

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.

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PROGRAMME No. 51

NEXT MEETING: Monday October 6th 1969 at The Masons Arms, Maddox Street, London, W.1. at 7.30 p.m.

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

N.B. This Programme has a number, in response to several requests for them to be numbered in future. If you have every number up to this one you are lucky, I've lost a few of the early ones somewhere.

SUBJECTS

Raoul Knutsen was unable to attend the September meeting and has promised to talk at the October meeting, not on pole arms as previously stated, but on the history of Kendo. This will be an informal talk and the speaker hopes to be asked many questions so that the evening becomes a discussion rather than a lecture. May I appeal to all members who possibly can to come to this meeting so that we have a good attendance. There is another reason why as many as are able should attend - but I intend to keep this a surprise, so, come and find out what is afoot!

For the November meeting we hope to have Alan Bale who will talk on the characteristics of Suie Bizen blades. For this meeting bring Bizen blades dating roughly from 1450 - 1600, or later Bizen if you have them for comparison.

LAST MEETINGS

Both the August and September meetings were marked by the "holiday period" slump, attendance was a little down and a general summer indolence prevailed. I'm sure those who were there enjoyed themselves, there was much discussion and passing around of swords, nothing however occurred to cause a stir in this Programme, that is with regard to collecting.

An important event in August was the announcement by Fujii Okimitsu of his proposed special charter flight to Japan. This I published to European members only on the 6th of August, as a "Special Announcement".

For the benefit of new members and of members elsewhere who might be interested I will repeat a synopsis of this scheme. In any case there has been a slight alteration of dates and plan

since the original publication.

The special Charter Flight will now leave PARIS on March 29th 1970; stop in London and leave for Japan at 3 p.m. Arrives on March 30th; Tokyo, at 4.30 p.m.

Departs from Tokyo April 13th at 10.30 p.m; arrives London on 14th April at 6.50 a.m. 1970.

I will not repeat the various ways in which Mr. Okimitsu suggested members might spend their two weeks in Japan, he will supply details on this. The main attractions are International Kendo Championships; Kendo Team Matches in Tokyo; Expo '70 Exhibition; Individual sword sessions at Museums to be arranged for To Ken members.

The cost of the return fare to be between £190-£200 not more, a reduction of well over half the normal fare. Limit of baggage 44 lbs.

Places are still available for this trip. Mr. Okimitsu has been able to extend the final date for joining the party to October 15th 1969.

Members wanting further details should write immediately to:

Fujii Okimitsu,
Flat 33, Grandville Court,
Mountview Road,
London, N.4.

CREDIT FACILITIES

In connection with the above Charter Flight I have been asked to announce that credit facilities can be made available to To Ken members, with I believe up to two years to pay. To find out about this scheme members should write to the Sakura Trading Co., 78B High Street, Hounslow, Middlesex. Tel: 01-570 9018 Apply direct to this company and not to the To-Ken Society.

HONORARY MEMBERS

It was decided at a Committee Meeting in July that the To Ken Society should ask certain Japanese sword experts and men who have given our Society great help in different ways, if they would honour us by becoming Honorary Members of our Society. Accordingly at the August meeting Fujii Okimitsu was asked if he would be, and graciously accepted being, an Honorary Member. I subsequently wrote to Mr. Yazu Kizu in the U.S.A. and Mr. Albert Yamanaka in Japan, both of whom kindly accepted Honorary Membership. May I express our pleasure at having these gentlemen join us, in

the case of YazuKizu and Albert Yamanaka may I ask members to think carefully before deluging them with questions, simple answers may be found elsewhere, although I am sure they will both help with the more difficult problems which arise in studying Nihon To. It may be well to stress here that reading an oshigata does not authenticate a blade, nothing is a substitute for a blade in the hand.

VISITING MEMBERS

It was a great pleasure to meet two corresponding members during the summer period, since the issue of the last Programme. These were Ernst Stumpfel from West Germany and Ronny Rönqvist of Finland, both of whom arrived at different times out of the blue at the door of my flat in London which serves as Society Headquarters. Ronny Rönqvist was just in time to accompany me to a sale of swords in a country town, which I think he found at least amusing. Both of these members were in fact fortunate to find my wife and myself at home, and we have wondered since if any other members from far away places have arrived at our door to find no one at home. Brightwells is not as far from central London as it might be, but it is nevertheless not a place which is easy to find. It was an easier matter when Headquarters was D.J.K.Wright's shop in Piccadilly Arcade. Because of this and because Headquarters now is also a home which may not always be occupied, the shop was always open during weekdays, we would like to suggest that visiting members telephone before attempting the journey to Fulham. We will always be delighted to see and talk with members visiting London, but a telephone call first may well save a wasted journey.

KENDO

The 'Special Announcement' of August 6th also gave details of an invitation to Kendo at the Nenriki Kendo Dojo on September 13th. The tournaments were arranged by The Eikoku Kendo Renmei and Japan Air Lines with the approval of the Oshu Kendo Renmei. These European Championships were held in honour of the first official delegation to Europe from the Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei. The delegation comprised five 8th Dan, one 7th Dan, three Hanshi and three Kyoshi. As may well be imagined, the European Kendoka were on their toes to produce their best, and the conducting of the Kendo bouts by the members of the delegation as well as their various demonstrations was all superb to watch.

The function was attended by Prince Tomohito; the welcome address was given by Sir Frank Bowden in which he greeted the Japanese guests, members of the various European Dojo who were competing, and members of the To Ken Society. Mr. Takizawa Kozo, chief representative of the delegation, replied to this in Japanese, a translation being read by Raoul Knutsen. In his turn Mr. R.A. Lidstone, Chairman of the Eikoku Kendo Renmei replied, and this was translated into Japanese by Fujii

Okimitsu, and so the proceedings got under way.

The competitive bouts were the first rounds, semi-finals and finals of the Kyu-sha and Japan Air Lines Yudansha Tournaments. To the non-expert in the audience these were a series of anonymous masked figures, circling each other, and rather like two tom-cats emitting enormous volumes of noise, rising to the highest pitch at the moment of attack. Throughout the afternoon these battling warriors eliminated themselves to the final winners of the prizes, revealed as a gentleman from Switzerland, Mr. Galinski, another from London and surprisingly a girl from London. (Mr. Hopson and Deborah. I'm afraid I haven't discovered her surname and for this I apologise).

