish, however, with the skill and determination of Sadakazu, his son Sadatoshi, and the three dedicated aizuchi (hammer men) two blades were forged from sand ore all the way to the yaki-iri process. At the tōshō shop, built in the courtyard, there was a wonderful display of swords and irons depicting the process of creating Nihontō in all of its stages. Also displayed was a polishing demonstration and a beautiful hirazukuri ko-wakizashi with dragon horimono in a sukashi hi along with a demonstration of carving horimono by Gassan Sadatoshi.

The horimono started by using a number of thick chisels with heavy hammer blows all the way to the finest chisels to creat outlines of scales and eyes. The result was an exquisite tama-oi-ryū horimono. The Ōtozuchi (apprentices/aizuchi) was immersed in his task of filing the nakago first to shape the bevels from nakago-shinogi to nakago-ha and then to the nakago-mune, the nakago-mune itself, the nakago-jiri and lastly the yasurimei. The meticulous care that went into this process was amazing. This process continued through several of the two hour long demonstrations and at the point I had to leave, was still unfinished.

KOKUHO cont'd.

The forging process was undertaken by Gassan Sadatoshi, leaving the best for last, the yaka-iri process, which was done by Gassan Sadakazu. The forge was surrounded by the traditional Shimenawa and Gohei and all were dressed in white. The forge itself was a fire-brick lined furnace which was supplied with air from an electric driven fan with a manual pump which regulated the air flow. All the utensils in the kaji were those of traditional and personal manufacture by the Gassan smiths.

The process of hammering and welding the steel together was of immense interest showing the skill not only of the tōshō Sadatoshi, but also of his aizuchi who repeatedly hit a surface area of approximately ten square inches from a point of four to five feet away from the 10 inch by 14 inch anvil. The steel was hammered, folded, submerged into a charcoal and pine ash solution, reheated and then the entire process was repeated. Through constant hammering the blade finally began to take the shape of a true Nihontō. After the general shape was achieved the blade was given to the tsuchigashira aizuchi and the nakago was heated and hammered to the desirable Gassan shape. From here the blade went on to the nakazuchi, who's specialty was polishing, where the blade was rough ground to shape. The shape began to truly resemble Nihontō as the shinogi-ji, shinogi, ji, mune and kissaki were finally achieved. The blade began to take onthe shape of a Kanbun shintō katana after Inoue Shinkai (the shape and style Sadatoshi had determined to make).

Once the blade had achieved its desired shape, Sadatoshi set about to compiling the secret Gassan formula for tsuchidori mixing a dark watery clay into which he added pine as (?) and a thicker tannish clay. Once sufficiently mixed, Sadatoshi went about covering the entire blade with the tannish clay, being ever so careful to create an insulary coating of the proper thickness. Over this he applied the darker clay which would be the outline of the hamon simulating a Shinkai style notare-hamon. The blade was then allowed to dry; next would be the yaki-iri process.

One could not have asked for a better night (7:00 to 8:00 P.M.) for the yaki-iri process. The night was black and the sky was filled with storm clouds. Gassan Sadakazu entered the kaji with a respectful bow and the lights were dimmed, a red glow permeated the kaji from the forge. The blade was attached to a special handle and then placed into the charcoal of the furnace which we were assured was at over 1200 degrees Centergrade. Sadakazu began to hand pump the motor while circling his other arm checking the color of the blade. His movements and expression all depicted intense concentration and an inborn choreography mastered through a half century of sword forging.

Each time the sword was drawn from the furnace one could see the intensively bright cherry red glow of the area of the ha compared to the duller red of the rest of the blade. The process of pumping the motor and drawing out the blade was repeated several times until at one point he drew out the blade for what seemed an eternity, checked the color, poised above

the quenching trough, then plunged the blade into the water.

It was of great interest to see the blade go into the trough with nearly negative sori only to come out with an even torii-zori. The blade was then brought back to the forge and the hardness of the ha was reduced. The blade was then handed to the nakazuchi where a window was polished to determine whether or not Gassan Sadakazu and Sadatoshi had been successful. The windo revealed a beautiful notare-hamon with lusterous nioi guchi.

The excitement was not to end with the forging demonstration. Inside the museum one could view the Ningen Kokuhō Exhibit and the Nihontō exhibit in the Asia Wing. Among the collection of Ningen Kokuhō were ten examples of contemporary Nihontō. The tōshō Sadatsugu Takahashi was represented by an interesting copy of the Hochō Masamune (No. 103 in the Showa Dai Meitō Zufu; page 66 in Tantō) and a Bizen-style tachi in ko-choji midare. The tōshō Yukihira Miyairi was represented by a tachi with bo-hi, gunome-notare hamon and signed "Miyairi Shohei" and an Ō-tantō in gunome hamon with a dark jifu utsuri. Masamine Sumitani was represented by an extremely long Ō-yari, a tachi with gunome-choji hamon, and a chukutō which was a copy of the famed Shichi-sei ken (Seven-Star sword) complete with the yaki-otoshi characteristic as on the original sword (No. 24 in the Showa Dai Meitō Zufu p.8-9; Nihon to Koza, Vol. 1). Gassan Sadakazu was also well represented with two katana both with dragon horimono, one was tama-oi-ryū horimono with bo-hi no sue-hi continuing up into the kissaki and with a subtle suguha hamon. The other blade was more robust and flamboyant, having a dragon horimono wound around a branch with the dragon reaching for a flower bud, and with an active gunome-notare hamon. The former blades had vivid ayasuji-hada which dipped into the hamon to create a beautiful effect.

