

THE TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

for the Study and Preservation of Japanese Swords and Fittings



Hon. President: B. W. ROBINSON, M.A., B.LITT.

Secretary: H. M. HUTCHINSON, 141 Nork Way, Banstead, Surrey

PROGRAMME 83

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EDITOR - TONY GIBB

21 Elthiron Road,
Fulham S.W.6.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 2nd December, 7.30 p.m. at the Princess Louise, High Holborn, To get there: underground to Holborn, turn west, cross Kingsway and the P.L. is 50 yds down on the left hand side.

FOLLOWING MEETING: Monday, 6th January 1975. 7.30 p.m.

SUBJECT:

"Nambam Art". An unusual meeting perhaps! Bring along anything Japanese which shows signs of European influence in style or construction.

Last meeting saw a good turn out. A number of faces which were new to me and some old ones. Mr. Gregor, Mrs. Gibb (yes another one!), Mr. & Mrs. Saboir were some of the new faces. One old face turned up again and that belonged to Andy Ford. Nice to see you back Andy.

MODERN JAPANESE SWORDS by Bill Gray - Chairman Birmingham To-Ken.

This is almost a verbatim account of Bill's lecture at the last meeting. It stirred up a lot of interesting facts and I think encouraged many people to look again at swords that at one time had been quickly passed over.

The modern military sword as we know it was born in a very traumatic time in Japan's history. After Commodore Perry and his "black ships" entered Uraga Bay, the fall of the Shogun and the Meiji restoration, a whole class of people became jobless. Eventually the Samurai gave way to His Imperial Majesty's Army and Navy and it was the first time that an attempt was made to generalise all the arms that they carried especially the swords.

It was a very bad time for swords. A tremendous number of them were exported abroad because the sword had lost all its value as a weapon.

Then, however, with the invasion of China and the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, both of which the Japanese won, there was a great upheaval in the martial spirit of Japan. The Japanese began to get back a little of the self respect that they had lost and a little bit of the feeling that perhaps they were God's chosen people. This was a return to the feeling that they had prior to the opening of Japan. The feeling that the western civilizations were superior and that they were backward people was beginning to fade. The country became industrialised on a great scale and the Japanese began to believe that they could build an Empire which they almost did.

Up until W.W.II there were about 100 swordsmiths working and these smiths increased in number during the war years. The main question arising is the quality of a blade. A blade is good or not as the case may be. But it does not matter when it was made. I have always contended that there were some very good Showa smiths. They seem to be covered by the term Gendai To. The method of construction was the same as that of earlier sword periods and they were as good as the earlier swords. The Japanese are now beginning to realise this and are buying them back.

Some swords that dealers wouldn't touch two years ago are now being bought and are being taken to Japan. I believe that this was not legally possible prior to this year.

The first style to arise was the Kyu Gunto. This was a poor attempt to ape the style of swords used at the time by the foreigners. We usually find good blades in this type of mounting and they were used up to and during W.W.II.

On quite a few swords, such as these, Mon are found. Some had two or three Mon on the sword depending on the man's descent. One sword here has a Mon on either side of the Kabuto Gane. One is possibly a character Mon, either that or the title of the owner.

Coming into the Japanese army as a cadet the potential officer could take a sword with him. If he hadn't got one he was given one. But until he passed out he could not carry it in military koshirae. He had to carry it in a semi-civilian koshirae. Often they simply put a leather combat cover over the saya. He could continue to wear his sword in this way when an officer if he chose to and many did.

On many military swords one finds a strip of linen hanging from the sword, with Japanese characters on it. It is

usually said that this is the name and rank of the officer whose sword it was but this is not necessarily true. At the beginning of W.W.II a great many Japanese families had no sons to send into the army but they did have swords and these were donated to the army on the promise that they would be given back at the end of the war. In many cases therefore, especially when the characters are placed inside the saya, this is the name of the people who owned the blade and donated it.