The first demonstration by the Japanese experts was Nihon Kendo-no-Kata, given by Takizawa Kozo Hanshi, 8th Dan, and Ueda Hajime Hanshi, 8th Dan. The first part was katana opposing katana, the second tanto opposing katana. The strict form of these movements were not conducted at great speed but were obviously performed with great attention to style and were very beautiful to watch, like living Japanese Prints. Later Nakakura Kiyoshi Hanshi, 8th Dan, gave a demonstration of Iai-jutsu. This was fantastic. For those who know the film 'Seven Samurai' this was the expert swordsman come to life. His utter relaxation and composure of facial expression as he sat quietly before bursting into each round of movement was incredible. Bursting is the wrong word - it was more a slow unwinding, almost a reluctance to draw the sword rapidly accelerating to a crescendo of straight clear cut movements ending in a lightning return of the sword to the scabbard. All this was performed without a sound, not a hiss of breath or rattle as the sword was replaced in the scabbard. The only sound was the audible whistle of the blade through the air. That replacing of the blade in the scabbard really had to be seen to be believed, the only way I can give an impression of this is to say imagine the fastest drawing of a sword to arms length that you can, and then realize that this man returned the sword from arms lengths into the scabbard at twice that speed.

Gogyo-no-Kata, "old Kendo forms" were demonstrated by Iho Seiji Kyoshi, 8th Dan, and Sakuma Saburo Kyoshi, 8th Dan, using wooden swords, boku-to. Short graceful patterns of movement apparently following the form of Kendo-no-kata.

The final demonstration was by six members of the delegation, who in pairs, performed Mohan-Jiai, special practice. To me, the non-expert, there appeared to be more fencing in this and the movements speedier but more controlled, as might be expected, than the earlier European competitive bouts. The noises just as loud, but sounding much more Japanese! The last bout showed that Kendo is not without its humorous side when one expert pulled off repeated rapid blows to the forehead of his opponent with apparently humorous remarks and much laughter.

This was a great afternoon and I am grateful to the Nenriki Dojo for inviting us, my only disappointment was that not many members of the To Ken Society attended. This is a poor do; the Nenriki members always support our functions extremely well; more co-operation wanted on the part of To Ken members please. In any case those of you who did not come missed something very worth while.

KYUDO Sunday September 14th, 1969

The demonstration of Japanese archery (Kyudo) was much better attended by To Ken Members. This was a remarkable event, being so different in many ways from the previous afternoons Kendo, although perhaps the Iai of Nakamura Kiyoshi had the same spirit of pure Zen. The archery took place at the London Kendo Club, organized by Jock Hopson and Keith Feltham, in this instance together with the Sakura Trading Co.

The proceedings were introduced by Hideharu Onuma, 8th Dan, and Master of Kyudo, who explained in English the basic principles of Kyudo, its elements of self-control, breathing and Zen teaching. If I may quote from Onuma Sensei's excellent small book, he says: "Archery, the practice of bow and arrow, means the most complex interconnection of three spheres of activity, i e. that of body or art, idea or conception and mind or spirit, with their myriad modes of changes and shiftings; which makes it so difficult for the archer to make his aim rightly and firmly.

Trying to find it out in the target, the archer will find it unmoved and unperturbed; trying to find it out in the bow and arrow he will find them thoughtless and artless.

And so there is really no other way than to reflect it within himself, to purify and rectify his mind and body, to cultivate purity and righteousness of both his spirit and art, and to carry on self-training with utmost faithfulness.

Therefore, he who is determined to search into the secrets of the art of archery should use the deepest consideration about the loftiness and far-reachingness of the art, and should continue his self-drilling and training with intense sincerity under the watchfulness of God, thus hoping to realize his aspirations under the activities of truth, goodness, beauty and holiness."

I cannot in my ignorance add to these words, except to say that this introduction to Kyudo was marked by an atmosphere of peace, calmness of mind, tranquility and gentle strength. There was no printed programme so I must apologise if my naming of the participants is not absolutely correct. To my knowledge the first Master to demonstrate the art was Anzawa Sensei Hanshi, a legendary 10th Dan, and I believe 82 years old. His movements, as were those of the other archers, were remarkable for the

absolute control of each position and the slow relaxed strength at the moment of drawing the bow; "the archer should unify his mental and bodily self and the bow and arrow in one single form of cruciform axis; all powers of the body, hand and mind should be balanced and held in a state of equilibrium." A long pause and then the loosening of the arrow, "in full readiness of mind, with brimming spirit, allowing the opportunity of discharging the arrow to ripen itself."

Even with the arrow gone the archer "should not derange both his mental mood and bodily posture, but he observes closely the arrival point of the arrow". This is the moment of "Zanshin" to reflect on the past actions.

Not until the archer has lowered the top of the bow to the floor and stepped back from the shooting point does this complete control relax into the low head to the floor courteous Japanese salute.

Anzawa Sensei was followed by Kitajima Sensei, 6th Dan and Suhara Sensei, 5th Dan, a Zen Bhuddist Priest, moving in unison and gracefully allowing each to shoot in turn. Finally Onuma Sensei went through the ritual of shooting his two arrows, it was noticeable that his performance had certain different elements of movement, probably attributable to another School of Kyudo.

I have tried to give an impression of this very beautiful and truly aesthetic demonstration, the tranquility of which communicated itself to the audience who were as still as the archers. A final note of wonder was that particularly in the case of Anzawa Sensei even the folds of his garments were controlled throughout into perfect symmetry.

After an interval the Master Hideharu Onuma invited us to practice; I don't think any of us really thought he meant this literally but sure enough he did, and eventually some thirty-odd of us of both sexes were trying our poor best to emulate the movements of the Kyudo experts. In this we were assisted, and I must say with infinite patience, kindness and humour, by the three Sensei. Anzawa Sensei sat and looked on with an amused twinkle in his eye, and occasionally he joined in to add a very authoritative few words in Japanese to both Japanese and English alike. It was a remarkable fact that although the instructions of Sensei's Kitajima and Suhara were almost totally in Japanese, due to their patience and good humour there was no mistaking their meaning. Surely this is what international relationships are all about, if only there was more Kyudo taught throughout the world.

