

THE TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN  
for the Study and Preservation of Japanese Swords and Fittings



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PROGRAMME NO. 54

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 6th April 1970 at The Mason's Arms,  
Maddox Street, London W.1. at 7.30 p.m.

FOLLOWING MEETING: Monday, 4th May 1970, at The Mason's Arms,  
7.30 p.m.

SUBJECTS: April - We will hold a dirk evening. Please bring  
interesting examples of Aikuchi, Tanto or unmounted blades.

Swords for study should be Horikawa School, Shinto and  
Yamashiro Den, Koto.

May - Alan Bale will talk about tsuba's.  
Swords for study should be Tsuta School Shinto and Soshu Den,  
Koto.

OMISSION IN LAST PROGRAMME

The article 'A Few Prints of Bakemono' was, of course,  
by our President, B.W. Robinson, which was probably apparent to  
everyone except me!

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I announce that we have  
at last produced Journal No.4. This is with all thanks due to  
our new Editor, Malcolm Hutchinson. Many copies of this Journal  
have already left these shores etc. etc. but there are many  
copies available still - so please write in to the Secretary,  
enclosing six shillings (or one U.S.dollar) which includes  
postage, and you will receive your copy. Buy one for a friend  
too, it all helps to keep the Society solvent and a paying  
concern. Incidentally, as is not unusual it seems, the Printer  
let us down on some copies, and omitted four pages. If you  
unfortunately received one of these, please write in and we  
will send you another copy.

Since the last Programme the Society has received a  
gift of two modern swords from Mr.K.Sayama. These are modern  
copies of genuine Nihon-to and are an Itomaki-no-Tachi, or Jin-  
Tachi, and a normal Katana. The blades of these swords, made of  
compound metal, have the weight and appearance of a true blade,

except of course, the hamon is ground on. The use of the Jintachi is purely decorative and it would look well with a suit of armour. The katana is also decorative but is also intended for the practice of Iai. This should be of interest to collectors who practise Kendo and to Kendo students, who would like to have a good solid sword to practise Iai, without the attendant risk of damaging a real blade or oneself with a sharp blade. Details of these swords are published in this Programme. I think they are cheap, but because they are modern we have customs to contend with and this puts the price up for import into this country. By how much we are not yet sure.

I would like to put it on record how much I personally enjoyed Syd Divers recent talk on sword polishing stones. This talk was not "this is How you Do it" but rather - "this is how it might be done, and what do the Japanese do anyway?". We all came to the conclusion that the cost involved in polishing a blade was not expensive when one considered the knowledge and effort that went into the operation.

#### LAST MEETINGS

February: The Daisho Evening. A warm welcome was extended to Mr. and Mrs. Sumeya who are visiting Europe. Mr. Sumeya who speaks excellent English, is a Kendo expert whilst his father is a connoisseur of Nippon-To. Mrs. Sumeya graced the meeting by wearing traditional costume which was extremely decorative and colourful. The Chairman opened with remarks to try and clarify just what constitutes a Daisho. The two swords do not have to be by the same swordsmith although in some cases they were originally made in pairs. Time and changes of ownership have usually separated the blades, but occasionally a daisho, with matching blades is seen. The mounts, themselves, do not have to be exactly matching although differences are usually minor and the overall design is adhered to. Sometimes the subjects on each sword are matched but made by different artists. Scabbards normally seem to match although the wakizashi can have more ornate lacquer work. Bon then produced a little model of a Samurai wearing a Daisho and also the mounts with Tsunagi of his Yamato Tegai blade which took a green paper recently. He said he was told that the wakizashi was in the same sale in a different lot. It was sold to Mr. Fairclough and the question was the most frequently asked one of the evening - "Where is it now?"