The arsenals that produced blades had working in them many of the smiths who were working freelance before the war. They continued to make blades in exactly the same way as they had always done. Therefore we find many blades with arsenal stamps on them that are good swords and made in exactly the same way as swords of the earlier periods. We also find blades that are oil tempered. It is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between oil and water tempered blades, however there always seems to be Nioi but very rarely Nie on oil tempered blades.

The main thing to consider about swords is the blade itself no matter when it was made or whatever stamps are on it. There are good blades of modern manufacture. Two years ago a modern blade in Weller & Dufty's fetched £400 and it was definitely a Seki arsenal blade. This is something for which I have no answer.

Incidentally I am told that the reason for oil tempering was that so many blades were being cracked by water tempering.

The standard military koshirae was introduced in 1934, but the Kyn Gunto was still carried as well. Mons are found on many military swords and in many places, e.g. the Kabuto Gane, menuki, fuchi, even on the saya. It seems the officer could choose where to put it.

N.C.O. swords sometimes have good blades. Just because a man came from a good family didn't necessarily mean that he would become an officer and he was only allowed to mount his sword in a regulation manner. I have seen a good blade in N.C.O. type mounts. Nine times out of ten however they have Arabic numerals engraved on the blade.

There were also swords called Mura-ta-to, named after the man but I haven't seen any. The books say they were machine made blades and that the colour of the steel is rather beautiful.

There were five arsenals making blades. Seki and Tokyo being the best known. A lot of blades were mass produced but some were made that are very good.

One particular smith Hideyoshi made blades during the

war and in 1966 he was selected as the smith to make the blades for presentation to various officials for the 2600th anniversary of the Imperial reign.

An example of a good Showa blade which is as good if not better than many of the smiths of preceding periods is seen. In my opinion it is a blade that sums up the spirit of Japan and the spirit of the Samurai. The carving on the blade reads:-

"Just as the cherry blossom fades and falls to the ground so it is with my useful life. Should it prove to be of use to my Emperor I would not fail to fall".

We saw many examples of military mounted swords. Some contained old blades and others modern blades.

One interesting question was that we see many army and navy swords but what about the air force? In fact we were told that they carried a sword mounted in standard army mounts and there was a place in the cockpit for it. Also they carried a small dirk with which they apparently committed Seppuku during their final crash dive.

Getting back to blades. John Harding told us that oil tempered blades were made from prepared steel, then shaped and tempered but instead of using clay, wax paper was used instead. Oil tempering was, in fact, what we might call "case hardening". It is fairly well accepted that the edge is no harder than the rest of the blade and we only find Nioi but not Nie. The type of hamon could vary by cutting the wax paper into a design. This type of blade was made at the Seki arsenal, although some blades are signed "Bizen". This merely meant that the man came from Bizen Province. These arsenals were cutlery factories turned over to arms factories.

It is also seen that some swords were inscribed with the information that they were made from Manchurian iron (Mantetsu). This referred to Manchurian railway lines, which were in fact made in England and shipped to Manchuria in the late 19th Cent. This was ironic as some years later in the 2nd W.W. the Japanese were fighting the English with swords made from English iron!!

Then followed a discussion on whether or not good blades are found in military mounts. Obviously what constitutes a "good" blade is a matter of opinion but it seemed that blades in military mounts could be divided into three groups viz:- old blades, Gendai-To and mass produced blades.

As regards old blades I have myself seen a fair number of poor to medium quality Koto blades in military mounts. They seem to be Mumei and maybe there was some superstition re. having

a Koto blade but I don't know. From my experience I have not seen so many Shinto and Shin Shinto blades but this may be coincidence. I must admit, although it is difficult to say categorically that no good blades were taken to war, that I have not seen many good blades in military mounts.

Bon Dale said that in his experience 25%-30% of blades in military mounts may be old blades and about 1% are really good blades.

