

THE TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN



Hon. President: B.W. Robinson, M.A.B. Litt.
for the Study and Preservation of Japanese Swords and Fittings

Secretary: 16 Brightwells, Clancarty Road, S.W.6.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX (Tel: 01-736 6838)

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HON. PRESIDENT KAZUTARO TORIGOE, D.F.J.I. XXXXXXXXXXXX

SECRETARY, 17, PICCADILLY ARCADE LONDON, S.W.1. (HYDe Park 6496)

PROGRAMME

NEXT MEETING Monday, February 3rd 1969 at the Masons Arms,
Maddox Street, London W.1. at 7.30 p.m.

FOLLOWING MEETING: Monday, March 3rd 1969 at the Masons Arms at
7.30 p.m.

NOTE Meetings are always held on the first Monday of
each month except when coinciding with a Bank
Holiday, in which case the meeting is held on the
following Monday.

LAST MEETING Was on Monday, December 2nd, the first part being
devoted entirely to business in hand and discussion
of future plans for the Society. A fairly lively
argument developed on the conduct of future
meetings. It was suggested that in order to give
some form to meetings a monthly subject should be
decided upon. This method has been adopted by
the Art Circle of The Japan Society for many years,
and it was felt by some of us who know these
meetings, that we might well try this in To Ken
meetings. Briefly, the method is to announce, for
example, that the subject for the next meeting will
be "Plum Blossom" and all members are asked to
bring objects illustrating aspects of this.
Because our range of "objects" is somewhat limited
it was suggested that we might expand our range
and bring other forms of Japanese Art to meetings.
These would include netsuke, prints, lacquer
boxes, inro, etc., etc.

Personally, I think this would be a good idea; I
have always advocated that a wide knowledge of all
Japanese Art is of great benefit in bringing more
understanding to the specialized knowledge of the
collector: collecting just a small part of the
whole. To put it another way, the Japanese sword
is not something which exists alone and outside
the rest of Japanese art. The decoration of the
sword is, in fact, a combination of many other art

forms. The same spirit and feeling exists in a fine sword blade or in an ink painting by a Zen master. A knowledge of one helps in understanding the other.

However, after some discussion, no firm conclusion was reached and the matter is still in abeyance. We will, I'm sure, discuss these ideas further in future meetings.

It was agreed some time ago that we would have another film evening. This has taken a long time to organize but at last all bookings have been made. Details below, I hope all members will be there and will bring guests. The same message also for the special Kendo evening announced below, please arrive in large numbers with hundreds of guests.

Journal No.4 is under discussion; this is long overdue and we hope to have news of it being prepared for print before much more time elapses. David Tudor Williams is Editor and Malcolm Hutchinson is helping him with the production. If members have any small advertisements they would like to include will they please address them immediately to the Secretary at Society Headquarters. We have made before, a small charge of 2d per word for this service, and will do so again. This gives 30 words for five shillings or other equivalent which is cheap. Remember you get world-wide circulation!

After the Business the meeting moved into general discussion and examination of swords, mounted and unmounted, newly polished to needing a polish, which members had brought along. One point from the last Programme was discussed; the article on Ivory Swords and some interesting remarks were made regarding these by Mr. Fuji which I will include in this Programme.

FINANCIAL
STATE OF THE
SOCIETY

Receipts and Payments Account for the period
ended 30th September 1968.

	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Payments</u>
Balances in Hand - Brought		
Forward.		
Bank	230. 6. 9.	
Cash	6. -.10.	
Subscriptions	227.14. 5.	
Journals, Printing and		
Stationery	19. -. -. .	131.15. 8.
Dinner	46. -. -. .	55. -. -. .
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Carried Fwd £	529 2. -. .	186.15. 8..