One of the most interesting Gassan displays was a copy of an old Ō-yari, also a copy done by Masamine of the same blade was also displayed at the museum. The yari were mounted on either side of a passageway and provided a unique opportunity for one to compare the workmanship of these two tōshō. Both yari were beautiful with full length hi in which there was kurikara horimono and suguha hamon. I, however, felt that the Gassan yari was superior in quality due to the lovely nioi-guchi, suguha hamon with ko-gunome at the point, superior horimono and better worked steel resulting in a running masame-hada (this yari can be seen in the Nihon no Meiso No. 1, p.71; Nihon tō Koza, Vol. 1, p.90).

The last Nihontō related exhibit was that of tsuba and tsuba-processes. The tsuba were by Mitsumasa Yonemitsu who worked in iron with dark patination and Higo-zogan producing Higo tsuba. Below the tsuba which shows the tsuba during eight phases of completion was a display of the production process of Higo-zogan in eleven steps. This is very interesting as well as being integral for the understanding and appreciation of tsuba.

KOKUHŌ cont'd.

Moving on to the Asia Wing one immediately is confronted by a fine Edo period Ō-yoroi in complete form with large Ō-tate-age suneate. I will not dwell on the twelve swords on exhibit at the museum other than to say they represent the Kamakura and Nambokuchō periods of sword production, with the exception of a superb Kotetsu wakizashi. The swords were represented by a Shikkake Norinaga tantō, an old Senjin tantō, a suriage tachi by Bizen Saburo Kunimune (signed Kunimune), a rare Heian period tachi by Hoki Yasutsuna, an ubu Osafune Kanemitsu tantō, an Osafune Kanemitsu tachi, an Osafune Kagemitsu in superb gold ito-maki tachi koshirae, an O-suriage Osafune Nagamitsu, an ubu Nagamitsu tachi and a Morinaga tantō. The koshirae were represented by such persons as Unno Moritoshi, Okuwa Teikan, Iwamoto-den, Goto Ichijo, Kotetsu, Hirata-den, Ishiguro Masa-tsuna, Murakami Jochiku and Kano Natsuo.

The entire experience was overwhelming and really required several weeks of attention rather than the two hectic days I was able to spend there.

The Nigen Kokuho Exhibit will remain in Boston until January 3rd, 1983 only, I am sorry to say, minus Gassan Sadakazu and Sadatoshi who left on November 22nd. According to Mr. Morihiro Ogawa the collection of permenant display items will be rotated on January 3rd and subsequently every three months or so. The long awaited Boston Museum of Fine Arts catalogue of Nihontō should become available in January or February. Keep your fingers crossed as Mr. Ogawa assured me that the catalogue would surpas even the Compton Collection catalogue in quality.

* * * *

Gassan Sadatoshi and two aizuchi preparing the iron for folding.

Gassan Sadatoshi and the tsuchigashira aizuchi hammering the iron after folding.

Gassan Sadatoshi adding the finishing touches to a tama-oi-ryū horimono.

GENDAITO BY MASASUKE

Oshigata by Jon Jensen

SUGATA - Ubu Katana of shinogi-zukuri form with medium sori measuring 2.3 cm. Graceful and light style.

NAGASA - 67.4 cm (cutting edge), 19.4 cm nakago length.

KITAE - Extremely tight hada.

HAMON - Komidari hamon in Yamashiro style with ko-kaeri (return down the back). There is abundant nie.

NAKAGO - (omote - side facing out when the sword is worn with cutting edge up on the left side of the body)

KENSHA O SHIRABE (above the mekugi-ana)
HACHIMANGU MAE NI OITE YASHIRO (below the hole)

(Ura - side of nakago against the body when worn)

TAISHO 15 NEN 5 GATSU KICHIJITSU MASASUKE KENSAKU KORE.

This translates to be: KENSHA - temple designated by the prefectural government; O-SHIRABE - this probably has a much deeper meaning but the words actually translate as "according to the reaches"; HACHIMANGU - the temple of the Hachiman; OITE - at; YASHIRO - temple compound; MAE - in front of. Put together it would read "according to the state designation and at the front of the Hachiman temple compounds".