We heard that the navy tended to attract people with good samurai backgrounds, therefore there seems to be a greater likelihood of finding a good blade in naval mounts. However good blades do occur in army mounts. In fact a "National Treasure" has been found in army mounts but this is an extremely rare event.

The second group, i.e. Gendai-To is a group which I think has far to go. Just as in the art world where modern paintings are admired so too in the modern smithmade sword group there can be much to be enjoyed. Gendai-To should not be written off just because they are not old. After all try and get one made by a present-day smith and see the cost.

As regards the third group, these swords are interesting as war swords but not, I think it is agreed, as "art" swords.

Anyway let us look a little closer at Gendai-To as I am sure that collectors that cannot afford older blades may well be able to obtain some interesting modern blades.

Next follows an interesting letter from Mr.E.Mathers of Derby, the gist of which reads as follows:-

Here is at least part of the correspondence which you requested on the subject of nijuba and utsuri. I would disagree that the production of a double yakiba is the result of a double tempering process. The reheating of a quenched blade for a second quenching operation would result in significant distortion of the blade and a modification of the results of the first quench such that much of the first yakiba would disappear. The production of a double yakiba would require either

- a) a high carbon steel strip to be deliberately incorporated into the low carbon steel of the jigane, oriented to lie parallel to the cutting edge when forged to shape. For a readily visible yakiba the strip would need to be of a higher carbon content than the cutting edge. If this is done then covering the blade in sabidoro in the conventional

manner and quenching would result in two areas of approximately matching hardness - the cutting edge and the second yakiba. I consider that the second yakiba would however, be very diffuse, perhaps discontinuous, with no sharp boundary, possibly *niei* between the two yakibas but no *nie*

or

- b) the *sabidoro* to be removed from two regions - along the cutting edge and from an area parallel with the cutting edge to give the second yakiba. The blade would then be quenched, in one operation, resulting in two rapidly cooled regions and hence two yakibas. Both of these would be well defined, with *nie* and possibly *niei*. Such a treatment has been described by Masahide and is illustrated in *Sword and Same* p.91.

Of the two techniques I would favour (b) for the production of a well defined second yakiba. Option (a) however, would produce an effect such as has been described for *utsuri* and would appear on blades of complicated construction e.g. *san mai awase*. There are some suggestions by Masahide (*ibid.*) that this is so and he also makes the comment that a sword which has been reheated is *yaki naoshi mono* - not to be trusted in a fight.

Incidentally, I have assumed that where you refer to tempering it is the quenching operation which is being described. Tempering is a fairly precise metallurgical term which, in the types of carbon steels of which Japanese swords are made, infers that the steel has been reheated to a temperature of up to approximately 700°C. in order to reduce the hardness and increase the toughness, the higher the temperature the softer the steel. Such an operation was carried out on Western swords which were fully quenched making them hard but brittle and these were subsequently tempered to soften them and increase their toughness (resistance to shock or impact). This was not performed on Japanese swords since these have areas selectively quenched (the yakiba) to give an extremely hard cutting edge but a softer tougher body - a far superior product. I find the problem of metallurgical nomenclature within the society to be rather confusing, since many of the terms are incorrectly used probably because many of the errors are perpetrated and perpetuated in the books and papers available to us for study - *Sword and Same* is a prime example, pages 89 and 91 particularly so. As a passing comment you may be interested to know that I have been invited by the East Midland Metallurgical Society part of the Institution of Metallurgists, to give a lecture on "the Metallurgy of Japanese Swords". This will be held sometime in November 1975, probably at Loughborough University, Leics. To-Ken members and guests will be welcome to attend. Full details to follow.

I have been given some interesting newspaper cuttings by Ron Gregory which will appear in future issues. One interesting article is included here as it is concerned with "modern swords". Any other such cuttings that members may well be of interest also. The cutting reads:-

SWORD SMITH'S ART STARTED AT TEMPLE

Dedication of Ancient-Style-Shop at Military Shrine is Impressive Affair.