Sir Frank Bowden who thought of this evenings topic, produced two Handachi Katana and two Handachi Wakizashi whereupon everyone produced their swords and cross-checked to see if a match could be made. In all, 26 swords were placed on the table. The chances of actually matching two swords were mathematically slender but a late-comer placed a wakizashi on the table which caused jubilation amongst members, although the twinkle in Len Holtaway's eye should have given the game away. Anyway, for some time we thought that a daisho had been brought together until

Len and Mole Benn came clean. A list of swords to which the other half is sought is published elsewhere in this issue. Syd Divers had just bought a No-Dachi of 5 ft. length or more - he remarked that he was looking for the long companion sword. The evening was not without one success, however; John Sanderman had brought a bronze Tsuba along which was found to be the Dai- to the -Sho tsuba on a mounted sword belonging to Member Schofield. The swords present were too numerous to describe adequately, but a tachi with a Kogarasu-Maru copy blade showed that this design is not so rare as might be imagined. Malcolm Hutchinson had a very finely mounted wakizashi, which I always envy, with mounts by Omori Terumasa and a fine Aogai scabbard inlaid with large silver peonies. Alan Bale also had a wakizashi of extremely high quality mounts with an eye-catching blade signed Hosho Sadamune. Alan reckons this blade to be by Hiromitsu III who was well known for his Sadamune forgeries. Mole Benn showed a tsuba Daisho, one of which had been incorporated into a menu-holder - a thing not uncommon to see in Japan, apparently. He also had a Kozuka Daisho made by different artists. Two other items of especial interest were shown by Mole - a very large Panorama of Yokohama harbour and a large print of Nikko as a street map.

March: Sword Polishing. The Club had the pleasure of Mr. & Mrs. Sumeya at the meeting again. Syd Divers had on display a complete set of polishing stones. These were mostly limestone and the prices ranged from £2 to £10 each:- Total cost about £50. Syd mentioned that two years ago, Professor MacFarlane had given a similar talk but lack of information had rendered a number of points obscure and that he would hope to clarify these. When we speak of polishing in the West, we mean a mirror finish obtained by the use of extremely hard abrasives. In contrast, the sword polisher uses a relatively soft stone which wears at the same rate as the sword. This makes the polishing an extremely lengthy and tedious business and in Syd's opinion, a proposition just not "on", for ordinary mortals. Sydney had two sets of instructions: one by Inami Hakusui, the other by Mr. Namikawa Heibei. The stones which he had were in order of descending coarseness: Kongoto, Binsui-To, Kaiseito Chinagura, Komanagurato and Uchigomori To. There were also bags of Hazuya To, Jisuya To, Kana Hada, Tsunoko, Ibotara, Nigaki-Bo, Uchiko and Chogi oil. Syd said that before polishing, the blade should be very carefully examined to see which stone should be used to start off with. There are some types of rust marks which look bad but are only surface marks and can be removed by a long rubbing with Uchiko. If there are deep pits of rust then the sword must be applied to the coarsest stone, Kongoto. When all the pits and rust marks are removed and also any re-shaping of the blade that might be required carried out, then the next stone can be used. It is a waste of time going to the