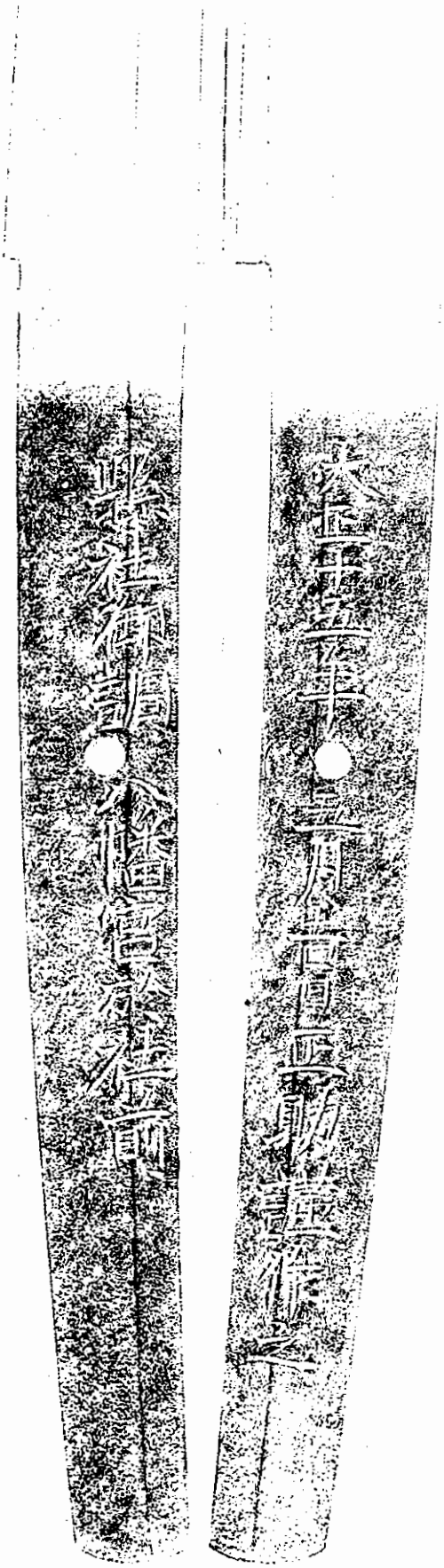
The ura is dated a lucky day in May, 1926 and states "respectfully made by Masasuke".

REMARKS -

Although not a highly recognized smith, this effort by Masasuke shows that he did have the abilities to make a very bautiful sword. As the inscription reads, it was forged outside the compounds of a temple dedicated to the Hachiman. One must wonder if it was made as a dedication to the temple or perhaps as a special order for some ranking officer or resident at that time. It is interesting to note that the date on the blade, Taisho 15, should probably read Showa 1 as there was no 15th year of Taisho. Perhaps someone can offer an explanation on this for a future Newsletter.

There is only one smith listed for this time by this name. His name is Awasa Ishosuke of Fukuyama in Bingo Province (Hiroshima). He was a student under Sakurai Masatsugu of Tokyo. He is listed in Hawley's new listing as Kawasaki Masasuke (#MAS-931).

The overall impression of the sword is one of quiet or calm. It is mounted in shirazaya with wooden habaki and ivory trim on the mekugi-ana.



ON THE STUDY OF JAPANESE SWORDS

by Han Bing Siong

The following is part of a lecture which was delivered to the Token Society of the Netherlands, by the author, in August of 1979. This lecture was being serialized in the English edition of Token Bijutsu but the series was terminated before completing the lecture. The following is the remainder of that lecture. The footnotes for the entire lecture were presented in the 1980-81 JSS/US Bulletin.

* * *

A direct reply to the question whether one has correctly judged the authenticity of a sword signature is provided by the shōshin kanteishō (certificates with the opinion of experts on the authenticity) issued as from 1979 by the Nippon Token Hozonkai. This society is the oldest sword in Japan. This year (1979) it celebrates its 90th anniversary. As it already existed before the occupation of Japan by the Allied Forces, it is a society for the preservation of Nippon tōken, Japanese swords, and not for the preservation of Nippon bijutsu tōken, Japanese art swords. In view of the artistic quality of Japanese swords [46] apart from the Zōhei-tō, Shōwa-tō, Mantetsu-tō and Murata-tō - I believe there is no difference between the two.[47]

The certificates of this society are also highly respected. One of Japan's greatest living sword polishers[48] Yoshikawa Kentaro is director and shinsa judge of this society. Swords are judged on the basis of points. As from the 1979 blades that received 60 till 69 points are awarded a "shinteishō", which is a rather simple paper. Only swords that are rated 70 points or more are awarded a double folded "shōshin kanteisho"[49] Different from the certificates of the Nippon Bijutsu Tōken Hozon Kyokai (N.B.T.H.K.) these kanteishō on the front page explicitly declare the swords concerned to be "shōshin", genuine. So these certificates are certificates of authenticity in all respects. On the second page the judges place their personal seals, which I think is a very attractive feature of these papers. Beside a description of the item concerned on the second page the period of manufacture is mentioned. This is important in case there are various generations of smiths signing almost in the same way. Essential information like this is provided by the N.B.T.H.K. only as regards the important swords. Once a year the Nippon Tōken Hozonkai organizes a "Yu-shu-saku" shinsa for selecting the superior swords out from those that have received a "shōshin kanteishō [50]. So the quality of workmanship of the swords is a criterion as well beside the genuineness. I assume the state of preservation, the age and the scarcity also count. The "Yu-shu-saku" class can be compared with the "Jūyō Tōken" class of the N.B.T.H.K. The records of the "Yu-shu-saku" swords are also published like those of the "Jūyō Tōken" and the "Tokubetsu Jūyō Tōken". Up till 1979 the Nippon Tōken Hozonkai issued four kinds of certificates: Yū-saku, Shū-saku, Yū-shū-saku and Sai-yū-shū-saku [51], which referred to different levels of workmanship. Personally I would prefer if both the authenticity and the rank of workmanship were mentioned in a certificate.

