

THE TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN
for the Study and Preservation of Japanese Swords and Fittings



HON. PRESIDENT, KAZUTARO TORIGOYE, Dr. Litt.
SECRETARY, JEFFREY RODFORD.

PROGRAMME.

NEXT MEETING.

Wednesday, 4th May 1966, 7.30 p.m. Fulham
Conservative Club, 4 Shorrolds Road, S.W.6.

PROGRAMME

The first half of the next meeting will be given over to business and time will be allowed for a general get together of members. It will be an opportunity for members to bring any new acquisitions they may wish to show or indeed anything they may think of interest. Should you have any questions that you feel you would like answered it might be an ideal time to approach members who could well be of help.

LECTURE

After the usual break for refreshment, Mr. Maitland will give a lecture on Lacquer with particular reference to its use on sword scabbards. Those members who know Mr. Maitland will also know of his keen interest in the lacquer wares of Japan on which subject he must be considered an expert, and this quite apart from his study of the sword. So much time has been spent on discussion of the blade and its metal mounts that the art of the lacquer worker in respect of the sword has been somewhat neglected. It is with this in mind that this lecture is being given. Once again we would ask members to bring any examples of good quality or unusual lacquered scabbards they may have, for exhibition.

LAST MEETING

We had quite a full programme at our last meeting and the first half of the evening was devoted to a lecture by John Harding. This was the introductory lecture of a series he proposes to give on the small fittings of the sword and this first was concerned with MENUKI, the smallest of all. He confined his comments on this occasion to the GOTO school and explained many good points for recognizing GOTO MENUKI. We all look forward to his future talks and hope he can be persuaded to publish his findings for the benefit of the Society.

The second half of the evening was a sword appraisal session. A number of blades were judged by members and their various merits and demerits noted. Afterwards, Bon Dale held a "post mortem" on the blades, allowing members to compare their findings with his. Although time did not allow us to go into all the blades shown, I think sufficient was said to give those who pitted their wits, a fair indication as to how well they can judge a blade.

TO KEN INFORMATION
LEAFLETS

The Society has had a number of leaflets printed which set out the aims and objects of the Society and also give information with regard to meetings and membership. A membership form is included in it. If any corresponding members have the opportunity of distributing these to any persons who might be interested, would they kindly contact the Secretary, c/o 17 Piccadilly Arcade, London, W. 1., and they will be sent some copies.

JOURNAL

The next Journal has gone to press and it is to be hoped, will be out before the next meeting. This being so we are now looking forward to future publications for which we of course need material. If any members have any articles which they would like published will they kindly let the Secretary have them for consideration. Should you have an idea for an article not yet written but which you would be willing to produce in time for the next or some subsequent publication, please let us have particulars, and we will help with research if possible.

BLADE POLISHING

John Harding has opened a contact whereby he tells us it will be possible to have a blade polished in Japan and returned within three to four months. The initial transport charge for this will be £6, plus later, polishing costs and return. Members interested are asked to contact John, and in any case he will probably have more to say at the next meeting.

NEW MEMBERS

The names of new members are not published this month because it is proposed to send out a revised list of all members in the near future.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Overseas members, when renewing their subscriptions, are politely requested to bear in mind that when cheques in dollars are paid in to the Society's bankers they have to be sent to the Foreign Bills Purchased Dept. at Barclays Bank Head Office and that after they have been changed into Sterling at the prevailing rate of exchange, the Society is generally charged a commission of 2s.6d. and a shilling for postage.

From one three-dollar cheque for example, the Society received the sum of 17s.11d. On a cheque for four dollars and twenty cents, £1.6s.5d.

SWORD GLOSSARY (Continued)

- CHISA KATANA. Smaller or lesser Katana, worn at Court. Distinguished by normally being somewhat smaller than the standard Katana; the hilt binding, itomaki, is crossed over the top of the usually plain horn kashira. Various colours of itomaki represent the different Court ranks of the original wearers.
- CHU Medium, as against Ko (small) and Ō (large), a word often used in sword references, for exemplifying the following.
- CHU-GISSAKI or Chu-kissaki, a medium sized kissaki on a sword blade.
- CHU-SUGUHA A medium width straight yakiba or hamon, also called NAKA-SUGUHA. Found on the work of numerous schools, almost without exception Shinto, and in particular blades of the Tadayoshi school.
- CHU-SAKU "Medium make". A sword valuation used in the better Japanese swordsmith dictionaries, i.e. "Nihon Toko Jiten"; and the lowest rank given, the other ranks or valuations being, "Medium Superior"; "Superior"; "Superior, Superior"; and the top rank "Very best (or exceptional) Superior". Also often used now on orikami given by a panel of experts, rather than the old valuations in gold coins.
- CHŌJI-HA One of the most glorious yakiba found on sword blades, used by many schools, but at its best on blades by the Yoshioka Ichimonji, Katayama Ichimonji, Early Bozen and Early Osafune Schools. There are many variations of Choji-ha and combinations with other styles of hamon, for example the following.
- CHŌJI-MIDARE-HA Irregular "cloves" (Choji hamon being representative of Clove leaves); in this form the "cloves" are irregularly spaced and interwoven with more angular forms.
- CHIKAI Or Jikei, a shining line of martensite in the jihada of a blade, that is between the top of the hamon and the shinogi ridge.
- CHUKAN ZORI Reference to curvature, a short straight blade.
- CHOKUTO A straight blade, without curvature, usually found in later swords when a fashion for this type of katana developed.

GLOSSARY OF ARMOUR TERMS

- DŌ** A cuirass. The body armour for breast and back, whether of scale or solid plate construction, hinged on in one continuous piece.
- DŌ JIRI** Lit. End of the body. The bottom plate at the back of the DŌ. A modern term not used in ancient times.
- DŌ MARU** A scale, cuirass, without hinges opening on the right side. First used by infantry during the HEIAN and KAMAKURA periods but later adopted by the SAMURAI classes suitably mounted and embellished as befitted their station. During the EDO period fine quality DŌ MARU were produced in imitation of the earlier styles.
- DZU NARI** Lit. Head shaped. A term applied to a type of helmet with a high back. It is the direct successor to the AKODA NARI form but its shape is much more distinctive being noticeably bulbous at the back when viewed from the side or rear.
- DAI SHINODARE** A type of SHINODARE (decorative strips, usually of stylized KEN form overlaying the plates of a helmet) which have plates of the same outline below them somewhat in the fashion of a washer.
- DAIYENZAN** Lit. Great round mountain. An early style of helmet first found in the 10th century. It is small and low in form and almost completely round with a large TEHEN (hole in the top). This might well be considered to be the classical shape for a helmet. Other names for the same form are ZARU NARI (basket shape) and Ō-BOSHI (Great Star).
- DONSU** Silk damask. A material recommended for use on sleeves and thigh guards of armour.