ARTISANS ARE INSTALLED
(July 9/33)

Impressive Rites Mark Seating of Masters and Their Disciples before Altar.

Establishment of the ancient art of the sword smith in the compound of Yasukuni Shrine atop Kudan Hill was marked yesterday by the attendance of more than 60 army dignitaries and other notables at the dedication of an ancient style structure according to Shinto rites.

In ceremonies taking place before the entrance to the building the chief priest of the military shrine read an announcement of the opening of the unusual shop for the welding of Japanese swords after the olden fashion. There was a purification ceremony, offerings were placed on the altar, and a ceremony symbolical of the actual start of sword-welding there was held.

Part of the money used in erecting the structure, which has a roof of copper plates, came from Mrs. Takeko Komine, widow of a wealthy lacquer dealer in Kanda. She contributed ¥1,600,000 to the army and navy in accordance with the will of her husband.

In a setting of large sacred trees decorated with paper strips of five different colours, War Minister Araki introduced Mr. Toshihiro Miyaguchi, 37, and Mr. Tokutaro Kajiyama, 53, well known masters in Japanese sword welding, and conferred professional names on them. Mr. Miyaguchi receiving the name of "Yasuhiro" and Mr. Kajiyama the name of "Yasutoku".

The masters were seated before the altar as the ceremonies began. Their four disciples were led into the place by Rear Admiral Koizumi and seated beside their masters. All the sword smiths were dressed in traditional costumes.

As collectors we are, I think, always interested in the items in other peoples hands even if we cannot buy them!! It

would, I think, be interesting to hear from members of the swords that they have. For example what the sword looks like, who made it and when, details of Koshirae, how it was acquired and so on. To start the ball rolling, I include a note on a sword in "Robbie's" collection which some members already know about but others I am sure do not. The note was sent to me by Robbie and it reads:-

A SWORD FOR THE EMPEROR

by B.W. Robinson

By an Imperial decree of 1877 the wearing of swords, which had been the Japanese Samurai's privilege for many centuries, was forbidden once and for all. Blades were still made for ceremonial or presentation and for officers of the army and navy, but for all practical purposes this decree put a period to the long history of the Japanese sword, what has followed is in the nature of an appendix.

But the quarter-century immediately preceding the decree was by no means a twilight period of the craft, and a number of brilliant swordsmiths were at work: Naotane and his pupil Naokatsu at Yedo (Tokyo), Sa Yukihide in Tosa, Gwassan Sadayoshi and his pupil Sadakazu at Osaka and, perhaps the most brilliant of all, Kiyomaro "the Masamune of Yotsuya", whose best pupil, Kurihara Nobuhide, made the blade under discussion.

Nobuhide was born in 1815 at Tsukigata, a poor village in western Kambara county (Kori) of the province of Echigo. His father died when he was still a child, and his mother married again. Edged tools were made in the neighbourhood of the new home, and the boy was apprenticed to a cutler. At the age of fifteen he conceived the ambition of becoming a swordsmith, and set off alone for Kyoto. It is not known who was his teacher in the old Imperial capital, but he learnt enough of his swordsmith's craft in the next few years to justify a decision to take the Tokaido road for Yedo, where the most skilful craftsmen were at work. Here he became a pupil of Kiyomaro and perfected his technique under that wayward genius. But on January 2nd, 1855 Kiyomaro, depressed after illness, committed suicide by deliberately swallowing a large quantity of verdigris obtained from a neighbouring painter.

Nobuhide was by this time one of the leading figures of his profession being especially noted for the chiselled designs (horimono) on his blades. We hear of a straight blade of ancient form made by him for the Yahiko shrine, chiselled with a phoenix and clouds on one side and the Shinto Goddess Ame-No-Uzume-No-Mikoto ("Heavenly Alarming Female") on the other. Another notable blade was engraved on both sides with a poem by Minamoto No Sanetomo (1192-1219).