	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Payments</u>
Brought Fwd.	529. 2. -.	186.15. 8.
Meetings		34. -. -.
Exhibition	97. -. -.	248. 2. -.
Catalogues and Advertisements	475. 4. 6.	295.11. 9.
Postage	19.16. 7.	50. 8. 4.
Bank Charges		3.19. 6.
Typewriter		33. 5. -.
Repairs to Typewriter		1.15. -.
Accountancy		13.13. -.
Balances in Hand - Carried		
Forward - Bank		229. -.10.
Cash		24.12. -.
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	£1121. 3. 1.	£1121. 3. 1.
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SPECIAL
INVITATION
EVENING

The Society has arranged with the NENRIKI KENDO DOJO, Trinity School, Harper Road, Elephant and Castle, London S.E.1. for an invitation evening on Friday the 31st January 1969 at 7.30 p.m.

Kendo, Kata, Iai and possibly Naginata will be demonstrated. The Kata will be with real swords. Mr.R.Knutsen and Mr.O.Fuji will show how swords were used. To all To Ken members this is a MUST. Will all those members going, please notify Sydney Divers, "Hunters Moon", Aspley Guise, Bletchley, Bucks. A stamped and addressed envelope is included with this Programme for all U.K. members. Please enclose a slip of paper in this saying whether you will be attending or not, and put it in the post. Any overseas member who may be in London at this time will also, of course, be most welcome; if you will be in this fortunate position, please notify Syd Divers at his address given here.

This should be a fine evening, full attendance please, bring guests, free admission and I'm told sherry for the audience only.

FILM EVENING

On Tuesday April 8th 1969, we will be showing Akira Kurosawa's "Throne of Blood" with Toshiro Mifune. This will be shown at Holborn Library. Full details will be published later, we will also publish a film synopsis and biographical notes in the next Programme. For the moment, please reserve this evening.

NORTHERN
BRANCH OF THE
TO KEN
SOCIETY

Next Meeting. Tuesday, January 21st 1969 at the Seven Oaks Hotel, 5 Nicholas Street, Manchester at 7.30 p.m.

Subject: Kodzuka. Bryan Bateman has promised to

bring along a very unusual collection of kodzuka for discussion. Members are requested to bring items in this field.

Last Meeting. The Chairman gave a financial report for the current year, and a new levy was agreed to cover the cost of the premises for 1969. The Chairman then offered himself for re-election and was re-elected. It was decided that a Deputy Chairman was required and Ian Bottomley was elected to the post. The Chairman was pleased to report that the swords collected for polishing at the last meeting have arrived at the polishers in Japan. Then the items at the meeting were examined and discussed.

Ian Bottomley showed a complete suit of armour by Nagato Yasukiyo, a pupil of Miochin Muneyasu, a helmet of unusual form and a mail shirt with detachable sleeves. More detail in an article from the owner.

Bernard Marsh brought along four helmets and an iron jingasa. They were a Hineno three plate, a 32 plate suji-bachi possibly Kaga work, a 62 plate hoshi-bachi with 1890 rivets signed Nagamichi, a 16 plate suji-bachi with shinodare signed Haruta Mitsusada. This last helmet had provision for igaki but they were all missing.

Bryan Bateman passed round a selection of arrowheads covering most of the known forms. There was a lively discussion as to whether the larger ones were practical to shoot from a bow. Ian Bottomley, who is an archer, said that he doubted that most of the decorative ones would be much use because a head of over 4 ozs. is impractical however much fletching there is. So it rather poses the question of why they were made; does anyone have any comments?

Mr. Jolley showed a magnificent stirrup, silver inlaid on iron and a Mogari yari by Ujishige, UJ 88 or one of the later generations.

Andrew Ford showed a naginata by KA 678 in a good state of polish, the shaft complete with hadome and a black lacquer scabbard for the blade. Also a fireman's lacquer helmet and a pair of stirrups.

Finally a katana that was produced at the last meeting caused some discussion as to whether the tang had been welded on. Mr. Jolley said that he would X-ray it and he produced the negative at the meeting showing that our theories were unfounded. There was no trace of any interference.

FOR SALE

Captain A. Black, of 41 Droomer Drive, Windermere, Westmoreland, has written to say that he has the following books surplus to his library. Will interested members please write direct to Captain Black for details.

