

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 91

MARCH - MAY 1976

Programme Editor

Clive Sinclair
61 Norfolk Crescent
Sidcup, Kent
DA15 8HW

Meetings are held at the Princess Louise public house, High Holborn. To get there, from Holborn, Kingsway underground, cross Kingsway and the Princess Louise is 200 yards along on the left hand side.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

July Meeting: 5.7.76 - Wakizashis. Please bring anything you have so that we get as broad a display as possible.

August Meeting: 2.8.76 - Sukashi Tsuba. All examples welcome, the more the better.

September Meeting: 6.9.76 To be arranged.

EDITORIAL

I have been supplied with a glossary of terms in connection with the arts of the Japanese sword by Canadian member David Pepper. This glossary was supplied to those who went on the trip to Japan in 1975, by the N.B.T.H.K. via the Yoyogi Sword Museum. It is as comprehensive a glossary as you will ever find. Should any member require a copy, please send a large stamped, self-addressed envelope to me and I will mail one to you.

March Meeting:

This was a well attended meeting at which Mr. Victor Harris, laid out a number of fine blades, tangs covered, and supplied us all with cards on which we were to note our observations. The nakago were then exposed, and we were allowed to revise our opinions if necessary. Victor then discussed the swords in some detail in terms of shape, hamon and hada, pointing out differences and what meant what. The whole meeting was very educational and everyone went away feeling the evening was well spent. Many thanks Victor.

April Meeting:

Following on the success of the March meeting it was decided that a similar evening, this time with Tsuba would be a good idea. As it turned out, a glittering array appeared on the night amounting to sixty pieces in all. The range was enormous, from glittering Mino Goto to fine iron Tsuba. The idea was that each owner stood up and spoke about his own pieces. As usual, that shyness that siezes all Token members on the first Monday of each month, gripped the room in an iron fist, and nobody would talk. Eventually Alan Bale, Malcolm Hutchinson and myself started talking, the room started to unfreeze and in the end everyone managed to become involved.

May Meeting:

Now for something completely different! Mr. Ronald Knutsen, martial artist of some renown and author of the only English language book on polearms that I know of, came to give us a demonstration of sword techniques from the Sengoku period. Mr. Knutsen, who really lives his art, has just returned from training at the Kashima-Shinto-Ryu, at the Kashima shrine. Mr. Knutsen used a straight Bokuto (wooden sword) that was used at Kashima. Apparently Bokuto were modelled on the swords of the area, their styles and shapes. Does anyone know of straight swords being made in the Kanto in the sixteenth century?

Techniques included attacks and defences against other swords, and an impressive display of Naginata-Jitsu. After watching this, one wondered why anyone ever used swords, as the Naginata appeared almost unbeatable. Then followed a demonstration of Iai-Jitsu with a "live" sword. Mr. Knutsen explained that many of these techniques were thought up by twisted minds from Tokugawa period. Some of the most interesting were for use in confined spaces, such as doorways and low ceiling houses. One technique was for an opponent who was actually in the process of bowing, very unsporting! But, of course, this was a kill or be killed situation. Many thanks Ronald for your time and trouble.

ANDERSON ARMOURS IN JAPANESE PRESS

Mr. Iida, who spent an evening with the Society last November, as most of you will know, is the publisher of the Token Shunju press in Japan, a bi-monthly newspaper on swords and fittings. In a recent edition under "News Flash, report from Europe" an entire page was devoted to our Chairman, Mr. John Anderson's collection. Although, of course, most of it was in Japanese there were several paragraphs in English and a number of photographs, including one of our illustrious Chairman looking rather bemused.

Three items from John's collection seem to have been of particular interest to the Japanese, although I am sure anyone that has been privileged to see the lot, will know that I am not 'knocking' the rest.