It is also the level of workmanship to which the certificates of the Tōen Sha refer. This society of the late Murakami Kosuke is also of importance in Japan. It issues three kinds of certificates: Jō-saku (superior workmanship), Jō-jō saku (exceptionally superior workmanship) and Sai-jō saku (top class workmanship). The "Jō saku" certificates are white, those for "Jō-jō saku" are beige, and the top class papers are green [52]. The qualifications of these certificates bring me to another subject.

All the above mentioned certificates are issued for individual swords only. In other words they give a judgment on the class of a particular sword, not on the rank of the swordsmith concerned. So if one acquires a sword by a smith, one of whose blades is a "Kokuho" (National Treasure), the collector must not consider his sword to be of National Treasure class itself.

The classification of swords and that of swordsmiths are entirely different things. Although the workmanship of one particular swordsmith of course varies from blade to blade, his rank is decisive for the class to which his blades in general belong.

At present the ranks of the swordsmiths are usually expressed by money values or by points derived from money values, like in the books of Hawley listing the names of all recorded swordsmiths [53]. In my personal opinion the use of money values for the classification of swordsmiths has the disadvantage that money values may also be influenced by other factors than the quality of workmanship of the smith concerned, like scarcity and the period in which that swordsmith lived. I personally prefer a clasification of swordsmiths according to their ability as shown in the quality of their workmanship. I mean the classification or "i-retsu" as given by Fujishiro Yoshio in his Nippon Tōkō Jitten and in his certificates [54], by Shibata Mitsuo in several of his books, and by Iimura Kasho in his Shinshintō Taikan. It is the classification of "Chu-saku", "Jō-jō saku" and "Sai-jō saku" [55], also used by Sasama Yoshihiko for the classification of the makers of helmets [56]. The word "saku" indicates that this classification is based upon the quality of workmanship. It is the same classification used by the Tōen Sha in its certificates. But now it is not for appraising individual swords; it is for the classification swordsmiths.

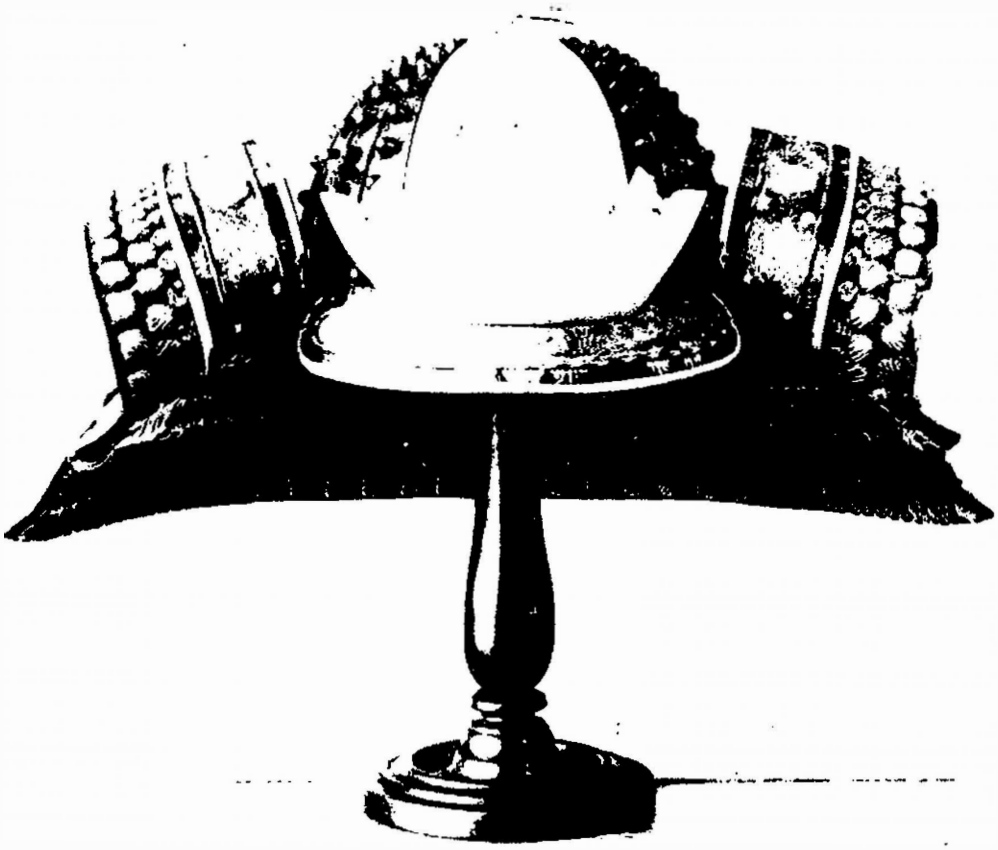
As Homma Kunzan puts it in the first issue of the English edition of Tōken Bijutsu, "Students should try to pay close attention to such important factors as the quality of the blade, the period of making, and the ranking of the maker" [57]. The Japanese sword is the most magnificent edged weapon in the world [58], it is true, but nevertheless there are superb Japanese swords, excellent ones, very good, good, middle class and low class ones. To know the rank of the swordsmith is essential because only by examining the swords of smiths of high standing can one get an idea of what really good workmanship means.