On behalf of the To Ken Society and of everyone there I would like to express thanks to Hideharu Onuma and his delegation for coming to this country and for demonstrating this pure art form to us.

A very memorable afternoon, thanks to the London Kendo Club for the invitation. I'm sorry not to have been able to warn more members of this event but we did not know it was taking place until a few days before, at the September To Ken meeting.

ARROW HEADS

Following the recent discussion and letter from Wilf Dodds on the probable use of large ornamental arrow heads, and their actual use in battle asserted as quite possible by Wilf. His letter ends, "It's a pity we are not in a position to get comments from the older generation of Japanese archers on this subject". It goes without saying that I suddenly found myself exactly in this position. I was able to ask Onuma Sensei this question. His answer was a definite "No". He told me that all ornamental arrow heads were made for ceremonial and memorium purposes, such as that when a boy attained the age of fifteen etc. At first these arrow heads were quite small, flat and pierced with a Mon, as we have all seen. In later times these became larger and grander, presented by Daimyo and nobles for various purposes. He told me that he had in Japan a very large arrow head, chiselled and pierced with a dragon horimono which was signed UMETADA. So I think we can all agree that these authoritative words put an end to that discussion.

A REFLECTION

I am delighted once more to be able to publish the following brilliant piece from our anonymous sword fittings author, this time he writes in a different vein:

"Shortly after the twentieth of the Ninth Month, 'I went on a pilgrimage to Hase Temple. When I woke up late at night, the moonlight was pouring in through the window and shining on the bed clothes of all the other people in the room. Its clear white brilliance moved me greatly. It is on such occasions that people write poems'. So wrote Sei Shonagon through the beautiful translation of Ivan Morris. Shonagon was born just over a thousand years ago, but her words are as good as any with which to contemplate the rapid approach of winter, and your correspondent on small fittings, although incapable of writing poems, is using her as an excuse for "the idle thoughts of an idle fellow", rather than a learned dissertation on some long-dead craftsman of tsuba or kozuka.

He, like other ardent Japanese collectors, has returned from an all too short holiday with a dirty car, sea shells, sand, a new smattering of foreign words, fading memories, and absolutely no money. Poverty, the collector's autumnal nightmare. Through the letterbox come the first tempting catalogues of the European auctioneers. They are all written, one believes, rather to conceal the identity of the contents of the sale than to reveal the splendours of other men's collections. Perhaps it is better to leave them unopened than to long for pieces one cannot buy.

Autumn must, therefore, be a time for rediscovering other pleasures. For the collector of blades, who has fretted for many a day on a foreign beach at the thought of his sword by Munechika developing a rust spot and returned home to find it only too true, there are the anxieties and rewards of cleaning and polishing. Through the length and breadth of the land, anxious owners assemble their scattered equipment and set to work in the most inconvenient place in the kitchen. Sounds of loving owners rubbing away the patina on a shakudo tsuba can be heard on all sides, and the desperate cursings of those attempting to rebind a handle.

More comforting perhaps, now that the evenings draw in all too quickly, are those books one has never quite finished, or read and forgotten. The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon can be read countless times and still be unfamiliar. After all, what else is there to do now that Wagner's "Ring" has been laid aside by Covent Garden? In the Japan of Shonagon's day, the palace quarters were being changed. The summer garden was over and the wonderful graded colours in the autumn garden beginning to show at their best. Not always tranquil however. "One day after a furious autumn wind everything moves one deeply. The garden is in a pitiful state, with all the bamboo and lattice fences knocked over..." "One night in the ninth month, a certain lady was visited by a young man, who, although not of the highest nobility, was known for his elegance and keen wits. He left before dawn when the moon still hung in the sky..." The Japanese of those splendid vanished days had no knowledge, as we have now, when leaving our lady loves by the light of the moon, that from its distant surface we are observed by American astronauts.

The interests of autumn for the impoverished collector are many and varied. Why not make a model of the disposition of the fleets at the great sea battle of Dan-No-Ura? After all, Sir George Sanson has given us a drawing in his History of Japan. And what a book that is, coming fresh to minds bored long ages ago, at school, by the mythology of Greece and Rome. It reads page by page like the best of thrillers, and one is only too sad when it is finished. But to quote Shonagon once more, "One day, I passed a handsome man carrying a narrowly folded letter. Where could he be going?" He was your correspondent hurrying to catch the printer and satisfy the demands of the indefatigable and much to be admired, Mr. Dale.

ARTICLE

We have received from the Sword Club of Southern California the following summary of a talk given by Yasu Kizu on the Tsuta sukihiro line of swordsmiths. Many thanks to the Southern Californian To Ken Kai and Yasu Kizu for allowing us to publish this for the benefit of our members who are not members of the Southern Californian Club.

The Swordsmith Family of Tsuda Sukehiro (SU 69) by Yasu Kizu.

In the Genwa and Kanei periods from 1615 to 1643, shortly after the Shinto era began, Osaka in Settsu province became an important sword making centre, having such famous smiths as Izumi no Kami Kunisada (KU 497), Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke (KU 617), Tamba no Kami Yoshimichi (YO 288), Mutsu no Kami Kaneyasu (KA 350) and in later years, Inouye Shinkai (2nd Kunisada) (SH 471), Tsuda Echizen no Kami Sukehiro (SU 69), Ikkanshi Tadatsuna (TA 129), and many others whose blades are known as the Osaka Shinto.

An obscure smith named Yahei Sukehiro, born at Tsuda in Harima province and engaged in making the Kazuuchi mass-production blades moved to Osaka sometime during the Kanei period between 1624 and 1643, becoming a student of the first Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke (KU 617), one of the fathers of the Osaka Shinto, and at last made himself one of the top ranking swordsmiths. He is the first Tsuda Sukehiro, better known by the nickname Soboro Sukehiro or "Rag-clad Sukehiro" as he was commonly clad in rags.

