

# THE TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

For the Study and Preservation of Japanese Swords and Fittings



## Guidance Notes and Code of Practice for Collectors and Owners of Japanese Art Swords

The following guidance notes lists a number of points, which will help maintain the reputation of the serious and responsible collector of Japanese Art Swords. We are confident that you will already practice them anyway.

At formal sword appreciation, viewing and kantei sessions, normal traditional Japanese sword etiquette will apply. This is seen as a given and therefore not part of these more modern guidelines which follow.

- 1) Wherever a private collection is kept, it should be in a reasonable and secure environment and should not be accessible to young children. Ideally, blades should be kept under lock and key, as in a gun safe, lockable cabinet or bank vault. A separate lockable room is further option.
- 2) If swords are being transported for any reason, they should not be readily useable or accessible. They should be wrapped in a sword bag, which in turn should be in a carrying bag (such as a custom made sword bag, gun slip or gun case). Ideally, this outer case should be lockable.
- 3) A To-ken Society of Great Britain membership card and some other proof of identity should be carried at all times when a sword is in transit or displayed for any reason (ie. teaching, demonstration, exhibition etc.).
- 4) If stopped and questioned by anyone in authority, politely explain what you have and the reason for having it with you (please note that it is an offence to carry a blade in a public place with no good reason). Show your membership card.
- 5) In the above situation (4), if the person in authority asks to see the blade, suggest this be done somewhere more privately. Resist having to unwrap and draw the blade in a public place unless, ordered to do this by a police officer. If such a situation occurs, explain proper sword handling technique to avoid both damage to the sword and any accidents.
- 6) At all times, remain co-operative and reasonable.
- 7) If sending a sword abroad (eg. To Japan for restoration work or appraisal) make sure that you have absolute proof of sending it. Unless you can prove to HM Customs and Excise that the sword was a temporary export, you may find difficulty in the reimportation.
- 8) When swords are being mailed internally within the UK, they should be properly packed and sent by a mail system that requires them to be signed for by the recipient and have a tracking number. It will then be possible to know where they are at all times

- 9) If swords are on public display and not cased, the display must be carefully monitored at all times. Swords must never be left unattended for both safety and security reasons. Signs stating that swords must not be touched or handled should be prominently displayed.
- 10) Never leave swords unattended in a public place even for the briefest of times.
- 11) Swords should never be touched or transported by anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 12) Under proposed legislation, it is possible but highly unlikely, that Japanese art swords, or alternatively the owners, may need to be registered or licensed in some way. We will inform you when and if this happens and urge your immediate compliance. The new regulations come into force on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2008 in England, Wales and N Ireland.

Please complete the details below to show that you understand and will comply with the code of practice. You will not be issued with a new membership card unless you do this.

I have read the above and undertake to comply fully with these guidelines.

SIGNED .....

DATE .....

PRINT FULL NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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POST CODE .....

DATE OF BIRTH .....

HOME PHONE NO ..... MOBILE NO .....

EMAIL .....