The three items were :-

1. So-Men (Whole Mask)

A boldly embossed russet iron mask signed under the chin Myochin Munehisa. Made to take apart in three pieces, the brow is joined to the chin and cheek pieces by hinges and the nose is held in position by turning pins. The brow is embossed with deep wrinkles and bold roped eyebrows above well-formed eyes. Its edge is pierced with a series of holes for attachment to the hood. The long nose is very well forged and cleverly drawn out. Beneath it, a moustache of long hair juts out. On the cheeks, the wrinkles are very bold and in an unusual design which sweeps down to the very well formed chin. The ears are naturalistically formed and riveted on. Beneath the chin are two large Otayori-No-Kugi (literally, cord assisting nails) and a large Nagashi-No-Ana (sweat running hole) pierced through the bottom plate. The mask is extremely well formed and shows similar details of treatment to other work signed Munehisa, although the signature differs in some respects and it may be earlier work by this man. Whole masks are comparatively rare and many examples are in fact half masks with a brow plate added later. These are generally easy to detect, often being of inferior quality to the half mask and of bad shape.

Signed: Myochin Ki No Munehisa - about 1800.

2. Tsuinari No Kabuto - Helmet of acorn shape

The bowl is made of sixty two vertical plates capped by an iron Tehen-Kanamono which surrounds the small Tehen hole. The front centre plate is covered with white bronze (Sawari). It is simply signed "Saotome" and has an attribution to Iyetada. The rounded neck guard is of three layers, the first and second lacquered black, the lower one covered with gilded leather, as are the peak and ear pieces (Fukigayeshi). Over the peak, which is secured to the bowl by three gilded rivets, is a pierced design of vines in iron. This, with the two bonji characters for Senju Kwannon and Dainichi Nyorai, which are on the Fukigayeshi are all splashed with Sanari. The fore crest (Maedate) is in the form of a gilded copper Bonji for Fudo mounted on a ground of flames in red lacquered copper. The neck guard is laced with green silk thread. It is very unusual to find Saotome helmets of anything but standard Koshozan shape, but Iyetada seems to have been an exception to the family rule.

Signed: Saotome, and attributed to Metada Saotome - Working 1600.

Token Shunju Press's comment:-

Helmet of unusual shape

The helmet is signed "Saotome" and its shape may be regarded as an intermediate shape between the paper umbrella shape and the acorn shape. According to the owner it was made in the seventeenth century. Perhaps it was made in the Keicho era.

In any case it is a rare article. There exists one other helmet which is signed Iesada.

3. Kon-ito-Odoshi, Hotokedo-Gusoku - Dark blue laced armour with the cuirass lacquered smooth.

This is my "favourite" of John's armours, it is extremely impressive and I would advise anyone who has the opportunity to study it at length.

The helmet is of unusual form, representing a cap worn by a priest of the Nichiren sect of Buddhism. It is of iron and has no peak, the brow piece being embossed with bold eyebrows and the neck guard of close fitting Hineno form. It bears a fore crest of a copper Oni. The helmet is signed "Nagasone Masanori" and is lacquered an unusual brick-red colour, as are all the other portions of the armour with the exception of the face mask. The mask is of russett iron and is signed beneath the chin "Myochin Muneyasu". The cuirass, Hotoke-Do (Saint's breast) is of iron lacquered smooth. The top two plates of the breast are laced on. It bears the centre portion of the Mandara, sacred to the Nichiren sect, in gold lacquer, the centre column of which is the invocation Namu Mioho Renge-Kiyo (Hail Lotus of the Good Law). The tassets (Kusazuri) are of leather - the two at the back being shorter by two plates for ease in riding. Sleeves of Bishamon-Gote formed with hinged plates on the upper arm in place of Sode. The thigh guards (Haidate) are of rectangular iron plates joined by mail, the centre of each embossed with a dome. Shin guards are of vertical iron strips joined by mail (Shino Suncate), and foot protectors (Kogake) complete the suit. This armour is mounted entirely in the style of the 16th Century and is of very serviceable manufacture. The family badge (Mon) is as yet unidentified, but as the Nichiren sect were a particularly militant body it is possible the armour belonged to a priest. The mounting is typical of the work of Muneyasu and the distinct features are easily seen when compared with other examples of his work.