His blade characteristics are:

1. Mostly katana and wakizashi - rarely tanto. Katana and wakizashi are gracefully shaped, tapering with medium curvature toward a medium point.
2. Well forged small mokume burl grain with some masame straight in the ridge surfaces. There are some utsuri reflections in the surface.
3. Temper lines are choji mixed with irregular and gonome patterns, both are nioi based.
4. Boshi are straight or slightly irregular with small round turn back.
5. Well shaped tang of which the end is off-centre ken point. Slanting file marks.

Signatures are - Settsu ju Fujiwara Sukehiro, Settsu Osaka ju Sukehiro saku, and two character Sukehiro.

His blades were classified as of Supreme Sharpness by Yamada Asaemon the official cutting tester of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

The second Sukehiro (SU 70) common name Jinnojo, was born in 1637 at Uchida, a little bayshore town in Settsu province. He was adopted by the first Sukehiro when he was a small boy and learned the art of swordmaking. Young Jinnojo must have been a talented person for, at the age of 19 he succeeded his adopted father's name, Sukehiro. At the age of 21 he received the title Echizen no Kami, and was employed by Lord Aoyama Inaba no Kami Munetoshi of the Osaka Castle in 1679. He became so famous that Kamada Natae placed him first of all the top ranking smiths in his set of sword books called "Shinto Bengi".

Sukehiro is known as the smith who created the Toran-midare pattern or "waves about to break" temper line. This was imitated by his students and many other smiths in later years among whom were Omi no Kami Sukenao (SU 191), Sakakura Terukane (TE 43), both of Osaka, Tagarayama Ujishige (UJ 88) of Harima, and among the Shinshinto Smiths, Suishinshi Masahide (MA 63), Ozaki Suketaka (SU 277), Tegarayama Masashige (MA 484), and Ichige Tokurin (or Norichika) of Mito in Hitachi, are well known. He died in 1682 at the age of 46.

His blade characteristics are as follows:

1. He made mostly katana and wakizashi which are well proportioned and well balanced shape of medium curvature, rather high shinogi and back ridge lines, medium point, somewhat meaty body.
2. Finely forged small mokume burl that looks like nashiji grain with fine dense nie evenly distributed and shining clear and bright.
3. Temper line patterns are suguba, large wavy toran and the breaking wave toran, all nie based. All patterns are wonderfully skilfull having so much dignity that no other smiths approached his skill.
4. Boshi line most dignified with low small turn-back.
5. Horimono carvings include grooves with round ends, the god Fudo, dragons, and bonji characters but they are rare.
6. Tangs are well shaped, a little flat and long with off-centre ken end. File marks are slanting with decorative marks at the top that are so beautiful that they are called "a shower" on his later blades.

Signatures are: Echizen no Kami Sukehiro, Echizen no Kami Minamoto Sukehiro, Echizen no Kami Fujiwara Sukehiro (on early blades). From 1667 he signed Tsuda Echizen no Kami Sukehiro in a square style which is known as Kaku Tsuda or square style Tsuda. From 1674 he signed Tsuda Echizen no Kami Sukehiro in grass form called Maru Tsuda or round style Tsuda. Most of his blades have dates in grass characters.

Yamada Asaemon the official cutting tester rated his blades that have suguba temper lines as O-wazamono or near Supreme Sharpness, and those with other temper lines as Wazamono or plain Sharpness.

The third Sukehiro (SU 71) whose common name was Zentarō has been almost forgotten, may be because he was overshadowed by the greatness of the second Sukehiro, and by the fact that his active time was only seven short years.

Among students of the second Sukehiro, Sukenao (SU 191) from Takagi in Omi, who became his teacher's brother-in-law, is the best known. In fact he is considered to be nearly as skilfull as the second Sukehiro, having blade characteristics similar to his teacher, except slightly wider body, larger point, and

shallower curvature, and with some gonome and pointed patterns mixed in the toran temper line.

He received the title Omi no Kami about 1672.

His signatures are: Omi no Kami Sukenao, Omi no Kuni ju Sukenao, Omi no Kami Takaji Sukenao, and Tsuda Omi no Kami Sukenao, in either square or grass style characters. Dates are usually in grass style characters.

His blades were selected as Superior Sharpness by Yamada Asaemon.

The best reference for this school is the 'Osaka Shinto Zufu' which shows a year by year progression for each smith.

N.B. The letters and numbers in brackets refer to the index system of Hawley's Japanese Swordsmiths, Vols.I & II.

OSAKA SHINTO ZUFU may be obtained from W.M.Hawley, address at the end of this Programme. It is good, covers important Osaka Shinto swordsmiths, very well illustrated.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

I have received a copy of "Rotunda", the bulletin of the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada. This is the Summer 1969 edition, Vol.2 No.3; and it contains a well written and well illustrated article on Japanese swords and the museums collection by David Pepper, a member of the museum staff and a To Ken Member. The article well illustrates that there are some fine blades in the museum, although as Mr.Pepper states many of them are in need of restoration, which he hopes to achieve one day with the aid of a Japanese polisher. The article also contains two old photographs of samurai taken around the 1860's (Mr. Rönqvist please note!). My immediate thought was to publish this, but it would be pointless without the illustrations and general excellent layout of the article. I should imagine that members who would like a copy have only to write to the Museum, address below, enclosing 75 cents, plus something for postage, say a total of one U.S. dollar - and they will duly receive a copy. Address: Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto 181, Ontario, Canada. Details of "Rotunda" copy above. Thanks David, hope you sell a million!

NIHON TO NEWSLETTER

In accordance with our usual policy and by arrangement with Albert Yamanaka, I publish once more part of an article from the above bi-monthly - sometimes monthly - newsletter. New members will find details of this at the end of this Programme and as always I still urge all members to join. I don't accept the argument that it is too expensive, you will save the subscription on the first bad Japanese sword you do not buy, because of the new knowledge you have gained. This extract is intended primarily for newish collectors but may be digested with profit by more experienced members. All too often many of

these very simple rules are neglected, particularly at our meetings, to the detriment of many a good blade. This extract deals with etiquette in handling swords; in the next issue I shall hope to publish the rest of the etiquette and the section dealing with care.

ETIQUETTE & CARE (Extract from the Nihon To Newsletter)

In ancient Japan the etiquette regarding the handling of swords was very strict. The Samurai having to carry these blades day in and day out and it being a very sharp instrument, care naturally had to be observed. Further, since the Samurai revered it as something sacred, they took care of its preservation and certain rules were followed in its care and handling.