next stone before the pits have disappeared. On all the large stones the blade is held in the hands and rubbed against the block, the cutting stroke being diagonal to the blade edge. On the next stone the polishing direction is changed to produce scratches at right angles to those already produced. This change of polishing direction is done with every change of stone and enables the degree of polish to be ascertained. Copious supplies of water are used to wet the stones and strict cleanliness is required to keep grit from one stone getting onto the next one to be used. Syd had a spear blade which he had previously rubbed on the various stones to show their effects. He thought that after 2 or 3 stones the Yakiba would usually start to show. When all the scratches from the previous stone had disappeared, and not before, does one proceed to the next stone and so on down to the finest stone of all. The Hatsuya To which is a thin sheet of stone with a paper backing is then rubbed on the blade to bring out the Hada and the Yakiba, similarly the Jitsuya-To. The application of these stones is where the master polisher applies his skill. They are run along the edge of the yakiba, and it is the care taken here that gives the clear contrast between the hardened edge and the rest of the blade. After this, various powders are applied with a tissue or a cloth. The hada is further accentuated by rubbing with iron oxide mixed with Chogi Oil (oil of cloves to you!). The mune is burnished with a hardened steel needle and there you are - a polished blade. Syd had a tanto blade which according to Alan Bale, was a Katana prior to Syd's polishing, which showed the final stages of polishing. It is this final polishing where Syd thinks we can obtain real savings. The difference between a cheap and expensive polish is the care taken in the final polishing. By sending blades to Japan for a cheap polish and doing a further final polish yourself it should be possible to obtain the maximum best polish for a fraction of the cost. Again Syd emphasized that complete polishing is too time-consuming and that he as a machine tool maker, had not managed to create a machine to do the job, despite a great deal of effort. In fact, if there was a better or quicker way of polishing the Japanese would be using it. There isn't, and never will be, because of the complex shape of the sword and yakiba. The talk aroused considerable interest and many questions were raised by the meeting, such as how the Kissaki was polished or the merits of the various polishes available in Japan or even if etching was used.

Syd concluded with some sound advice: Only attempt to polish your own blades and you will keep your friends. Syd put over such a good talk that there was a spontaneous round of applause from all present. A very enjoyable evening was rounded off by the usual viewing of the swords present.

Len Holtaway had a Masahira blade and Bill Baxter a very straight wakizashi by Nobusada. Mr. Saville had two military swords, both of interest; one with a beautiful grain signed

Yasutsuna, the other with the Yakiba deliberately curling off the edge of the blade near the Habaki. Steve Yorke had a very finely mounted unsigned hirazukuri wakizashi with large Tokugawa Mons on the black rorio scabbard. He also showed the beautiful Kuniyuki sword which he bought from just under Bill Baxter's moustache. Dave Parker had a Yari with a signature signed Harima No Kami - either Nobutaka Tsukuru or Tachibana Hirochika. There was some disagreement over this reading apparently.

#### NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Forthcoming Meetings: 19th May; 21st July, 15th September; 17th November. All at 7.30 at the Seven Oaks Hotel, Nicholas Street, Manchester. Please come, visitors welcome.

At the last meeting George Chan gave us a demonstration on how we ought to do our calligraphy. It was interesting to see how one ought to construct a character. In such a short time it is obviously impossible to become an expert, but one thing is obvious, it is impossible to write properly without using the brush due to the way the lines are constructed. Many thanks George, but we will need many more lessons to get to your standard.

One member brought along parts of a suit of Unkai armour which he is negotiating for. Helmet and mask signed 'Unkai Toshinao saku'; as far as I have been able to gather from our armour experts, Unkai work is provincial and weird. Well this certainly fits the bill. The sode are attached to the sleeves and are in the form of lots of overlapping leaves splashed with sawari coming to a point at the bottom. The bottom edge is trimmed with crepe silk, the hand guards being large with the Date of Sendai mon. The do is lacquered black with an applique Ho-o bird on the front and pawlonias etc. on the back, in russet iron and sawari. The bottom of the do is trimmed with red leather which also appears on the bottom of the shikoro. The kanemono are in silver and shakudo and the tehen-kanemono is of iron and one of the finest I have seen. A general verdict would be weird but of good quality.

Another member showed two blades he has just had back from Japan after polishing. A wakizashi by KU 194 and a katana by 2nd generation Nobukuni of Yamashiro. Both of these received a green paper which must please the owner greatly.

Our final item for consideration was a Masamune blade in shirosaya. This has with it an origami by the 13th generation Honami, Kochu dated 2nd February 1713. The valuation given is 2,000 gold rio, length 1 shaku 6 sun 1 bu (roughly 19.2"); it has bohi on each side of the blade, and a two character signature on the tang, signed katana-me. It is a fine blade in very good state, but as to its authenticity, I feel it would have to be

appraised again in Japan to make it unimpeachable. There is another Masamune in the Liverpool Museum, signed tachi-mei; of the two I prefer the one without origami though here again the only way to make it a 'sacred cow' is to send it to Japan for appraisal.