Helmet signed: Nagasone Masandri (1673-80),

Mask signed: Myochin Muneyasu (1833-38)

Token Shunju Press comment:

The helmet of "Noshi" shape is signed "Nagasone Masa Nori while the cuirass bears a portion of the "Mandara" in gold lacquer. So far we have not seen another cuirass and helmet made by the same artisan. However, it is known that there exists one open work iron Tsuba with a design of the plum tree, on which is inscribed "Echizen No Ju" in addition to the maker's name. The helmet was probably made during the Kanbun-Enpo era.

In addition to the above three pieces were illustrated - two Koshozan-Suji-Bachi (high sided ridge bowl) by Yoshimichi (1521-31) and Myochin Nobuiye (1532), several other helmets and a general view of John with some armours. The above descriptions are extracts from John Anderson's book "Japanese Armour", an illustrated guide to the work of the Myochin and Saotome families, from the 15th - 20th century. The book is available from :-

Arms & Armour Press,
Lionel Leventhal Limited,
677 Finchley Road, London NW2

Another item of interest in the paper under the heading of "Appreciation of Art Objects Series" was an interesting metal fitting for a door: a Cicada. This was illustrated and appeared to be a handle with a floral design and a large bee, appearing almost to be stuck on, and made of some soft metal such as Shakudo. It is 29 cm. in length and is one of the fittings of the Chinese style door of the Toshogu shrine at Veno, Tokyo. There exist two similar fittings of the same size made of brass by the same craftsman. Besides, the Toshogu shrine at Nikko possesses the same kind of iron fitting with an inscription of Nagasone Saiichi Toshiie made in the 13th year of Kan'ei (1636).

According to an official record, the ceremonies of transfer of the Toshogu shrine at Veno were completed in September, the 3rd year of Shoo (1654).

YASUNORI

In Programme 89, I mentioned a gendaito made by Yasunori which had been made in the precincts of the Yasukuni shrine. The following interesting additional information has been supplied by member Han Bing Siong from the Netherlands:

" With much interest I have read the account in Programme No.89 on the November meeting with the session by Mr. Iida Kazuo.

I think it is not surprising that Mr. Iida paid special attention to the gendaito made by YASUNORI. Mr. Iida has or has had a blade by that smith himself. On page 210 of volume 8 of NIHONTO ZENSHU there is a drawing of that sword and rubbings of the signature and other inscriptions. It has the two characters YASUNORI tachi-mei with on the other side in addition to the date (a lucky day, 9th month, Showa 14) the inscription: "Presented as a memento to Marquis Inoue by Nipponto Tanrenkai".

The NIPPONTO TANRENKAI or Japanese sword forging and tempering Society consisted of the smiths working in the precincts of the Yasukuni shrine and was established in 1933 (Showa 8) with the purpose of reviving the art of Japanese sword making in the old traditional manner. As such I think it deserves mentioning in the history of Japanese sword making.

On the establishment of the Society the principal swordsmiths were ordered by the minister of war, Lieutenant General Araki Sadao, to adopt names incorporating the character Yasu of the Yasukuni-shrine. Some of their pupils later did the same. In compliance with the order of General Araki KAJIYAMA TOKUTARO combined the character Yasu with the character Toku of his personal name. This character is the same as the Toku of the name Tokugawa and can also be pronounced as Nori.

KAJIYAMA TOKUTARO was the son of KAJIYAMA TOMOHIRA in Hiroshima who used the art name UJIMASA. TOKUTARO has also used this name of UJIMASA and thus was NIDAI UJIMASA. TOKUTARO was a pupil of BIZEN OSAFUNE YOKOYAMA SUKEYOSHI, who in turn was a pupil of SAKURAI MASATSUGU, well known for his signature with a swastika.