Women in Japan were not allowed to handle swords with their bare hands, but used the sleeves of their Kimono to carry them.

In caring for swords, some strict Samurai even went so far as to forbid women from entering the room when they were cleaning their swords. Also, this process was something more like a ritual. Of those who followed the very strict rules, some went so far as to hang mosquito nets and they cleaned swords under it, this was found to be the only dust free place. In some Japanese Movies, depicting scenes where a Samurai is cleaning a sword, one will notice that a Samurai will have a piece of paper in his mouth, not only in cleaning but in looking at swords as well. This was done so that one's breath would not defile the blade.

We do not feel that this served any purpose, since if one closes his mouth then he must breathe through his nose and surely, in close inspection of swords "hot air" from the nostril will fall on the blade and thereby defeat the purpose of having the paper in his mouth. Though the appearance of a person seated on a Japanese Tatami, with a paper in his mouth and looking at a sword, certainly poses a pretty picture, that seems to be the extent of it. Today the ancient rules are no longer heeded, however in its preservation and appreciation certain rules are still applied.

We, as students of Japanese Swords, should heed these rules:

1. When one is given a sword to see, whether it be for appreciation or otherwise, it is proper to give a slight nod of respect to the blade before the swords are removed from the sword bag, or from the scabbard.
2. In removing the sword from the sword bag, grasp the bag in your left hand, unravel the silk cord so that only the hilt of the sword is exposed. During this phase always keep the cutting edge up.

3. Having exposed the hilt, the opened part of the bag is folded back and it is lightly wrapped with the loose cord.

The sword is then held so that the tip of the Saya Kojiri is away from you, and the tip of the Tsuka Keshira is near you, with the cutting edge uppermost, then you are ready to remove the blade from the Saya. At this point, with the Tsuka exposed, it is proper etiquette to use a "Fukusa" around the Tsuka so that you will not soil the Tsuka.

Often times a fine blade is in a fine mounting and will be wrapped in fine aged silk cord or deer skin and they are easily soiled by the oil in your skin, therefore in looking at such blades one should always carry Fukusa, in addition one should also have a Nuguigami or another Fukusa. Like a well-to-do person, a good blade wears expensive clothing. Though not all blades are in fine clothing, sometimes one comes across a blade in a very dirty mounting and at such times rather than dirty your fine Fukusa and Nugui, as well as your hands, plain newspaper may be used or be well prepared to get your hands dirty.

4. Grasp the Tsuka with your Fukusa wrapped around it firmly and with your left hand have a firm grip on the Saya.

5. In drawing the blade from the Saya, always keep the tip slightly lower than the Tsuka and also when you have drawn the blade out, keep in mind not to allow the tip of the blade as it leaves the Saya to scrape the mouth of the Saya (Koiguchi).

At times one sees a person draw a blade out about 10 inches or so then look at the half-drawn blade turning the blade and the Saya over and over. This act is the worst offence and an insult to the owner of the blade, as well as to the blade itself. In turning a half drawn blade over and over, there is a great possibility of chipping the cutting edge as well as putting scars on the blade. This offence should never be committed by a student of Japanese Sword.

6. Having drawn the blade from the Saya, cover the mouth of the Saya with the loose part of the bag so that dust will not enter the Saya, then the Saya may be laid close by.

It may be rather difficult for a person to draw the blade out and cover the Saya with the loose bag, so then you must lay the sword down, however when you do lay the sword down, place a Fukusa or Nugui at the tip so that the blade will not touch the floor or the table, or whatever you are laying the blade down on.

7. You are now ready to look at the blade. First hold the blade at arms length with the Habaki at about on an even keel with your eye and look at the shape of the blade from the Habaki towards the Kissaki. Then inspect the other side in a like manner. It is very important that your first impression of the blade be taken in a proper manner and the etiquette for your impression of the blade at this point will largely influence your judgement later in observing other parts of the blade. Your

observation at this stage will give you a good foundation in determining, what school and in what period the blade was forged. It also will tell your host that you have the right attitude and know the correct etiquette. Accordingly, he will be glad to show you what he has. On the other hand, improper observation of these rules will result in a negative reaction from your host.

8. Now you are ready to observe the finer, minute details of the blade, blade pattern and steel structure. For this you must have another Fukusa or Nugui as mentioned previously. Have the 2nd Fukusa/Nugui in your left hand and place the blade on it at a slight angle. Point the blade towards the light and you will be able to see the finer workings of Nioi in the blade pattern. In looking at Nie, you must have the light source shining over your shoulder on the blade which will give you the best angle in observing Nie. In looking at the tip or the Kissaki, slightly lower it bringing it near you, however whenever you move the blade in any direction always be careful that you are not near any object so you will not cause injury to the cutting edge or for that matter any other parts of the sword. You can then scrutinize the details and fine points such as the 'workings' in Nie/Nioi, condition of the Jitetsu, grain of the steel, as well as the areas of the ridges.

Never allow any part of the blade to come in contact with your clothes, this act is considered the worst offence. (Members take note, B.D.).

9. Having gone through the ritual, you then replace the blade into the Saya in reverse order of the way you withdrew it. In returning the blade into the Saya keep the cutting edge up and straight. Allow the Mune to rest on the Saya mouth, keeping the blade and the Saya always in a straight line and let the blade "slide" into the Saya, however you must always maintain control of the blade so it won't rub against the side of the Saya.

10. At this point you may rewrap the Saya bag and the cord, though in most cases the host will do this himself according to his own liking. Also, the host will always rewipe the blade before putting it away after your visit, so this part should be left up to him.

11. In looking at a good quality mounting, extreme caution and care must be observed. A fine blade in fine mounting will have Tsuba, Menuki, Kozuka and Kogai by master craftsmen. In drawing the Kozuka and the Kogai out from the Saya, use the utmost of caution so as not to mar the Tsuba, Saya, Kozuka or the Kogai, for in certain cases, the Kozuka and the Kogai rest very snugly on the Hitsuana of the Tsuba, and if one is to draw the blade out without caution, the sliding action will cause the Kozuka and the Kogai to rub hard against the Hitsuana thereby marring the backside of the Kozuka and the Kogai as well as the part of the Hitsuana the two rest against. It would perhaps be best to leave this operation to the host and have him draw the blade, Kozuka and the Kogai for you.