### DISCOVERY OF JAPAN

There are still copies of this book by Michael Hardwick available. There seem to be a large number of tight-wads in the Club. Go on, spoil yourself and let the Club benefit. Send your 6/- to: Syd Divers Esq, "Hunters Moon", Aspley Guise, Bucks.

### A REMARKABLE NEWS ITEM

Baron Loof Lirpa, one of our Swedish members, has discovered whilst cleaning out an old store-room in his family castle, a large lacquer box containing three swords of incredible importance. The box is 18 ins. x 18 ins. x 3 ft. in gold lacquer of the highest quality and set with the Imperial Mon. Inside the cover are the personal seals of 13 consecutive Emperors to whom the treasure was entrusted upon their accession. The three swords are mounted as tachi and fit into a special rack inside the box. The blades are by Masamune, Sadamune and the Emperor Go-Uda (1275-1288). Each one is in mint condition and signed. Of great significance is a small solid gold Fumibako fitted into the main box which contains a letter by Masamune himself giving the history and authenticity of the blades. This letter has been subjected to the most rigorous scientific calligraphy tests, the ink being dated by the Radioactive Carbon Method, and has been pronounced genuine by the highest Japanese authorities. Until this discovery only the Emperor Go Toba was thought to have made swords but here is an actual Tachi blade by the Emperor Go Uda, signed with a 32 petal double chrysanthemum and Go Uda Saku. Masamune writes that this was made by the Emperor to celebrate the destruction of the Mongul fleet in 1281 and the sword is named "Divine Wind Barbarian Slayer of the Honorable Gods" in gold on the ura of the tang. Incidentally, Masamune supervised the furnace personally and the Lords of Sendai and Awa assisted as hammer-men. The blade is made in the Soshu tradition at its most flamboyant. The Sadamune is unique in so much that it is the only known signature of this smith. It was made as a gift to Masamune upon the marriage of Sadamune to his favourite niece and according to Masamune's letter, surpasses the quality of any of his own blades. It was the very blade which Masamune used to cut off the hand of his pupil when trying to steal his tempering secrets. This blade was named by Masamune in gold "Offending Hand Remover". The last blade is by Masamune himself and displays all the mastery expected from the greatest smith. In the letter Masamune states that under the Habaki was his fingerprint to act as a further guarantee of authenticity. The excitement was tremendous when the sword mounts were removed and the Habaki slid away - there was, indeed, a perfect finger-

print etched into the blade by natural corrosion. By use of the great computer at Berkley University, in California, this fingerprint has been positively identified as Masamune's left hand forefinger at the age of fifty-six when at the peak of his powers. Much information is hoped to be gained by further study and the intriguing question of Masamune's European origin finally settled.

The mounts of the swords are of Royal quality, solid gold and superb 13th century lacquer; the Go-Uda sword being set with 18 rubies and 29 large pearls of beautiful lustre.

The Baron explained that the swords were acquired in the 1860's by his great grandfather, the Graf Sven Christiaan Loof Lirpa, who was commissioned by the Ichiryu Zen Buddhist sect to build a series of sauna baths adjacent to their main temple in old Nara. By the physical exhaustion of prolonged bathing along with deep Zen meditation, these Spartan monks achieved Nirvana. In utter gratitude for this service, these monks opened the nearby Shosoin and removed these treasures as a gift to the Swedish gentleman. They had originally been placed in the Shosoin by the Emperor Go-Uda and since the temple inventory was for its original earlier objects, these swords were not contained thereon. Further, since the temptation of theft would be so strong if they were well known, only the Emperor upon his accession was shown the swords in conditions of strict secrecy. Hence, there was no official record and the discovery has caused unprecedented excitement.