1. HAWKSHAW COLLECTION by Joly. A valuable book in perfect condition, 50 plates with tissue interleaf.
2. SWORD AND SAME by Joly. One of the original 200 copies printed in 1912. Perfect condition.
3. SHINKICHI HARA. (2 vols. 1931). Complete and clean. Binding a little weak, in paper covers.
4. JACOBY. A treatise in German published in Hamburg. Illustrated, dealing with Higo province sword furniture.
5. GILBERTSON COLLECTION (1882). List of swords and furniture from the collection. Paperback.

AN APPEAL

An Appeal for all to join in the Serious Study of Sword Fittings, published by Japanese Sword Club of Southern California. by Robert E. Haynes.

A history of the scholarly study of the fittings for the Japanese sword must begin with the writings of Akiyama Kyusaku. Akiyama was born in 1843 (Tempo 14) in the province of Tosa on the island of Shikoku. He served the Lord of Tosa in his early years as a page and wore a sword until the Haitorei edict. Later he was the principal of the Kainangaku school of Tosa. Still later, he went to the city of Nara and was an officer of the police force of that city.

It is not known when he first became interested in the fittings for the sword but he first studied the subject with Kishimoto Gensuke, a dealer in Kyoto. It would seem that for the most part he was self-taught for the information then available was so meagre and worthless that he had to start from scratch.

It is very fortunate that he had such a long life for he was able to devote many years to his study and pass on his knowledge to his students. He died January 21, 1936 at the age of 93.

Akiyama had a number of students, the most famous of whom were, Tsunashiro Wada, Noboru Kawaguchi and Dr. Kazutaro Torigoye.

Wada began to publish his studies about the time of Akiyama's death. He was not only a careful follower of the research and paths laid out by Akiyama but he added important information in his own right to what his teacher had founded.

Kawaguchi was a careful follower of Akiyama's ideas and he did not deviate from them. He did do extensive research and found much valuable information concerning the Goto School and their followers, an area that Akiyama only touched on in his studies. Kawaguchi, like Kuwabara Yojiro was founded in the iron schools of study of tsuba but did most of the basic research in the Kinko schools in later life.

Dr. Torigoye has taken note of and published all that Akiyama has said in his studies, but he has gone far beyond this and added new research and information to that of his teacher while also reappraising what Akiyama knew were only theories and ideas that someone else would have to prove. This has brought up to date all the available information of the last fifty years.

From this one can see that the serious study of fittings started very recently and is still in its infancy. In addition, much that has been stated as truth has not been proven in any way and until proof is found, cannot be relied on. It could be said that the published material pertaining to fittings that deals with the period before 1600 is for the most part fantasy and that even the terminology is used to cover up the fact that the real truth is not known. The information dealing with the period after 1600 is slightly more truth than fantasy!

Until we have some concrete proof of dating, origins, geneologies and history of fittings we cannot write a true study or even a basic guide to the subject. It will take years of concentrated research and many more people than are presently interested in the subject before collectors and students in the future can truly know that they can turn to the printed page to seek accurate information on any piece in their collection.

It is for every interested person to give all the help he can so this ideal may come to pass before too many more years have elapsed!

ARTICLE

Following on the words of Robert Haynes above, we are fortunate in having a piece of original research on Nara Toshinaga I. This is from a member who wishes to remain anonymous; I am extremely grateful to him, I respect his knowledge and hope that this article will be the first of a series.