To know the rank is also important because the higher the rank of the swordsmith whose name is inscribed on a sword, the greater the risk that the blade has a counterfeit signature.

As expounded, when a blade is submitted for appraisal, it will among others be examined on its quality. As the different ranks of the swordsmiths are based upon the quality of their workmanship, the rank of the smith who made the blade is also essential in appraising the sword concerned. Generally speaking swords of high ranking smiths have a greater chance to receive higher grades of certificates. For instance, the swords that through the years have become "Jūyō Tōken", are for the greater part swords made by swordsmiths of "Jō saku" rank or higher. This is the case in particular as regards shintō. Shinshintō that have received "Jūyō Tōken" status are mostly swords by smiths of "Jō-jō saku" and "Sai-jo saku" rank. Of course exceptions do exist, because even a mediore swordsmith can once or twice excel and make a masterpiece [59]. Or a particular sword can be exceptionally old, exceptionally rare or exceptionally well preserved. Another example to illustrate the importance of the rank of a swordsmith generally swords only qulaify for green "ninteishō", if the pattern of the steel and the hamon are still sufficiently visible and if the sword is otherwise also in a reasonable condition. However, I have experienced that a sword immediately received a green certificate, even though it was in a terrible state. The hamon was almost invisible, the pattern of the steel was completely indiscernible due to scratches, stains and rust, and there was a serious nick at the edge. For swords of middle class smiths it would be impossible to pass the shinsa in such a condition. But this sword had the authentic signature of a smith who according to Shibata Mitsuo was one of the five shinshinto smiths of "Sai-jō saku".

As Yoshikawa Kentaro has put it [60], "for learning about Japanese swords it is absolutely necessary to study authentic examples." Therefore we need confirmation of our judgment as regards the genuineness of the signatures on our swords. As genuine Japanese swords are not available in great numbers in Europe, in our study we cannot but work in a differnet way than the Japanese do. We must first concentrate our study on the authenticity of the signature. Only after having received confirmation of the correctness of our conclusions can we proceed in our study to acquire knowledge of the characteristics of the swords we happen to have at our disposal. If, for instance, the swordsmith concerned according to literature often made "imo no tsuru" ("potato vine", a thick kind of kinsuji), then we look for something in the blade that answers to this description. Having found it, we know how "imo no tsuru" looks like. If farther on we come across another blade by the same smith or his school, we will be able to recognise the "imo no tsuru". This will help us in identifying that sword only. In that case we will be able to stick to the Japanese rules and examine the sword's identity not just by the signature on it, but also by the characteristics in its steel. And if the swordsmith concerned is of good rank, then we can learn to recognise the quality of sword characteristics as well. By seeing the workmanship in swords by smiths of considerable rank we know how the characteristics of a blade of good quality look like. And so we must be able to tell a good blade from a lesser one.

* * * *



REWARD

£500 OFFERED FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE RECOVERY OF A JAPANESE HELMET STOLEN IN CHISWICK AREA ON THE 17th. JANUARY 1983..SIMILAR TO THE ABOVE (WITHOUT RAISED STUDS ON THE BOWL) COMPLETE WITH BLACK FACE MASK AND WHITE BEARD. Signed Muneyuki

PLEASE PHONE 01-994 7607 Mr. Harding.

CONTACT: Clive sinclaire

Subject to the usual conditions.

LETTERS FROM THE MEMBERS -

Occassionally letters are received from members in which questions of general interest are asked or comments are made which deserve sharing. In an effort to share some of these comments and letters a "Letters from the Members" section of the Newsletter is being initiated.

Question: I would like to know if the club couldn't spend some of the treasury money on a translation of Fujishiro and if not, why not?

Van Heldorf
Houston, Texas

Answer: An English translation of Fujishiro's Nihontō Tōkō Jiten; Kōtō and Shintō-hen was to be a Society project. A partial translation draft was offered to the Society by David Pepin several years ago. Meanwhile, Steven Winkley acquired sole permission from Fujishiro to produce the translation for sale. Much conversation was had between all the people involved. As often happens, some misunderstandings occurred resulting in the eventual deteriation of the project. Last word was that David Pepin and Steven Winkley were to handle the project as a private venture. No further word has been heard about this in the last six or eight months. This would certainly be a fine Society project and, if the venture has for some reason again become bogged down, perhaps it needs to be reconsidered as a project of the Society and seen through to completion. Be it a Society project or a private one, such a translation would be a great boost to sword study for the non-Japanese speaking collector.