In 1865 by Imperial decree he received the honorary title

of Chikuzen No Kami, and four years later, after the Meiji Restoration, he is recorded to have made a blade for the young Emperor. Later in the same year, he was commanded to forge a sacred mirror for the Yasukuni Shrine, then being built. He died in 1880.

The present blade, though perhaps a little flamboyant for the purist, shows the work of Nobuhide at its best. The forging is superb, the richly-patterned itame grain almost giving the effect of watered silk, and merging into a wide tempered edge (Yakiba) of irregular outline (gunome-midare) plentifully supplied with niye. The striking russeted horimono, with touches of gold overlay, shows the legendary hero Yamato-take-no-Mikoto wielding the famous "Grass-mowing Sword" (Kusanagi no tsurugi) in the midst of the flames, kindled by his barbarian adversaries. On the reverse is chiselled the banner of the god Takemikadzuchi-no-mikoto ("Brave awful possessing male deity"), who is said to have descended to Japan from heaven in advance of Jimmu-tenno, the first Emperor. On the tang of the blade is the signature Kurihara Kenshi Nobuhide, above which appears a small "ascending dragon". On the reverse are engraved the names of the deities, represented in the Horimono. All these features, together with the measurements of the blade, are recorded in a brush-written inscription on the plain whitewood scabbard, which also adds that the blade was made for "the present Emperor Meiji". Whether or not this is the blade recorded above as having been made for the Emperor by Nobuhide in 1869 must remain a matter of speculation; it bears no date. But at all events it demonstrates that even at this late period a blade could be produced that would hold its own in sheer quality and beauty with the mediaeval masterpieces of Bizen and Kamakura.

This blade was among a number sold by Glendinnings some twenty-five years ago as "sequestered enemy property" having formed part of the stock of the pre-war Japanese dealer Murakami. It was bought by Field-Marshal Sir Francis Festing, and obtained from him by the present writer in exchange for a tachi by Kiyumaro; both parties were highly delighted with the swap.

CORRECTIONS TO LAST PROGRAMME

As I expected a number of errors were made by me in the last issue, corrections of which follow by courtesy of Robbie. Further criticism will be welcomed by me from Robbie and other members as and when the case arises.

P.2. Line 20. "Omano school". Presumably this should be Hamano, or is it Omori?

P.6. Line 2. "Tomishugi". This must be Tomoshige of Kaga?

Line 4 from bottom. "Kentoku 2nd year (1331)". The second

year of Kentoku was 1371 (after Masamune's death) so I imagine Gentoku was intended. But the second year of Gentoku was 1330. In any case the error was probably Sotheby's.

P.8. Line 5. "Michiasa". I feel this reading must be wrong. The second character could be read tomo, though I cannot find any recorded smith of that name, or could it be a misprint for Michimasa?

P.9. penultimate paragraph. I found this story very amusing; it reminded me of a number of "opinions" given by Japanese "experts" on objects in this Museum.

P.10. Line 14. "Kiomaru (c.1820)". If this is Kiyomaru, his dates are c.1813-1855. But the name of Oniō-Marū, who founded the Gwassan School in the late 12th century is sometimes read as Kiō-Marū.

NEWS

I have received a letter from:

Mr. Michael Horsfield of: 9 South View,
Hunwick, Crook, Co.Durham

stating that there are a number of Japanese sword collectors in the Durham area interested in forming a Durham Branch of To-Ken. Anyone interested in doing so should contact Michael at the above address. He tells me that he expects to be inundated with letters so the Durham collectors had better not make him disappointed. Good luck Michael. If the London branch can be of help just drop me a line and we shall do our best.

Clive Wheeler, our To-Ken Committee member (Adviser), has now changed his name to Clive Sinclair. No doubt to avoid the hoards of Japanese sword buyers expected at any time from Japan!!!