Nara Toshinaga I. (1667-1737)

Collectors of small fittings claim to be neglected in the West and indeed also in Japan itself where some of the most fascinating recent comments and illustrations on tsuba and the like have been appended

to articles on sword blades. It is therefore, an event worth celebrating that the Christmas number of the *Antique Collector* contains an all too rare article by Mr. W. W. Winkworth, concerned with Sugiura Joi, and illustrating six superb guards in the author's collection, it should be studied by all collectors. Probably no other authority in the West is so equipped to discuss Joi and few if any, have ever possessed so many examples of his work. It is moreover, an excellent excuse to think again about the Nara school and in particular the work of Toshinaga I, who, born in 1667, was thirty three and undoubtedly a great master by the time of Joi's birth in 1700. Yasuchika I, the third of this splendid triumvirate, was born in 1670, and together with all other Nara school workers was influenced by the extraordinary skill and vigour of Toshinaga's industry and imagination. A glance at his tsuba in brass illustrated by Mr. Winkworth as fig. 2 demonstrates this mastery. Showing Benkei and his seven famous weapons, it is typical of the type of subjects (legendary and historical) Toshinaga favoured - bold, masculine and humorous. The hero stands framed in a pierced opening which throws him into almost full relief whilst opposite him stands a pine tree suggested rather than elaborated in a manner as subtle as the low relief of Joi.

The Nara school was based on Yedo and it was there that Toshinaga lived and worked. Yedo under the Tokugawa was the largest city in Japan, having from 1700 a population of some half a million which was increased by the daimyo and their retainers on their 'compulsory residence' periods, instituted by Ieyasu, to upwards of one million. As seat of the Bafuku and Shogun it attracted from the early 17th century onwards many of the great artists and craftsmen. Among the Shogun who ruled during Toshinaga's lifetime, the most fascinating was Tsunayoshi (ruled 1680-1709) son of Iemitsu (3rd shogun), and the daughter of a green-grocer in Kyoto. This woman, suffering from mild religious mania, played an important part in her son's policies. He was undoubtedly mentally unbalanced, causing extreme discomfort to Yedo by an edict placing dogs on a level almost superior to that of humans. Towards the end of his rule he increasingly patronised the arts, was a genuine scholar and eventually abdicated to indulge in his passion for acting in the Noh drama. His patronage of the arts was reflected throughout all classes. The stable government of the Tokugawa helped establish, in Yedo and Osaka in particular, immensely wealthy brokers and merchants. The middle classes thrived and in Yedo at least, the

samurai were not yet impoverished. This period of expansion gave rise to the Genroku era's (1688-1704) opulence and patronage of all the arts. It was the age of Kenzan and Korin, Hishakawa Mornobu, founder of the Ukiyo-e school, and countless others. The late 17th century was an ideal moment for the arts and Toshinaga was very much a man of his age.

The identification of genuine work by any of the Nara masters is difficult but not impossible. All three were greatly admired from the 18th century onwards and were consequently much copied. The finest copyist is said to have been Sekijoken Taizan Motozane who died in 1829 but there were many more including later followers in the Nara school. Toshinaga's work can also be confused with that of his son, Toshinaga II who died in 1771 but both signature and kakihan differ. Judgement should be based on technique and style. Toshinaga's technical skill was superb, both in iron and soft metals, his attention to detail is unfailing. Small points of interest are his fir trees where the chiselling of the needles is irregular needle crossing needle, a departure from earlier stylisation. All his forms are solid, almost chunky, having the robustness so often the hall-mark of genius in artists the world over. He had a tendency to elongate his animals (horses, tigers, etc.), which seems to add to their strength. It is probable that his work in shakudo, shibuichi and brass, which he used especially for fuchi-kashira, belong to the later period of his life. His greatest achievements unquestionably were with iron. Indeed, few kinko workers can be compared to him in the use of this extraordinarily difficult and subtle medium.