The Japanese Government are anxious to recover the treasures and have offered Baron Loof Lirpa 5 million Koku of rice, the traditional method of payment. However, this would infringe the strict Swedish law concerning the importation of foreign cereals, which if waived might well affect Britain's entry into the Common Market. Delicate negotiations are under way and U Thant has been asked to mediate. Extreme Japanese Nationalists attired as Ninja have been seen in the vicinity of the family castle and at the time of writing, Baron Loof Lirpa has been forced in hiding until the disposal of the swords is completed.

#### ARTICLE

Once more we thank the Southern Californian To Ken and Yazu Kizu for the following article which we have pleasure in publishing for our members.

SWORDSMITHS OF KAGA PROVINCE IN THE SHINTO ERA by Yasu Kizu.  
Japanese Sword Club of Southern California. Talk No. 31.

After the age of the Civil Wars in the late Muromachi era (1530-1600), two powerful men became Lords of two northern provinces, Echizen and Kaga.

One, Lord Yūki Harumoto of Echizen was succeeded by his son-in-law, Hideyasu, whose father was Iyeyasu, the first Tokugawa Shogun, with a fief of 320,000 koku of rice (at that time a koku was about 335 pounds).

The other was Lord Mayeda Toshiie of Kaga with a fief of 1,127,000 koku of rice.

Thereupon, many swordsmiths from other provinces moved into both of these provinces, adding greatly to the number of smiths of several lines and groups who were already active there since Koto times. Among them were Sanekage, Fujishima and Nobunaga.

In the early Shinto period two smiths in Kaga became famous. They were Darani Katsukuni and Kanewaka. The Darani Group, a branch of the Fujishima Tomoshige line originated in 1400 or so, but Katsuiye and eight generations of which four were Koto, continued until 1752. Their blade characteristics in shape, grain and temperlines are similar to those of the Mino School smiths of the late Koto period.

Darani Katsukuni, considered to be the most skilful in the group and one of the representative smiths of Kaga, had signed Iyeshige in his early years. He changed his name to Katsukuni in 1661 when he received the title of Iyo Daijo. Seven generations continued to 1880. Characteristics are as follows:

1. Made mostly katana and wakizashi, shallow curvature, low ridge line, and medium point.
2. Finely forged itame wood grain with a white tinge appearing on surface.
3. Temper lines are suguba, small irregular, and a uniform sanbonsugi three cedar trees pattern resembling that of Mino Kanemoto, with some nie at the bottom of each pattern.
4. Boshi lines are irregular and suguba having hakkake brush marks at tip.
5. Carvings are very rare.
6. Tang end is lopsided triangle called iriyama-gata. File marks are horizontal, slanting and slanting on flat ground with horizontal on shinogi surface.
7. Signatures are - Katsukuni KA 1446; Kashū Kanazawa ju Tachibana Katsukuni; Iyo Daijo Darani Katsukuni; and others.

Blades by the first Katsukuni are rated Awaza-mono or Great Sharpness, and those by the second Katsukuni as Yoki Waza-mono or Superior Sharpness.

Kanewaka of Kaga was famous not only in that province but in the whole country. He was a son of Yomosuke Kanewaka of Mino who moved to Kaga in the early Shinto era.



He was a son of Yomosuke Kanewaka of Mino who moved to Kaga in early Shinto times. His name was Tsujimura Jinroku. He received the title Etchu no Kami in 1619 and changed his name to Takahira. He died 1627. His blade characteristics are:

1. Made mostly katana, wakizashi and tanto. Katana and wakizashi shapes are - shallow curve, low shinogi line, elongated medium point. Two types of tanto: one is Soshū style, wide flat body, 12" or longer and curved a little; the other is regular flat body tanto, comparatively short with thick straight back.
2. Surface grains are finely forged wood or burl mokume mixed with masame straight of rather coarse texture, the large wood grain plainly visible, all having surface nie and a bright clear look.
3. Temper lines are large notare wavy mixed with irregular, suguba, gonome mixed with choji, and large box-shaped gonome having sunagashi or sand-floating lines formed by nie at the bottom of the box shapes. This is said to be Kanewaka's creative characteristic.
4. Boshi lines are straight with small round turn-back, having hakkake brush marks, and crumbled irregular patterns.
5. Carvings are rare, though grooves are seen on some katana and wakizashi. Occasionally found are delicate horimono on tanto.
6. Tang ends are kurijiri chestnut shape. File marks are slanting.
7. Signatures are:- Kanewaka KA 1299; Kashū ju Kanewaka tsukuru; Etchu (no) Kami Fujiwara Takahira, TA 188; and others.

Five generations of his line were active until 1735.

Kanewaka was so famous that his blades have been called "Kaga Masamune" meaning "Masamune of Kaga Province".

It is said that some of his blades which have the appearance of Koto work have often been passed off as those by Shizu Kaneuji KA 1278, and Kanesada KA 920, both of Mino, and as those of Muramasa of Ise province. There was a saying going around in Kaga province in the Edo period that goes something like this -

"To a Samurai, even if his rank is low, who wears a Kanewaka sword, I am willing to give my dearest daughter as his bride."

#### NOH THEATRE

Making its only appearance in the United Kingdom at the Brighton Festival, the NOH Theatre of Tokyo: Nihon Nogaku Dan will perform at the Dome on the 15th and 16th May. Time of performance is 8 p.m. on Friday 15th, and 3 p.m. on Saturday 16th.

Prices on Friday are: 21/-; 16/6d; 13/6d; 11/6d and 8/-. On Saturday, 15/-; 12/6d; 10/-; 7/6d and 5/-. Tickets from:

The Dome Box Office,  
29 New Road,  
Brighton, Sussex. BN1 1UG

It is also hoped that there will be an exhibition of Japanese Flower Arrangements, Tea Ceremony and Graphic Art and Photography.

### APOLOGY

For some unknown reason and without any plausible explanation, a garbled and altered version of the following poem by Capt. Raymond Johns has appeared in the current issue of the Journal. We have fully apologised to Capt. Johns and do so now publicly. To make some slight restitution for this unpardonable error we publish below the true version as it should be in the Journal. If members would care to note this if they already have a Journal we would be grateful, meanwhile we are having printed an insertion slip to be placed in Journals to be sent out in the future.

#### KATANAMEI

by Raymond Johns.

Pride of a thousand years, stainless and terrible,  
Flood-water powerful and plum-blossom fair,  
Sharp as the ice-wind coming from the mountains,  
Bright as the mirror when a Queen binds her hair.

Nestling in silk and the lacquer's gleaming darkness:  
Live flame, leaping to the war-conch's bray;  
Bright are the blades of the heroes of Yamato  
Where the banners are tossing and the war-horses neigh.

Treasure of the Prince and friend of the warrior  
Guarding, though guarded like a royal maid;  
Touchstone of honour and pattern of perfection -  
Hear, then, the singing of a Samurai blade!

x x x

"Munechika made me in the mountains of Yamato,  
White-robed and purified with incense and prayer.  
Iron from the hillside, singing to the anvil,  
Many days he wrought me, lapping me with care.

"Lovingly he tempered me in the Summer moonlight,  
Prayed the Gods to make me mettlesome and tough;  
Hachiman the mighty stood to see the quenching,  
Hearkened to my hissing and said it was enough.

"Brightly and cunningly polished they and mounted me  
Carved me with the name of Bishamon of the Spears:  
So I took the sunrise of the dawn millennial  
And swept like a comet down the long warring years.

"Swinging through the fight as the lightning through the  
cloud-wrack

Softly singing to myself in the little ancient tunes;  
Mingled with waters of Minatogawa -  
Gallant blood has trickled in my runnels and my runes.