Comment: I enclose a copy of details of a recently available publication. I am sure it will prove of interest to many of the JSS of US members.

Tales of Samurai Honor, by Ihara Saikaku, translated, with an introduction by Caryl Ann Callahan. ¥900 plus ¥250 postage. Order from: Monumenta Nipponica, Sophia University, 7-1 Kioi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102, Japan.

Major Ian Brookes

Many truly encouraging comments have come in praising the Nihonto Newsletter reprint project. Many thanks to all of the people who have purchased copies and who have taken the time to write and express their satisfaction with the publication.

NEW MEMBERS -

It is a pleasure to start the year off with a long list of new members to be welcomed into the Society.

Kenneth R. Wilkins,
Michael J. Hooder,
Bruce W. Kowalski,
Dean J. Hadcock,
Earnest A. Cox, Jr.
William Truckenmiller,
Richard Conners,
K. Mark Schuhs,
Bill Oldring,
John C. Watkins,
Loal G. Arnold,
David A. Conklin,
Leonard S. Duff,
Roger P. Martinson,
* K. Sugimoto,
Richard Bunch,
James J. Ragan, III,

* Paul C. Gimondo,

* Fred Seay,
Chris Sora,

*
Earle J. Stone,
F. G. Bodinet,
chard E. McLemore,

*

1982 TREASURER'S REPORT -

Cash on hand 1/1/82	Savings Account	$15,672.53	
	Checking Account	387.11	
		$16,059.64	$16,059.64
Income	Dues	$ 9,500.00	
	Supplies/ads	25,554.24	
	Interest	641.61	
		$35,695.85	$51,755.49
Expenditures	Printing (Publications)	$ 6,586.00	
	Printing (misc.)	517.00	
	Postage	6,106.00	
	Clerical	2,100.00	
	Supplies (resale)	9,854.00	
	Secretary	100.00	
	Library	94.00	
	NL Editor's fee	250.00	
	Yamanaka Honorarium	800.00	
	Translations	407.00	
	Reprint project	14,434.00	
	Miscellanious	26.37	
		$41,274.37	$10,481.12

Cash on hand 12/31/82

Checking	$ 166.98
Savings	10,314.14
	$10,481.12

Nihontō Newsletter Reprint Project -

The project has been very successful with around 170 copies sold by the end of 1982, leaving some 32 copies in stock, yet to be sold. Albert Yamanaka's portion of the profits ($1,500) has already been paid him. The Society's profits will come from the remaining unsold stock and will amount to around $2,500 at sell-out. Many thanks to everyone who worked (and who purchased copies) towards making this project a success.

Newsletter/Bulletin costs -

Although exact figures are unavailable at this writing, it looks like the cost of publishing six issues of the Newsletter plus a Bulletin, along with a roster, supply list, and other Society operations, does exceed membership dues by about $2 per member. However, the profits realized from supply sales and from special projects off-set this difference, allowing the Society to maintain a very reasonable annual membership dues amount.

Ron Hartmann - Treasurer

A PROPOSAL FOR REGIONAL RESEARCH GROUPS -

I would like to propose the organization of a set of regional research groups to seek out and document the important swords in the holdings of public and private museums and similar institutions outside Japan.

Several dozen groups could blanket the U.S., Canada, and perhaps other countries. The idea is for each group to have an experienced collector as its chairman and he would work with others to establish a preliminary list of institutions in his region, contact the responsible parties there, visit the institution with the right equipment to do careful oshigata and record the physical characteristics of the blades that seem preliminarily to be important, pass that material along to a vetting committee which would further confirm the preliminary imputs, and finally publish the material as a monograph, as part of the Bulletin or periodically in the Newsletter.

I would be willing to serve as an initial clearing house for the organization of such groups. The first tasks would be to map out non-overlapping areas, designate or recognize the election or selection of chairman, and finally provide each chairman with suitable credentials (from the Board or Chairman of the JSS/US?) so that the right doors can open.

This is only an idea, but it seems to me that much could usefully come from such a project. There are many fine and unknown swords out th ere, swords that often aren't seen and probably will never enter the market, but that ought to be documented and known.

Arnold Frenzel

*

* * *

COMMENTS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP -

During the course of the year many, many letters come into the Newsletter, particularly at the end of the year during dues time, at which time members express their satisfaction with the organization. It is these comments which help make the effort of publishing a good paper worthwhile, but the comments seldom go beyond the editor's desk. However, being in a somewhat sentimental mood this writing, perhaps it is a good time to share some of these comments. Certainly they deserve sharing.

> Laurie Allen, Australia - "Thanks for such an interesting and informative Newsletter throughout 1982. The knowledge and expertise produced by your growing membership is reflected in the ever improving quality of your Newsletter."
>
> David Shorey, Main - 'I have enjoyed being a member very much and my knowledge has increased immensely because of the information that your society has provided. Looking forward to another year of membership."