Dr.Mene's collection, dispersed in Paris in 1913, contained an iron tsuba depicting Shoki with drawn sword, which well illustrates this mastery of the medium. So too do the fuchi kashira in iron of Shoki and the oni which once belonged to Henry Joly. Surely no one so well conceived the hero peering nervously from beneath his impossibly broad hat, his eyes bulging, with apple cheeks and beard flowing in the wind. But one of the most wonderful of all is that illustrated in the Nihon Soken Kinko Shi showing Omori Hikohichi with the demon disguised (thinly) as a woman upon his massive shoulders. Of almost square shape and also with a tree in low relief reminiscent of that shown in Mr.Winkworth's brass tsuba (Antique Collector, fig.2), it shows Toshinaga at his best. The figures are chiselled so solidly that they all but walk from the tsuba, the faces are bold, almost grotesque, the clothes superbly detailed and the feet (a favourite trick) shown almost 'full-face' without

perspective. It may well have been this tsuba that Alexander Moslé referred to in his catalogue which, when it belonged to a shogunal official Kugai Inabano-kami, was shown once a year by its proud owner to a few select friends. To ensure the protection of this masterpiece from the breath of these privileged connoisseurs, their mouths were covered by kerchiefs.

CHALLENGE

We announce a grand competition. Members are invited to submit their own personal taste list of the Ten Best Makers of Sword fittings. An example will be found in B.W. Robinson's "Arts of the Japanese Sword". And as our President writes elsewhere in the book, the arrangement and classification of the best artists in order of merit has been a favourite pastime among Japanese amateurs of the subject for centuries. No two lists agree, and he therefore makes no apology for submitting his, saying it may provide a basis for argument and discussion, or simply serve as a cockshy.

This is the spirit in which we would like members to approach this challenge. In addition to your list of the Ten Best Makers, we would like you to justify your placing of the first three in not more than 200 words. Members who collect sword fittings are urged to join in the fun and get themselves into print. I've had many complaints about the lack of fittings articles, well, it is up to you, the Members, to provide them. I'm only Chairman, Programme Secretary and Sword Swallower, you don't really expect me to write articles on Tsuba and fittings too?

Now, if the response to this is overwhelming, as I'm sure it will be, we will appoint a committee of experts to decide on the best three and publish those. We will even award a prize, what, to be decided later. So, come along all you secret hoarders of treasure; to recapitulate, your personal choice of the Best Ten Makers, or five or six if you don't know ten, followed by 200 words on why you think the first three are the best. I hope to publish the first of these lists in the next Programme, so get started now!

ARTICLE

We have received the following from the Japanese Sword Club of Southern California, a synopsis of a talk by Yazu Kizu given at their September meeting last year. Many thanks to the Southern Californian for this, I hope we may be able to exchange more information in the future. I only regret we haven't the facilities to use Kanji as our American friends are able to do.

MINAMOTO NO KIYOMARO by Yasu Kizu

The name Minamoto Kiyomaro is placed first in the list

of all Shin-shinto swordsmiths. He was born in 1813 as the younger of two sons of Yamaura Masatomo, the headman of Akaiwa town located by the Chikuma river in Shinano Province. His ancestor was Hitachinosuke Nobumune, a general under Lord Takeda of Kai province.

Kiyomaro had two names, Tamaki was his first name and Kuranosuke his common name.

His elder brother, Maso-ō (may be read Sane-ō SA 568) had a desire to make a trustworthy blade for himself and it impressed Kiyomaro so much that the two brothers became students of Kawamura Toshitaka (TO 530) a swordsmith employed by Lord Matsudaira of Uyeda Castle in Shinano Province. They studied blade making in the Bizen school method. Kiyomaro was then 16 years old and his brother was 25.

Young Kiyomaro's skill advanced so quickly that he made his first good blade only two years after becoming a student of Toshitaka and proudly signed it with his craft name Ikkansai Masayuki dating it 1830.

He soon realized that the only way to make a good sword comparable to the quality of koto blades was to use the best possible iron materials which are smelted from sand iron ores, and the brothers often times went up the mountains and down the rivers in search of the proper ore.

In 1831 the brothers left Uyeda city - the elder for Edo and Kiyomaro for Matsushiro city in Shinano, to further their study of blade making. In 1835 Kiyomaro went to Edo with the intention of learning kendo fencing under Kubota Sugane, an instructor in the Kobusho Kendo school of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

The instructor Sugane, finding that Kiyomaro was a swordsmith, advised him to keep up with his profession and helped him every way possible for his start in Edo and in 1839 Sugane even solicited 100 samurai, including his students to place orders at 3 ryo a blade. A year later, after making only a few of the 100 blades ordered, Kiyomaro ran away from Edo with most of the money. It was learned much later that he had gone to Hagi city in Nagato Province, the western most in Honshu, where he stayed five years.