Christies auction held on Tuesday, October 29th, again saw a good collection of swords, armour and fittings.

Many Tsuba were sold for under £20. As regards swords a large number of wakizashi and dirks were sold at reasonable prices many under £50. Long swords held their price and most made more money than the average collector could afford. £3,200 was paid for a fine Katana with tsuba signed Goshu Hikone Ju Soheishi Niudo Soten Sei (Soten School work 18th cent.) the blade honzukurī and shallow torii-zori with twin grooves, bonji and tokko on omote and grooves, bonji and ken on ura, itame-mokume hada and suguba komidare hamon of nie, chu-kissaki and ko-maru boshi, sunage hakago with three mekugi-ana 68-25cm. long unsigned 14th-15th cent. unusual having tameshigiri inscription O-Kesagake harui

by Yoshimutsu (Yamada Asaemon) and dated dragon year 1820.

There was a good collection of armour with prices accordingly.

The most impressive I suppose was a fine Murasaki-Odoshi Dangaiye-Do, comprising Kabuto with 62 plate suji-boshi with shakudo kuwagata-dai and oharaidate, ko-manju shikoro, Nara mempo, mongara-odoshi O-sode and chu-sode, shin-gote with silver nunome and gilt mounted with chirimen-namban kusari, kikko-haidate, shino suneate and a tsuru-bukuro; both pairs of sode bear the jo-mon and kae-mon of Ogasawara, Daimyo of Kokura in Bizen province, 1632-1868 - with wood stand and modelled head, hands and feet. The price: 12,000 guineas.

An interesting note has been passed to me from the Southern Californian Japanese Sword Club re. sword values and it reads:-

SWORD VALUES

We are constantly being asked what swords are really worth - what value should be applied to the index in Hawley's books? The old \$7 per unit can still be applied to blades of low rated smiths that are in poor but salvageable condition. Otherwise, you end up spending more than the blade will be worth to restore it. One year ago when the oil crisis hit the Japanese speculators, prices went down overnight to 25% of the asking prices. Now things have stabilised at 50% for average blades. Top quality blades however, remain high simply because there are not enough to satisfy the demand. These would be the ones rated upper-upper and upper-middle in Fujishiro's books - perhaps 500 smiths out of 18,000! Junkers you can still bargain for. Dealers in this country and Europe are justifying outrageous prices for poor quality blades by saying they are getting it, and as long as buyers will pay it the high prices are the market. What they don't realise is that collectors are realising that they have been taken in, and are losing interest in droves.

Killing the goose that lays the golden egg is never good business. Hardly 10% of collectors are capable of telling a shin-shinto copy of a koto blade with a fake signature from an original genuine one. The only way to combat the abuses is to refuse to buy at inflated prices, spend only what you can afford and buy to keep not to speculate.

Although there seems to be a lot of sense in the "American opinion" I feel that the "scene" is different in England. It seems that American dealers are held in low repute. Perhaps it is up to the English dealers to make sure the same does not happen here!!!

NOTE re. "FOREIGN TRADE WITH JAPAN" by John Anderson

The first contact Japan had with the outside world was in the 5th to 6th centuries when contact with China brought her the blessings of the KANJI characters, horses and Buddhism and contact continued sporadically from then on.

In the 13th century the Mongols under Kublai Khan invaded Japan and were repulsed and at about this time Japanese pirates called WAKO started their attacks on the coasts and shipping of China and Korea, possibly as a reprisal for the Mongol attack however these continued almost continually until the end of the 16th century.