COMMENTS cont'd.

> Louis Mastracci, Pennsylvania - "I'm a new member of the JSS/US and am still surprised at the amount of quality information the society sends its members. In a world plaqued by rip-offs, I can truly say that this has been the only time that I've ever received more than my money's worth. I would like to thank you and all of the contributing members of the Society for a job very well done."

What more can be said! If such comments do not get the knowledgable "old timers" off their duffs and onto their typewriters, and contribute to the Society publications, then something is lacking in their sense of responsibility as senior members of the JSS/US. Arnold Frenzel, Bulletin editor is hurting for material - the Newsletter is always in need of material. Again.....what more can be said!

CALENDER OF EVENTS -

Members have often asked that show dates, exhibits, special events, be noted in the Newsletter early in the year so that vacations and other travel plans can be scheduled. To this end, please notify the Newsletter of such events as soon as the dates are scheduled - so that they may be included in the next issue. This also goes for local meetings, whatever, in any part of the world.

> LIVING NATIONAL TREASURE EXHIBIT - January 29/March 20, Art Institute of Chicago, Morton Wing, Michigan Avenue at Adams Street. April 5/May 1, Japanese American Cultural Community Center, Los Angeles, California.
>
> SOUTHEAST TOKENKAI - Exhibition - Birmingham, Alabama, March 18-20, 1983 (see ad this issue).
>
> TOKEN STUDY GROUP SPRING MINI-SHOW - Noon to 4:30PM, Howard Johnson Motel, Kenosha, Wisconsin. Contact: Ted Wysocky for details. (see Roster).
>
> NEW ENGLAND JAPANESE SWORD SOCIETY - Regularly scheduled meetings (April is next). Contact: Jim Stathis (see Roster).

BIRMINGHAM SWORD SHOW -

Late word has it that sensei John Yumoto will lecture on Bizen swords during the coming Southeast Tokenkai Birmingham sword show. This area of study will no doubt be of great interest to many of our members. To assist in this study, perhaps it would be wise to bring a polished, authenticated example of this school of swordmaking for the exhibition room. Please read the advertisement in this issue for details if you can bring such an example for exhibition.

BUY-SELL-TRADE ITEMS -

This section of the Newsletter is offered as a FREE service to the membership, providing an opportunity to advertise for specific needs or to announce specific items available for sale or trade. Ads should be kept brief and not too elaborate. Business ads are not allowed. Direct all ad copy to the Newsletter.

- WANTED - Information on IZUMI (NO) KAMI SENJUIN MORIKUNI (M0351), also Guntō, Showatō, Gendaitō and inexpensive daitō in full koshirae, Jingasa, Japanese Orders and Medals, pre-Meiji/post-Meiji coins. Reasonable condition/prices/trades considered.
  Contact: Robert Masamori

- WANTED - Tessen (iron war fans), solid non-folding type.
  Contact: Ed Pilsitz, Jr.

- WANTED - Kendo armor; iron kojiri for iai swords; iron fuchi-gashira and iron menuki.
  Contact: Jim Baize

- WANTED - Menuki in "iris" motif (shakudo preferred) and soroimono tanto fittings of "iris" motif. Also looking for tanto by SAGAMI (NO) KAMI FUJIWARA MASATSUNE, 2nd generation.
  Contact: Robert M. Smith

- WANTED - Arrowheads, quality items, any shape or size. Signed examples preferred but not essential. Also seek research material, references on yano-ne.
  Contact: Laurie Allen

- WANTED - Kodzuka of good quality depicting Goto gold dragon(s) on silver waves. Must be good quality.
  Contact: Earle J. Stone

- WANTED - Samurai helmets, kabutos, body armor, iron face masks, somens, quality armor. Will accept suits needing work as long as helmets are good.
  Contact: John W. Ward

- FOR SALE - Twenty tsuba, two mounted tsuka, four kodzuka, six pair menuki, ten fuchi/kashira. Some top quality. Tachi-mounted 26½" katana signed HIZEN (NO) KUNI KATSUMITSU. S.A.S.E. for photos/prices.
  Contact: William Kerwin

BUY-SELL-TRADE cont'd.

- FOR SALE - Books, from my collection. All aspects of Japanese art, including some on swords and martial arts. All reasonably priced. U.S. inquiries only. Send S.A.S.E. to: Doug McDonough

- FOR SALE - Fire Viewing Helmet. Lacquered paper, $190. Banner, hand dyed, 50" x 26", white w/ large blue crest of moko melon/two blue stripes, $110. Contact: Ed Pilsitz, Jr.