That YASUNORI had earned some acclaim whilst alive is perhaps a little bit of an understatement. According to Shimizu's TOKO ZENSHU, volume 2, page 153, the Emperor's gunto was made by YASUNORI in 1934. This, I think, indicates that he may be considered as one of the top class swordsmiths at that time. The gunto of Emperor Meiji for instance, was made by the famous Gassan Sadakazu, grandfather of the present Gassan Sadakazu. And according to No.149 of the NBTHK-Journal TOKEN BJJUTSU, YASUNORI was also called DAITO no KAMI MASAMUNE: "Masamune, the protector of Greater East Asia". That YASUNORI must have belonged to the best swordsmiths may also be concluded from the fact that during World War II the making of swords for field marshals and admirals of the fleet (gensui) was assigned to a pupil of KAJIYAMA YASUNORI: KOTANI YASUNORI. According to Ono's GENDAITO MEIKAN, page 138, Field Marshal Terauchi's gensuito was made by this pupil of KAJIYAMA YASUNORI (KOTANI YASUNORI adopted the name YASUNORI in 1935 by order of the then minister of war, General Hayashi Senjuro). In this connection it is interesting to note that Field Marshal Terauchi has not surrendered his gensuito to Lord Louis Mountbatten. Apparently this gensuito was more important to him than the old family swords he did surrender; because it was presented to him on behalf of the Emperor when he was promoted a Field Marshal in June 1943.

KAJIYAMA YASUNORI died in 1954 at the age of 74.

"

The Compton Collection (or a small part thereof) has gone on show at the Japan Society in New York. This is one of the best sword shows ever mounted outside of Japan. Member Martin Lorber has written a review of the show for our Journal, which follows. I understand that the catalogue is most interesting, and details of how it may be obtained are at the end of Martin's review.

The Compton Collection

Through April 25, 1976, the Japan Society in New York will be host to an exhibition of 94 swords and fittings from the Collection of Dr. Walter A. Compton of Elkhart, Indiana. The exhibition is without doubt one of the largest, most technical and comprehensive exhibition of the arts of the Japanese sword ever mounted outside of Japan. With assistance from Dr. Compton, Ogawa Morihiro compiled the catalogue in great academic depth, forwarded by introductions by Drs. Homma Junji and Sato Kanichi. The catalogue covers the history of the Japanese sword chronologically, the history of the blade, the changing shape of the blade over the centuries and the reasons for changes, the schools and masters of the periods and military and social history. Included also, profusely illustrated with detailed line drawings, are identifications of Japanese swords by characteristics with discussions on koshirae and kodogu.

Included within the context of the catalogue is a master glossary of terms, specifically divided into the parts of the sword, types and shapes, sori, shinogi, mune, hiranuki, boshi, nakago, nakago-jiri, yasuri-me, complete drawings of tempering and forging patterns, jihada, signature types, horimono, variants and types of hi as well as koshirae; also glossaries of kodogu terms for metals, surfaces, bori, zogan and physical descriptions of tsuba; also an index of periods and eras and a map of the old Japanese provinces.

There are 46 blades included in the exhibition, of which 15 are fully illustrated in photographs of excellent detail, accompanied by extremely technical descriptions of the blades themselves plus a comment on the smith or school or the specific blade within this framework. This detailed work is lavished on all the blades in the exhibition, illustrated or not. Included in the show are 48 excellent examples of tsuba, fittings and accoutrements as well as an outstanding sumi kakejiku by Miyamoto Musashi.

Although not all the blades are presently in the possession of Dr. Compton, they have all, at one time or another, been in his collection and those presently not in his possession have been loaned through the gracious consideration of their present owners, The Chido Museum in Yamagata-ken, The Homma Museum in Yamagata-ken, The Society for the Preservation of Japanese Art Swords, The Sword Museum in Tokyo and the Terukuni Shrine in Kagoshima-ken. These particular blades had been given as gifts to the various institutions through the generosity of Dr. Compton, the most notable and outstanding one being a phenomenal tachi by sho-dai Kunimune, discovered in the United States by Dr. Compton and successfully identified as a missing National Treasure originally donated to the Terukuni Shrine by the Shimazu family. The blade was returned to Japan as a gift to the nation in 1967 where its classification was immediately ranked as Kokuho, and this is the first time a National Treasure blade has ever been loaned outside of Japan.