In the early 14th century diplomatic missions, the subject of which was largely the depredations of the WAKO, waxed fast and furious between the court of the Ming Emperor and KYOTO, and an annual voyage for trade took place under the auspices of the Abbot SOSEKI of the TENRYUJI Temple. However it was not until 1543 that any great impact on Japanese life was felt due to outside influence. It was at this time that a Portuguese ship reached Japan on the island of TANAGASHIMA. The most important single result of this meeting was the introduction of firearms, the first of these was obtained by Tanagashima Tokitaka who immediately started the production of matchlocks which in a very few years time was to alter the course of many Japanese battles. This first meeting laid the foundations for 100 years of intercommunication between Japan and the western world. The period is most often called "The Christian Century in Japan" for the Portuguese were as much interested in saving souls as trading, and immediately the country was visited by fathers of the Society of Jesus, started the work of conversion. For 45 years or so, the Portuguese had a complete monopoly of trade and conversion but in 1584 the Spanish landed at Hirado by accident and were well received by the local Daimio who allowed them to trade there and Franciscan, Dominican and Augustinian Friars to preach the faith. Almost immediately the opposing factions were at each others throats and these internal bickerings were largely to blame for Hideyoshi's periodic attacks on the faith. Meanwhile trade voyages continued with the Kurofunne or black ships as the Portuguese and Spanish ships were called, calling more or less annually. At the same time the Japanese were carrying on trading ventures on their own account, firstly with Portuguese pilots and later with Portuguese trained nationals. These trading ventures were officially recognised and a certificate called Go-Suin-Se (August red seal) was issued for each voyage. The first of these was issued in 1592.

Goods exported at this time included arms and armour, screens, lacquer ware, rice, barley, wheat flour, tunny, salted fish, horses and some silver and copper. Imports were raw and manufactured silks, gold, hides and old Chinese ceramics much prized by the devotees of CHA-NO-YU. One of the imports from Siam was Same.

It is interesting to note how many ports the Japanese traded with, certificates were issued for the Indo Chinese ports of Cambodia, Champa and Tonking, Siam, the Malay States of Patani and Pahang, Luzon and Manilla in the Philippines, Macao, Borneo, and the Moluccas, Siak and Formosa. The Portuguese traded between Macao and Nagasaki and sold their trade goods for silver.

In 1592 also, Hideyoshi started his invasion of Korea which was still going on at his death in 1598.

The death of Hideyoshi laid the way open to the rise of Tokugawa Iyeyasu and two years later in 1600 the Englishman Will Adams of Gillingham in Kent arrived in a Dutch ship. He was well treated by Iyeyasu and settled in Japan building ships and advising him on European matters. Cannons taken from Adams ship were used at the siege of Osaka Castle in 1615.

Trading posts were set up at Hirado by the Dutch in 1609 and by the English East India Company in 1613. Iyeyasu had a great interest in things European and allowed the Christians to convert without hindrance until 1614 when for reasons which were mainly political he banned the teaching of Christianity and expelled the missionaries. Trade was still allowed but it was thought that missionaries were being smuggled into the country, however, this was largely overlooked in the interests of trade. Sporadic persecutions continued under the Tokugawa Bakufu until 1637 when the Shimabara rebellion brought things to a head. Tokugawa Iyemitsu finally closed the Macou-Nagasaki route once and for all. The Dutch continued to trade on the island of Deshima and from then on a yearly average of 50 Chinese junks and 4 or 5 Dutch ships provided the port of Nagasaki with all the islands needs.

Thus we see that for many years the Japanese and the "foreigners" were in contact and it was hardly surprising that the art and customs of the foreigners rubbed off on the Japanese.

However the Japanese, as far as I can see, never really copied the foreign ways but adapted them to suit themselves. The Japanese did not seem to invent new styles in art and manufactures but copied and improved for their own use. This ability to copy and improve would seem to be just as strong today as it has always been.

If we look at the history of Japan from its beginnings, way back in the dark ages we find that almost everything in their daily life has roots leading out of the country. Their writing, ways, style of art and so on can all be traced as beginning outside Japan but used in Japan in an entirely different and modified way. Even the Japanese sword has roots which developed in China but adapted and modified to such an extent that in later

years they were in fact traded with China.