He came back to Edo in 1845 and visited Sugane, the Kendo instructor to whom he had become much obligated in previous years. Sugane, instead of accusing him, helped him again to establish his blade making profession in the Yotsuya district in Edo, whereupon he changed his craft name from Masayuki to Kiyomaro and soon after became so famous that people began calling him "Yotsuya Masamune" in praise of his skill in blade making.

The characteristics of his blades are as follows:

1. He made katana mostly, some wakizashi, tanto of various shapes like shobu iris leaf, unokubi cormorant head, and osoraku extra large point, besides the flat body type, also naginata and yari.
2. Katana are 2 shaku 3-4 sun or more in length, wide flat body, medium thick back, shallow curvature, and medium to large kissaki point of which the cutting edge is fukura kareru or less arc. Two shapes of flat body tanto, one 7 sun or less in length having takenokozori or bamboo sprout shape, while others are 9 sun to over a shaku of rather narrow body slightly curved.
3. Finely forged itame wood grain that tends towards masame straight grain. Exceptionally strong shin steel for the Shinshinto period with dense surface nie and some chikei lines shining bright and clear.
4. Temper lines are of various types as follows :-
 - A. Nioi based choji patterns on his early blades as he studied blade making in the Bizen method under Kawamura Toshitaka.
 - B. Then he changed to gonome in which there are choji patterns here and there, nioi formed ashi notches, sand floating marks, and thick kinsuji golden lines.
 - C. On his late blades, large gonome, gonome mixed with notare wavy, somewhat longer ashi notches, and long thick kinsuji golden lines along the temper line.
5. Boshi line is irregular, small round tip with short or long turn-back.
6. Horimono carvings or single or double grooves are rare.
7. Shapely nakago tang with kurijiri chestnut end. File marks are slanting with decorative marks on early blades, without them on later ones. Many different signatures are recorded -
 - Ikkansai Masayuki (MA 749)
 - Yamaura Kuranosuke Minamoto Masayuki
 - Yamaura Kuranosuke Minamoto Hidetoshi (HI 104,105)
 - Minamoto Hidetoshi
 - Yamaura Tamaki (TA 320b)
 - Yamaura Tamaki Masayuki
 - Minamoto Masayuki
 - Yamaura Masayuki
 - Masayuki
 - Kiyomaro (KI 114)
 - Minamoto Kiyomaro

The above mentioned blade characteristics tell us that he began blade making in the Bizen method, then as his skill advanced he gradually changed to the Soshū style especially noted for the characteristics of the Sa blades, on the way to establishing his own Yamaura characteristics which were outstanding in the Shinshinto period.

Kiyomaro and a comparatively small number of students, among whom Kurihara Nobuhide (NO 82), Suzuki Masaō (MA 410) and Saito Kiyondo (may be read Kiyohito KI 98) are well known.

It is understandable that he did not make many blades in his lifetime for the following reasons:-

1. He was very particular in selecting his iron materials.
2. He used the most difficult honsanmai or shihōzume (4 or 5 piece construction) forging methods.
3. He did not allow his students to make or sign his blades for him.
4. He was a heavy drinker which interfered with his work somewhat.
5. He ended his life in 1854, rather young at the age of 42 by committing suicide after being the victim of a stroke and realizing that he would never be able to make good blades again.

PUBLICATION

The Japanese Sword Clubs of Southern California, is producing a stiff paper folder of eight pages every two months, these illustrate tsuba, full size. The publication is called TSUBAS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA; so far five sections have been issued. This work is compiled and published by W.M.Hawley, the subscription rate I have is six dollars per year. (\$/6.00). Members wishing for further information should write to W.M.Hawley, at Nanka Token Kai;8200, Gould Avenue, Hollywood 46, California, U.S.A.