It is a very strong robust tachi with a strong sori towards the machi and typical of the late 13th century Bizen blades. This tachi (81.4 cm) has a strong ji-hada of ko-itame combined with ko-mokume and ji-nie with midare utsuri; the hamon is a mixed choji with kawazuko-choji in nioi and with good yo and ashi and tobiyaki on the omote mono-no-uchi. The slightly shortened (but ubu) nakago with kiri-jiri carries two mekugi-ana and simple squared kanji between the mekugi-ana and the machi. Without hi or horimono, the strength of the blade is seen in stark reality with a subtle play of the choji midare which Dr. Compton has likened to lights playing across a low, rolling mist; a blade of phenomenal strength and presence, the tachi is the focal point of the exhibition.

Among the other blades in the exhibition is an elegant, slender, late 13th century Yamato Juyo Token tanto attributed to Senjuin; the simple hira-tsukuri blade is an understated piece of masame with some itame, simple suguha in nie and utsuri, sumagashi and kinsuji developing into a most elegant yakizume boshi and engraved on either side with a simple suken. Ogawa mentions in his footnote that signed examples of this school are almost never found but those few existing blades carrying Senjuin or Senjuin Yasushige mei tend to be long blades.

An exquisite mumei 13th century Juyo Bunkazai tachi attributed to Fukuoka Ichimonji, 76.7 cm. has a strong sori and elegant slender ubu nakago; the hada is ko-itame with mokume and midare, the robust hamon is choji midare with juka-choji midare in nioi with large amounts of ko-nie, yo and ashi, an exuberant bit of tempering calming to a fairly simple medium suguha towards the machi.

One of the most elegant tanto in the exhibition is a Juyo Token blade bearing a Kunimitsu mei; hira-tsukuri, 24.7 cm. the blade has a simple ubu-nakago, the hada a fine ko-itame with some chikei; a thin suguha of nioi carrying kinsuji, sunagashi and dense nie, a very simple ko-maru boshi with slight hakikake, void of any horimono whatsoever. The koshirae is in aikuchi style with kozuka and menuki by Goto Ichijo in the form of fruit.

Another tanto of the same period, also with a Juyo Token classification, as many of the blades in the exhibition are, is a small hira-tsukuri 24 cm. Norishige; a vigorous matsukawa hada, the hamon is in shallow notare of kinsuji and nie with some sunagashi and a kaen boshi. Ogawa mentions in his footnote that the notare with sunagashi kinsuji given an impression of a Sung landscape painting.

The only Higo blade in the exhibition, in which the majority tends to be Bizen, is a fine tachi by Kunitoki, early 14th century with a Tokubetsu Juyo Token classification. A shallow elegant blade, 68.4 cm. it has a suriage nakago which displays, between the final mekugi-ana and the jiri, two very large Kunitoki kanji filling the width of the nakago; the ji-hada is a fine and thick itame with some indications of masame; the hamon is a shallow notare mixed with some komidare and ko-choji on the lower hamon with a profuse amount of ko-nie intermixed with ashi and yo. A very strong and elegant blade with a bo-hi extending the full length of the shinogi-ji.

One of the more subtle blades in the collection is a Juyo Token Bizen tanto by Chogi; hira-tsukuri, 21.2 cm. with an ubu-nakago bearing a full signature, Bishu Osafune Chogi and dated December, 1368. The ji-hada is a very dense itame with chikei and the hamon is a vigorous o-midare with notare in ko-nie with plenty of ashi, yo and some muncyaki. The midare-komi boshi with a long turn-back completes the overall presence of the blade which at first seems rather boistrous, but in fact is a blade of extreme subtlety and delicacy, a blade which Dr. Compton himself has said is one of his favourites. It is interesting to note that Ogawa mentions in his footnote that whereas most contemporary Osafune blades are principally gunome, Chogi used a great deal of notare mixed with choji.