12. It often becomes necessary when one has drawn the blade to pass it from one person to the next. In such cases, again, extreme caution must be used. When passing a drawn blade to another person, ALWAYS keep the cutting edge towards you. Hold the blade right below the Tsuba or Habaki, and make doubly sure that the recipient has firm enough grip on the Tsuka below you before you let go.

LETTER

This is a letter from Dan Erling, U.S.A. to Sydney Divers, which I publish with Syd's permission. Members will remember that we started a 'thing' on uchiko in the June/July Programme. This has sent a number of letters flying back and forth and has resulted in Society headquarters sitting on a pile of unsold uchiko! Nothing wrong with it either, you can expect a bill any day now, Dan Erling! To the letter -

"Dear Mr.Divers, Very happy to hear from you and also to obtain a piece of Uchigomori to work with. From the time I wrote to the Society until the arrival of your letter, I have not pursued this matter further, mainly because of the apparent lack of interest and the problem of obtaining Uchiko from different sources.

However, since there is some interest, let me summarize what has happened since the arrival of your letter:

Uchigomori - small piece removed and sent to Marquette Univ. for mineralogical identification (X-ray)

Uchiko Powder No.1-to be X-rayed	Both No.1 & 2 were in a collect-
Uchiko Powder No.2-to be X-rayed	ion I purchased. Both were
	obtained from Taikodo Ceremonial
	Sword Shop Utsunomiya Naka kawara
	machi Japan. (Circa late 1940-
	mid 1950)

Both of the Uchiko powders dissolved with strong effervescence in cool Hydrochloric Acid. Therefore, I imagine they are powdered limestone. The Uchigomori you sent me is also probably a limestone. It has the hardness and appearance of a limestone and therefore it probably is. So at this time, the only thing I can be certain of is the original sample X-ray which proved to be quartz. In order to check this out, I shall take the following steps:

1. Write to the collector who furnished the quartz uchiko sample and try to learn the following:

- a) Does he have any more (if so, obtain another sample and X-ray it)
- b) Where the original came from. Try to obtain another sample from source.

2. It would be interesting to learn how many companies are manufacturing Uchiko and obtain samples of as many as possible. It would also be interesting to know if all the Uchiko is supposed

to come from the same location or quarry.

Until I or someone else obtains another sample of Uchiko which proves to be other than limestone, we shall have to think of the whole matter as a possibility, and a vague one at that.

It might be interesting to ask each member to bring to the next meeting a pinch of uchiko, and the name of the source. They can obtain enough of the powder for a test by tapping it on a clean glass until they are able to scrape together an amount equal to half a pea or a couple of small beads. A few drops of Hydrochloric Acid added to the powder should cause it to effervesce and dissolve the powder completely. If it does all these things it is probably limestone. If it does not do these things, it might be interesting and I would like to check it further."

LETTER

Member W.M.Hawley has something to say on the same subject and some advice to offer; an extract from his letter:

"Re: Uchiko - originally made of Tsushima powder (from Tsushima) by grinding up in water, allowing to settle, pouring off, settle, pour off, etc. about ten times. What won't settle is filtered out and packed in 4 layers of 100 mesh silk lollipops. These days they save the residue from the last three polishing stones and treat as above. By this means it makes no difference what the mineral composition is, as the particles are so fine that the human eye cannot resolve the scratches it leaves. So, the sharper these fine particles are, the better they cut, still without leaving visible scratches. So, collectors take care, do not use too much uchiko or too often. Two or three pats and wipe gently, instead of heavily powdering and scrubbing hell out of a blade. Only do that to remove stains".

Chew on that please, Dan Erling, and let me have your comments. I've a feeling that member Hawley has put the skids under this research. Its not what it is but how many times it has been sifted that counts?

LETTER

Of interest in that it tells us about the sword scene in the U.S.A. from Col.Dean Hartley, Jr. I quote an extract:

"A bit of news - as I may have mentioned before, I had arranged for a three-day visit to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts for Mr.Kentaro Yoshikawa (polisher to the Imperial Household Agency- he has only recently repolished Ko-Garasu-Maru (by AMAKUNI?). At any rate, we had a most enjoyable period, during which we were joined by our American polisher, T.Sgt.Bob Benson. We, (Mr. Yoshikawa, primarily) examined about 365 of the 575 blades present. I believe he, Mr.Y., will prepare a report on his findings, so I won't pre-emp. However, in the area of sword names, I find I have one - a blade signed HIZEN no KUNI NO JU ICHITA MINAMOTO MORIYASU

(ca.1661), has a shumei inscription added by KANADA GYOMYO (kakihan). Top expert of 18th cent. (wrote SHINTO BENGI) which reads "IMA MONOYOSHI". Mr.Y. says this translates as "The now (current) MONOYOSHI" which was the name of a famous Sadamune katana owned by Tokugawa Iyeyasu. He liked the blade sufficiently to accept it for polishing. It is long Wakizashi-suguba".

LETTER

From David Pepper, mentioned elsewhere in this Programme. I quote this in full as he gives a stirring account of his recent 2½ month visit to Japan, displaying an enthusiasm which I like to see. How about some enthusiasm from some of you silent ones out there in the blue? How about a letter? You must be doing something, or have you all committed seppuku with that bad sword you bought when you should have contributed to the Nihon To Newsletter instead? David's letter:

"This letter may be a long one - in fact it may become more than one letter. In any case it will appear somewhat disjointed, I fear. I found Tony Griffiths piece on small fittings very amusing, and at the same time an honest approach. Appreciation of good craftsmanship and aesthetic quality should be the ultimate goal of any collector. The business of collecting signed pieces and 'big names' is too often foremost in men's minds, and can just as often lead them completely astray. In the world of Japanese art, there is a plethora of fakes. The imitation made by a craftsman is, of course, a legitimate work of art provided it is not mis-represented. What concerns me chiefly, is the vast quantity of mass-produced fakes, outright imitations, some of which appear in most large collections. The Japanese have been making cast-iron tsuba, copied from original pieces, since 1890 at the latest. Some of these are obviously imitations, but the best reproduce the patina and surface treatment of the metal so well that they are almost impossible to pick out, especially when a bit of soft metal decoration is applied by hand over the iron. I speak chiefly of TSUBA, but the technique is used on other fittings as well. From October 9th until December 21st of last year, I travelled about Japan, visiting historic places, castle towns, museums and cultural treasures. I took every opportunity to visit the KOTTŌ-YA-SAN or antique dealers, and came back with hundreds of small pieces ranging from books to sword-furniture. One thing became apparent however, and that is that the average Japanese dealer is little more knowledgeable about craftsmanship than his Occidental counterpart. Even very good sword shops sold blatant fakes beside genuine specimens, sometimes with no regard for price. In a shop in Tokyo, I saw a cast iron tsuba, with the mould lines still visible, on a rack with several others. It, because of its style, was priced at around 15,000 Yen or 45 Canadian dollars. A beautiful MOKKO tsuba in Nobuiye style, undoubtedly finely crafted, but with no gold decoration, was ¥5,000 or \$15 Canadian! I could spend hours enumerating similar instances. Generally speaking, the sword market in Japan is still booming. In Tokyo

alone there are at least 20 sword dealers, and every large city (many small ones as well) have dealers in sword fittings and armour. On the average, prices compare with those in the west - very fine blades seldom reach the open market, being negotiated for privately, and these of course, bring top prices. Armour is expensive all over Japan. Bows, spears, polearms and other items vary from place to place, but are not usually high priced; almost everything is expensive in Tokyo of course. It is definitely possible to pick up good pieces at reasonable prices, but only if one has a very sharp eye and a good knowledge of materials and techniques. This applies to any Japanese art objects. Aside from some tsuba and fittings (I searched through about 2,000 menuki in Kyoto to find 6 good pieces at a few shillings each - the rest were either stamped or cast metal - worthless). I tried to buy things which although not rare in Japan, are difficult to obtain here, if not impossible. I beg leave to mention a few items - 2 books printed in Edo around 1850, by a pupil of Hokusai, illustrating designs for tsuba, and other metal mounts (one or two of these appear in Lumir Jisl's book, Swords of the Samurai, with no explanation as to origin) - an iron pincers-type bullet mould for the old matchlock guns - a book (or rather set of 8 volumes) on swords of the SHINTO period, written by a swordsmith, copiously illustrated with signatures, NAKAGO shapes, HAMON etc. All this printed in 1780, and in perfect condition! Two KOSODE, or rather one SAMURAI HAORI, and one KOSODE for wearing under armour. A solid iron fan somewhat like a miniature JITTE - several old gunpowder flasks - several exquisite ladies' hair-pins in lacquer and tortoise-shell. If time and more particularly money had not prevented me, I would have needed to hire a ship to bring back my purchases. As exciting as this was the fact that I was able to get 5 swords polished by an excellent polisher. My experience may serve to shed some light on the abilities of the polishers of Japan. Two of my blades needed basic polishing - one a MUMEI KATANA of MINO style, probably 17th cent. and very long; the other a long WAKIZASHI by one of the many OSAFUNE SUKESADAS (prob. 16th cent. or earlier). The other three had more serious damage. One, a MINO blade by KANENOBU (16th c.?) had been very heavily rusted and had shallow surface pitting. One YOROI-TOSHI was completely covered with spider rust and surface corrosion. The other YOROI-TOSHI had been thoroughly sandpapered and had about 1/16 inch of the edge ground off at the tip, to protect some timorous Madame Butterfly no doubt. When the blades came from the polisher, I was astounded at the results. Each, in clean white shirasaya, bore no traces of former damage. Even the badly rusted KANENOBU had gained all its former beauty. I think the two factors most against polishing are: (1) loss of the yakiba through chipping or other damage; (2) that condition known as "tiredness" when much of the inner layers of steel are exposed from many polishings. Chips can be ground out provided enough of the Yakiba remains after this process.

While in Japan, I was fortunate enough to be invited to several samurai homes to look at swords etc. Always I heard this

comment: "We had more swords, better ones, but the American G.I.s took them away." The U.S. personnel fortunately often passed up plain-looking shirasaya blades in favour of decorative mounts, leaving a few good blades in the hands of their rightful owners.

One thing which struck me was that some of the National Treasure blades don't look that way. Many of these old blades ride on historical merit, and some have been over-polished to the point of losing their finest qualities. One such, I recall, is the MIKATSUKI MUNETSIKA, which has several flaws in structure, and does not make a vivid impression. In several museums and special exhibitions I was able to see finer blades than I have ever seen - blades which would literally take your breath away. Blades which any collector would sell his soul for! At the same time, some of the best blades, the great treasures, have flaws in construction which according to some collector's opinions expressed in the To Ken journal, would make them not worth mentioning. Even in Japan, everything is relative. It does become apparent however, that the best blades never left Japan.

I don't want to write a book, but I will invite questions from other members about my trip, etc. While in Japan, I lived completely in Japanese style, was with Japanese people and avoided gaijin tourists like the plague. Curiosity and interest took me to places where even the Japanese tourists seldom go, and the whole experience has benefited me incalculably.

Purely by accident I was able to meet Dr. Torigoye in Okayama City, but more of that later.

I'm going to write to Dan Erling about the uchiko question. Dan pops into the ROM about this time every year, so I'll probably get a chance to visit with him and talk swords. We have a pre-war uchiko here, which might be worth looking at, and I bought a different type while in Japan. Evidently the best uchiko is made from the TOISHI (polishing stone) which has been powdered during the process of polishing a blade, and this after careful preparation, is mixed with powdered stag horn. I must close this now but I warn you, I shall write again.

Sincerely, David Pepper".

LETTER

From member R.D.St. John of San Francisco. I'm not quite sure how to take the first bit! Only one lady so far as I know, Mr. St. John, our secretary. This hypothesis I should add is based on outward appearances only.

"Gentlemen (or Ladies): As a member of the To-Ken Society, I am taking advantage of that fact to enlist your help in securing auction catalogues on Japanese arms, armour, nesukes, inro, etc. (No prints or pottery) issued after 1960 and primarily those issued by Sotheby, Christie and Glendining. I need the price lists as well for a research project.