LETTER

From Col.Dean Hartley, Newport, U.S.A. The envelope contained an oshigata and drawing of a superb blade, with a query which follows below. The blade is by Ko-Bizen Masazane ca.1065, son of Awataguchi Masatsugu. Ubu tang, two character tachi-mei. Grain, mokume mixed ko-mokume; Hamon nioi-deki with midare utsuri. One of three blades known by this man, has Tokubetsu-kicho (green paper) and personal sayagaki by Dr.Homma. I quote the part of the letter which contains Dean Hartley's query to other members:

"I have now another sort of puzzle for you and the Membership. We read that one of the distinguishing

marks of Heian blades was O-Koshiba. I have carefully examined practically every photograph published of these old blades, and have seen only one or two "doubtful" (as to size and differences in hamon width). I am sending along a photo and oshigata of one of my blades which does have a classic O-Koshiba. My question is - are there others around? How many have seen one (or a photo)? Or what is the true state of affairs in this matter? I will look for comments in a future publication."*

* O-KOSHIBA. A widening of the hamon and increase in complexity of pattern for several inches above the hamachi, abruptly narrowing to a much more shallow width for the remainder of the cutting edge. Might almost be described as the reverse of yaki-dashi on Shinto blades.

SALES ROOM

Sotheby's sale of 15th October 1968 had only one sword in it, amongst a number of tsuba, other fittings, and armour. This was a "Finely mounted katana"; it was indeed finely mounted in excellent samurai taste, unfortunately the mounts were a little battered, but not by any means beyond restoration. The blade was excellent, by Hiroiye, dated Tembun 13th year (1544), with very exciting virile work in the hamon. This was altogether a desirable piece and would have delighted the heart of any collector, myself included!

On the day of the auction the bidding rose fairly rapidly to the rather alarming price of £420, at which price it fell to Spink. It was a good sword, but in my opinion rather expensive for the condition it was in; at that price I would want mint condition. The tsuba were fairly average fetching prices up to £28 for a rather nice iron Mt. Fuji. Fuchikashira went up to £48; armour fetched a top price of £220.

The second sale at Sotheby's rooms to include swords was that of December 17th 1968. This included a number of swords, none of which were particularly exciting in respect of blades, although some dirks were well mounted. Lot 26, a nice wakizashi with an interesting blade, which unfortunately had a slightly soft point, made £70, but for that suspiciously soft point it was worth more. Lot 32, a tachi-meiji Hizen no kuni Tadayoshi, in my opinion neither Sho-dai or San-dai, made £210, more I think, than it was worth. Lot 33, was a very battered Daishō, the katana blade was by a good Shinto man and a nice active blade. The mounts were signed Iwamoto Konkwan and so far as I can judge, probably were. That was all there was in this daisho, but at £130 the one blade and mounts were worth it, I suppose, but not forgetting of course, the

cost of repolishing the blade and putting it into shirasaya. However, as this lot was bought by a Japanese gentleman he probably has all the facilities to refurbish the complete daisho. He'd be hard pushed to refurbish that wakizashi blade though.

Lot 35, not a bad tachi, the mounts had been amateurishly doctored by somebody with black and gilt paint, otherwise had been good. Some doubts about the date of this blade, in my own final opinion the blade was probably by Masahiro, MA 116, dated to Ko-sho period 1455, a pretty good man illustrated in the Nihon Toko Jiten. This made a not too expensive £150.

Lot 34, described as a "good wakizashi" was signed Tsuda Omi no Kami Sukenao; this was a nice example of Nise Mei, reflected by the price of £90. Lot 333 was also an obvious nise mei, that good old favourite of this art Echizen no kami Sukehiro this time. The mounts of this dirk were excellent in carved polished wood. Lot 334 was a nicely mounted dirk in silver, reminiscent of the quality of such collections as the Tomkinson. Lot 333 made only £45, cheap for those mounts, the same for 334 at £80. Otherwise the swords averaged prices of £22 to around sixty pounds. The tsuba were not special, the best was a superb shungwa subject in soft metal. O-kame simpering behind her sleeve at a Tengu-mask, lying covered by a cloth - the significance of which would have been obvious to the Archbishop of Canterbury! This made the top price of the tsuba at £55. It was interesting to see a lot of thirty-one tsuba and fittings fetch a price of £150, some of these were excellent and this was a good buy.