In the 16th cent. Japan, as we have heard, was introduced to the west which had many un-oriental ideas for the Japanese to study. Thus, together with the other ideas and styles already being "imported" we find a most interesting situation.

"Nambam Art" does not apply to any particular style but merely a collection of styles foreign to the Japanese.

"Nambam Art" can take many forms. Firstly we see examples of foreign work actually used, e.g. in cases where European armour, i.e. cabasets, breastplates, etc. have been used. Then we see Japanese copies of foreign things, e.g. in armour. Thirdly we see foreign styles creeping into Japanese work, e.g. christian signs in metalwork paintings depicting foreigners, etc.

The subject therefore is endless. Many examples were seen at the meeting, each one could take up much discussion as to why, when, and so on. A subject such as this could, I think, provide much interesting and rewarding research as it is surprising how many examples of Nambam Art there are if we look. Two interesting books on the subject are:-

1. "The Nambam Art of Japan" by Yoshitomo Okamoto (The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art).
2. "Japan - A History in Art" by Bradley Smith (Spring Books).

Items seen at the meeting included:

1. A Katana saya with an Italian crest lacquered on it.
2. Many Nambam Tsuba of the usual form.
3. An openwork Tsuba with cross motif.
4. A Tsuba with soft metal inlay. The subject being a Dutchman.
5. A Kabuto in the style of a Spanish morion by Saetome Ietada.
6. An Italian cabaset adapted by the Japanese by altering the shape and inlaying the bowl in silver and gold.
7. A Kabuto in the form of a cabaset made with four plates and lacquered overall.
8. A Kabuto having a 16th cent. Korean bowl, possibly taken in battle.
9. A Do being a copy of a European breastplate c.1550.
10. A Dutch 16th cent. breastplate adapted by applying a plate to the lower edge covered with Buddhist invocations.
11. An early Meiji diplomatic sword c.1860 in classical European style.
12. Two brass crusiform sidearms c.1904.

Finally, one point was raised at the December meeting and that was whether or not the Society should broaden its outlook and include other forms of Japanese Art in its Agenda. This is obviously a basic constitutional question and therefore the Society as a whole should decide not just the London members. Therefore would you please write to me giving a YES/NO answer to the question:

"Should the To-Ken Society of Great Britain broaden its Agenda to include other Japanese Works of Art".

This does not mean that we stop studying swords etc. but that we increase our studies to include porcelain Netsuke, other metalwork paintings etc. as and when the opportunity arises. Anyway your replies will be welcome.

N.B. Please let me have your replies before the next meeting in January.

OSHIGATA

A reminder to members who may have difficulties in reading tang inscriptions due to inadequate references; if they care to send a rubbing (oshigata) of the tang addressed to Alan Bale, 46 West Close, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middlesex, he will check it for them and send them all available information he has on the smith or inscription. Please remember to make a careful rubbing of the whole tang, both sides, not just the inscription.

NEW MEMBERS:

J.A. Noble, 7 Westiecot Road, Swindon, Wilts.
 Miss Annette Jessup, 694 Gallywood Road, Chelmsford, Essex.
 Mr. F.J. Gates, 22 Thirlmore Avenue, Noctorum, Birkenhead
 Mr. S.F. Addy, First Floor Flat, 40 Henslowe Road, East Dulwich,
 S.E.22
 Messrs. A. & E. Offermann, 22 Ranulf Road, London, N.W.2.
 Dr. C.R. Kennedy, Godfreys House, Bow, Crediton, Devon EX17 6HP

CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:

Mr. J.G. Scott, 3 Greenwich Cottages, Ripley, Woking, Surrey GU23
 6AP
 Mr. M. Davies, 14 Queens Gardens, Dartford, Kent DA2 6HY
 Mr. A. Offermann, 56 Wuppertal-2 (Barmen), Wittelsbacher Str.31
 W.Germany
 Mr. D. Butler, Dubion, Granada, Spain.

RESIGNED: R. Wragg, Sheffield.