Among the other tanto and small wakizashi in the exhibition are included: Juyo Token wakizashi by Hironitsu, dated October 1362, a good Sagami blade with dense itame and hitatsura combined with gunome and a profuse amount of ashi, sunagashi and kinsuji in nie. A particularly nice hira-tsukuri Tokubetsu Kicho Token wakizashi by Ryuoshi Sadatsugu, dated March 1368, carries a ko-itame hada, an hamon of choji combined with ko-gunome with profuse ko-nie, ashi, ara-nie, kinsuji and sunagashi - a brilliant blade carved on the ura with a plum and on the omote with bamboo; it is fully dated and signed and is without mekugi-ana as it is an intentional copy of a shrine presentation wakizashi, classified an Important Cultural Property, made by sho-dai Yasysugu and donated to the Atsuta Jingu in Nagoya on the occasion of his recognition by Tokugawa Iyeyasu to use the aoi-mon on his blades.

Among the daito, there is a Tokubetsu Juyo Token tachi by Bishu Osafune Iyesuke dated March 1412; a Juyo Token katana by Hankei; a Juyo Token katana by Inoue Shinkai dated August 1676; a shinshinto katana by Fujiwara Kiyondo; a Juyo Token tachi by Bishu Osafune Tomomitsu dated January 1365; an o-suriage mumei Tokubetsu Juyo Token katana attributed to Yukimitsu (an excellent example of Sagami work;) a Juyo Bunkazai mid 13th century tachi attributed to Fukuoka Ichimonji, a thin elegant blade with strong sori, slender, curving nakago, executed in ko-itame with mokume, the profuse choji midare hamon comprised of juka-choji midare in nioi with yo, ko-nie, kinsuji and ashi, void of any horimono, the blade complete with itomaki-tachi koshirae emblazoned with kiri-mon and was given by Dr. Compton to the Society for the Preservation of Japanese Art Swords in August, 1967.

- - - - -

The catalogue is extremely important, not only as a record of the exhibition itself, but also for the excellent teaching qualities for beginning and advanced collectors; the profuse detailed drawings and massive glossaries clearly elaborate and explain the great technicalities of the field. By far, it is the most complete and extensive catalogue cum teaching manual on the subject in any Western language.

As this is one of the very few truly academic and extensive exhibitions of Japanese swords mounted outside of Japan, it can only be read as an omen of things to come. It honours, firstly, the blades and secondly, one of the great men of the field inside or outside of Japan, Dr. Walter Ames Compton, who for more than forty years has diligently studied and worked to preserve the field for future appreciation.

The cost of the catalogue (including air postage) outside of the United States is as follows:

	Japan Society Members	Non-Members
Softbound	\$14.35	\$16.85
Hardbound	\$29.85	\$36.85

The Japan Society
333 East 47th Street
New York
New York 10017
USA.

Californian Sword Show

I have received additional information on the Northern Californian Sword Club's Token Tai Kai, details of which can be found in Programme No 89. This event is taking place from July 21 - August 1, 1976 and includes a shinsa, lectures, auctions etc. Should anyone wish to go who has not yet registered and requires further information, or who is going and has not received the latest Newsletter, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to me and I will forward details.

Oshigata

A reminder to new members who may have difficulty translating inscriptions on swords through inadequate references. If they care to send a Oshigata (rubbing of the tang) to me, with a stamped, self addressed envelope, I will supply information on the smith, school or whatever.

New Members:

Miss E.M. Green,
38 Frederick Street,
Palmerston North,
NEW ZEALAND

Mr. O.Kelly
43B, Boomgaardstraat,
2000 Antwerp
BELGIUM.

Mr. D.J. Good,
55 Gloucester Avenue,
Grimsby,
South Humberside.

Mr.A.K. Betts,
84 Coniston Avenue,
Upminster,
Essex. RM14 3XP

Mr. M.B. Clark,
9 Stambourne Road,
Great Yeldham,
Essex.

Mr. I. Naito,
79 Jersey Road,
Hounslow,
MIDDLESEX.

Mr. John Upton,
22 Norfolk House Road,
Streatham,
London.

Mr. R. Bonehill,
Flat 1 (Basement)
222 Westbourne Park Road,
London W11.

Change of Address:

Mr. D. Perrett,
14 Willow Path,
Mason Way,
Waltham Abbey
Essex.