IVORY SWORDS

In the discussion at the last meeting regarding the reason "why ivory mounted swords?" Mr. Fuji came up with the Japanese point of view, which no doubt is the correct one, and was a reason which no one at the meeting had ever thought or conceived of. Like most truths it is simple. As I said in my article it seemed to me that ivory mounted swords were late, 18th and 19th centuries, ignoring the tourist stuff I could not give a reason for the fine examples which not infrequently contain good Shinto blades. Mr. Fuji's explanation was that there were times of domestic peace in Japan, particularly from Genroku onwards. The sword was not so often in use and in some cases became almost a thing of decoration. If a blade was to be made a decorative thing in what should it be mounted - particularly a fine blade - to match its excellence. The answer of course is Ivory. Why? Because ivory in Japan was a very rare and precious thing; it was imported at great expense from India, there being no

ivory in Japan itself. In the 18th century said Mr. Fuji, ivory was much prized in Japan, more so than gold and therefore, to have a fine blade mounted in ivory was indeed to possess a great treasure.

I should like to correct a charming spelling mistake which crept into this article in the last Programme. Obviously I was right from what Mr. Fuji has told us when I said these swords became fashionable in rich houses; however, in the last Programme this came out as "rice" houses - which I thought was rather nice!

SUBSCRIPTIONS Our poor lady secretary keeps on diligently pushing out reminders for these - sometimes a second and a third. It would be much appreciated if members reacted to the first one.

JOURNALS New members might like to know we still have a supply of Journals 2 and 3. Please write to the Secretary if you want copies. Price five shillings. (5/-d).

LETTERS I think I have about reached the end of my back log of sword enquiry letters. I did in fact get a long way behind due to pressure of my own work apart from pressure of To Ken Programme production. But, such was the flood of paper work concerned with To Ken a few months back, I have an awful feeling I may have misplaced or not answered one or two letters. Could I please ask if there are any members sitting out there in the wilderness who haven't received an answer from months ago - to please write in again, and I will put matters right. I still have one or two fairly recent queries to answer I know, but it is the feeling I've missed someone out way back which plagues me.

OSHIGATA A reminder to new members who may have difficulties in reading tang inscriptions due to inadequate references, that if they care to send a rubbing (oshigata) of the tang, addressed to Bon Dale at the Society's headquarters, I will check it for them and send them all available information I have on the sword-smith or inscription. Please remember to make a careful rubbing of the whole tang, both sides, not just the inscription.

NIHON TO NEWSLETTER New members will like to know and others be reminded of a venture started in Japan in January 1968, by Albert Yamanaka and Associates. The Nihon To Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication in English, 30 plus pages, on Japanese swords and its related fields. Packed with information from authoritative Japanese sources, there is no other publication in English which can offer such

a wealth of knowledge to the serious student of the sword. Members wishing to subscribe to this non-profit making publication should write to :

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For overseas members wishing to have their Programmes sent air mail, the subscription rates are increased as follows:

Europe.....£3. -. -.
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NEW MEMBERS

We have great pleasure in welcoming the following new members:

K.Sayama,
Kasuga & Co.Ltd.,
3 Isogamidori, 5 Chome,
Fukiaiku,
Kobe, Japan.

P.G.Wenman Esq,
127, Sussex Way,
London N.7.

M.C.Huntley Esq,
66 St.Dunstan's Road,
London W.6.

CHANGE OF
ADDRESS

Mr. R.J.Sanders to :

46 Park Lane,
Ramsden Heath,
Nr.Billericay,
Essex.