- FOR SALE - Wakizashi, koto, shinogi-zukuri, tachi-mei to SANEMORI or NAOMORI, flaws, saya. Cash/trade. Contact: Steven Frankfort

- FOR SALE - Accepting mail auction bids on all types of swords. Due to coming marriage, half my collection must go, some very good pieces included. Large group of furnitures also. S.A.S.E. please. Contact: Bill Harling

- FOR SALE - The Jack Paras Collection of swords/fittings Public sale the month of February at Toys for Big Boys, No.5 University Ave., Los Gatos, CA. Contact: Brian Powers - (408) 354-8180 (Although a business ad, it was felt that the membership would benefit from knowing of this)

- FOR SALE - Fine selection of menuki, tsuba, fuchi-gashira, one woodblock print. List and photographs. Contact: Ron Hartmann

NEW ENGLAND JAPANESE SWORD SOCIETY ELECTIONS -

The 7th annual Business Meeting and election was held at the December meeting of the NEJSS. The following officers were re-elected for a one year term: President.....H. Tadao Imoto
Program Chairman.....Betty Leavitt
Secretary-Treasurer..Gerard Morin
Newsletter Editor....James Stathis

ATTENTION ANYONE LOSING SWORDS -

A good number of members have contacted the Society over the past year or so, complaining about their loss of swords to a particular polisher agent. Although various law enforcement agencies are already involved in this sham, it is felt that the Society could compile a complete list of what swords are involved here. The number of swords, and the gross dollar value, appears to be alarming. The list would be kept confidential and be for the Society files and, if requested, for the use of any agency seeking help in this matter. Please - if you have lost blades in this manner, send a list of the kind of swords lost, maker, length, etc., and any other details, to the Newsletter. Your immediate attention in this tally would be appreciated.

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER AND SUPPIES LISTING -

An up-to-date membership Roster will be completed and mailed to all paid up members along with the next issue of the journal. We are trying a computerized Roster this year in the hope of saving retyping the list each year.

The Supply List 1983 is awaiting the final pricing and availability of certain needed supplies and books. This too will be readied and mailed out along with the next issue of the journal.

NIHONTO NEWSLETTER REPRINT MISSING PAGES -

Too many personal obligations, Society chores, and other demands upon available time have delayed the pulling and printing of these missing pages. However, they are now pulled and are being readied for the printer. All purchasers of the Reprint sill automatically receive a copy of these pages.

Remember, if you have not received a copy of the cross-index for the Reprint, simply write the Newsletter and ask for one. All recent purchasers should have received an index along with their copy of the Reprint. It was only the early orders that lacked it.

A reminder! Our supply of Nihonto Newsletter Reprint is quickly running out. It is unlikely that this publication will ever be reprinted again because of costs. If you are thinking about ordering a set, stop thinking about it an fire a check into the Newsletter with your order.

$90 per 3-vol. set, U.S. members ($100 non-members)
$100 per 3-vol. set, Canada and all other foreign members ($110 non-members)

A WORD OF THANKS -

Many thanks to the members who responded to your editor's plea for orders of the Book of the Sword. A good number of members did order copies and this did greatly relieve our storage problem. The various "comments" to my wife were also greatly enjoyed. She thanks you too! Of course we still have many copies on hand so feel free to continue to order them.

Book of the Sword -$8.00pp -

BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE SOCIETY -

A more elaborate and complete descriptive ad, and possibly a review or two, will be coming soon on the following two books. Meanwhile, since many members have already heard how excellent these books on kotō blades are, orders are being taken now.

Nihonto Zuikan; Koto-hen - Oshigata of nakago and hamon of the upper portion of the blades, some other information. Excellent printing and binding of quality. 1,063 pages. Hard bound with slip-cover. Price: $200 U.S. members,pp. Canadian and other foreign members must add $20 extra per order to cover parcel post/insurance costs.

Yumei Koto Taikan - Mostly oshigata much like the Zuikan book but with more photographs, often taken from other texts. Some tables and helpful information. Excellent quality printing and binding. Hard bound with slip-cover. Price: $200 U.S. members, pp. Canadian and other foreign members must add $200 extra per order.

Both books are excellent and they do compliment one another by their contents. What one lacks, the other has. If possible financially, members are urged to buy both. If not, the Zuikan book does offer the largest number of smiths represented. These books will hopefully be able to be kept in stock here in St.Louis if at all possible. If our stock would run out, backorders will be notified immediately and advised of the expected time delay.

ROSTER CONFIDENTIALITY -

As a reminder, any member wishing to remain confidential on our Membership Roster can do so by requesting this in writing to the Newsletter Editor. Such members will be listed simply by name and state (or country).

INDEXING PROJECT COORDINATOR NEEDED -

The proposed indexing project (cross-indexing sources of information in various publications) has started, but we are in need of a coordinator. If you can help, contact the Newsletter.

ALBERT YAMANAKA INQUIRIES -

Anyone having questions about outstanding dealings with the late Albert Yamanaka (polishing, purchases of books and supplies) can contact John Yumoto about these things. John has offered his assistance with these matters. If you do write John - PLEASE - include a self address stamped envelope. Contact John Yumoto:

— NEWSLETTER DEADLINE —

MARCH 19th

All material and ads intended for inclusion in the next issue of the NEWSLETTER must be in the hands of the Editor by the above closing date.

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