I am not sure that there is any provision for an advertisement in the bulletin, but should there be, I would gladly pay any reasonable charge. Please let me state at this time that I enjoy your bulletin tremendously and I should hate to find that they would stop coming, if I were to overlook the date on which my dues are required.

Sincerely Yours, R.D.St.John."

COMMENT, Regarding Advertising

Mr.St.John's letter comes at an opportune time because we have recently considered offering to insert paid advertisements from members in the Programme. This would help to publish this bi-monthly Programme which obviously costs more than it did and we are not a wealthy or profit making Society. The Committee decided that one U.S. dollar or the equivalent would seem reasonable for around ten lines of type script. If you want a whole page to yourself you will have to pay more! This means, if you wanted to, you could insert an advertisement in the six yearly issues of the Programmes for six dollars; this might bring you in untold treasures!

You can have this one for free Mr.St.John, but if you or any other member would like to work out about ten lines of type (using these pages as the standard) stating your wants, enclose one dollar or equivalent, send it to the Secretary, we will publish it in the next Programme, due in November. Don't delay too long, it will be at the typists about the end of next month. I now realize that I already have an advertisement and it is paid for! It follows :-

AD. Eager and willing to 'pay through the nose' for fine top quality small fittings, Fuchikashira, menuki, etc. Also very interested in fine quality kanemono. Can someone please offer something worth doing a "knees bend" to the Bank Manager for... I enjoy seeing him squirm!
Tony Griffith, "Gadsby", Wymeswold, Leicestershire, England.

AD. "Tony Griffith come South, we need you!" See last Programme.

AD. More please. Bon Dale.

CORRESPONDENCE

Well, that is just about another Programme off my back. I had hoped to report this month that I was completely up to date on letters too! But, I haven't quite made it except I think there are no outstanding back-dated letters to answer. All my arrears are pretty current letters; I'll be with you soon, Siong, Willis, Bart and Uncle Tom Curtis. One back-dated letter, apologies Captain Black, if you ever bought that sword! Send me a rubbing, that drawn-inked in thing has completely defeated me although I've kept going back to the ----thing! And a mystery. I note Mr. Vitt your comment in the Nanka Token Kai Bulletin of July '69 "Please be patient if there is a delay. We shall be

equally patient with those who have not yet replied to our correspondence since we realize that Great Britain is half-way around the globe." Do I owe you a letter Mr. Vitt? or is it just my guilty conscience? However, I shall shortly be writing to you on another subject so we may clear up the mystery. Mr. Hawley, please pass on the message!

NORTHERN BRANCH OF THE TO KEN SOCIETY

Next Meeting, Tuesday, September 23rd 1969 at the Seven Oaks Hotel, Nicholas Street, Manchester at 7.30 p.m.

Subject, Ian Bottomley will give a talk on the protective qualities of Japanese armour.

Last Meeting, Andrew Ford gave a talk on Bizen-den, covering all the main schools from Ko-Bizen to the Shin-shinto period. He would like to acknowledge the great help the researches of Yazu Kizu of the Nanka Token-kai were to his notes for this talk. Among the items brought to the meeting was a tachi in shirasaya signed Kanehira. Although this blade was an old Bizen blade, it did not seem to comply sufficiently with the characteristics necessary to be from the Ko-Bizen school. Of the other blades brought, surprisingly few were in fact Bizen-den.

Exhibition, The exhibition that the Northern Branch is organising at Manchester Museum is coming along well. Will any members of the Northern Branch who have items they wish to lend, and have not got in touch with me yet, please do so, so that the cataloguing can be completed in time. Unfortunately, it is not the Museum's policy to issue catalogues for their exhibitions, and we cannot afford it, so a short catalogue will be circulated with the Programme if the space is available.

SECRETARY'S PLEA

Would members sending in Bankers Orders for subscriptions please print their names in capitals together with their signature and add the name AND address of Bank. We have one Bankers Order, received around May, with a completely indecipherable signature and 'Barclays Bank, Kingston-upon-Thames'. All this means nothing and we do not know who sent this - any claimant please?

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 address, I will check it for them and send them all available information I have on the swordsmith 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:

NIHON TO NEWSLETTER
C.P.O.Box 967
Tokyo, Japan

Enclose: Name, Address, City, State, etc. and remit Twenty (20) U.S.dollars or equivalent. Bank Cashiers cheque only - NO personal cheques.

AIR MAIL POSTAGE

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

Europe - £3.-.-.
U.S.A. and elsewhere - \$10.00.

JAPANESE SWORD BOOKS

Japanese Swordsmiths - list 17,500 smiths. Vol.1 \$15.00; Vol.2 \$10.00. Japanese Swords - a Nomenclature chart 17" x 22", \$0.50. 27" x 35" \$1.00. Los Angeles County Museum, Arms & Armour Hall Catalogue. Colour plates \$5.00. Arms & Armour of Ancient Japan - Exhibition Catalogue 1964, \$3.00. Nihon To Koza, 10 vol. revision of pre-war edition, well illus. \$25.00. Nihon To Zenshu 9 vols. A modern scientific approach. Well illus. \$76.50. Juyo Token nada Zufu. Record of Juyo certification. Vols.13 to 16 available. Nihon Toko Jiten - Koto vol. \$17.50; Shinto vol. \$16.00. Tangs of 1000 smiths. Write for list of 50 or more titles in Japanese or English. Postage extra. We automatically get every new sword book from Japan. Tsuba boxes \$1.00. From:

W.M.Hawley, 8200 Gould Avenue, Hollywood, California 90046 USA.

NEW MEMBERS

We have much pleasure in welcoming the following:

Yasu Kizu, 2717 East First St., Los Angeles, California 90033. U.S.A.	Albert Yamanaka, C.P.O.Box 967, Tokyo, Japan.	A Ball Esq, 42 New Compton Street, London W.C.2.
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R.A.Hoare Esq, 35, Dorrit Way, Rochester, Kent.	Barry William Thomas, Flat 2/37 Faversham Rd, Canterbury, Victoria 3126. Australia	Fujii Okimitsu, Flat 33, Grandville Court, Mountview Road, London N.4.
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23.

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