"Catching the crimson of the battle sunsets,  
Leader of the vanward since Dan-no-Ura Bay,  
I have lived! Servant of the Son of Heaven,  
Cherished in the throne-room and trusted in the fray.

"Joy of the victor and solace of the vanquished,  
Ultimate mercy to a low-drooping head;  
DRAW! But remember who are standing with me  
Shades of the unforgotten, unforgetting dead."

x x x

Grip with the silk-square and hands not unworthy,  
Ho your breath in awe as the blade flashes free;  
Edged with the salt-spray on the rocks in storm-time,  
Curved as the far-off horizon of the sea.

Limpid is the graining as ripples in the moonbeams  
Fair as the pathway of honour - and as hard.  
Yet, in the peace of a scented Summer night-time,  
Golden flowers blossom on the hilt and the guard.

x x x

Did you hear them calling, the Ushers of Valhalla,  
Calling to your comrades where the great guns roared?  
Blood is the Redemption, sacrifice is glory -  
Hilt to your lips for the Spirit of the Sword!

### SALES ROOM REPORT by Bon Dale

There has been a great deal of sale activity since the last Report in the last Programme. All this activity came to a head on the same day, March 10th. By some profound cataclysm both Sotheby's and Christies found themselves to be having a major sale of Japanese arms and fittings on the same day. Not to be outdone, the new small contender in the field, Elliot & Snowden also had a sale of Japanese swords on that day. Who was at that sale I can't imagine, but that is perhaps where all the bargains were. Fortunately, Sotheby's was a.m. and Christies p.m., but it was still a long hectic day and I pray it never happens again.

On such a feast day it is impossible to detail all the lots and prices fetched. At Sothebys there were some interesting swords which fetched not unreasonable prices. For example, Lot 1 was a very fine unsigned wakizashi, the blade had a remarkable and distinctive hamon and was in excellent condition. I shall look forward to learning who the swordsmith is, for I had great pleasure in buying this sword at £60. I have often found that even if Lot 1 is good it's also cheap! It seems to take a few lots to get all the protagonists into their stride! Having put that into print, I suppose it will never happen again. Lots 2 and

3 were withdrawn; Lot 4 was an interesting katana which sold for £70. On looking at my catalogue again, I discover that Lots 5,6, 7,8 & 9 were also all very interesting and that they all went to the same buyer as lot 1, for prices from £28 to £160. Perhaps I should amend my statement above, and say it takes 10 lots for the rest of the place to wake up!

Three particularly fine aikuchi were on offer at Sothebys, all of which I associate with the "Tomkinson de luxe" class and kind. These made £350, £420, £220 for lots 23 to 25 respectively. Expensive but, where do you see dirks like these nowadays? Answer, only in Museums. I think Sir Frank Bowden paid the top price here as he did for another very fine aikuchi at Christies in the afternoon; this was Lot 181 which made 500 gns. Quite a pair, well beyond the means of the buyer of Lot 1.

The tsuba at Sothebys were numerous and very good on the whole, some exceptional. Many good tsuba sold for reasonable prices again; "reasonable" now seems to mean anywhere between about £40 to £70. Although some quite nice guards sold for much less. With so many very good tsuba in the sale it was to be expected that records would be broken and indeed they were. Prices from £100 to well over £200 were commonplace. Lot 47, a very fine Kenjo tsuba with beautiful gold nunome and kebori inlay made £200. The preceding Lot 46, a fine Kaga tsuba of shakudo, with incredibly accurate inlay of the Eight Views of Omi went for a cool £560. Lot 100, a nice Nagastune, shakudo nanako with two Manzai dancers in relief, ex various collections went to £600. A well known illustrated piece from "Hawkshaw" by Riounsai Moritoshi made £650, Lot 128. This was topped by Lot 132, Someya Tomonobu, a polished shakudo tsuba with distinctive chiselled relief of a landscape in gold, silver and shakudo, £720. All of these were put in the shade by a price of £1150 paid for Lot 126, a "magnificent Shibuichi tsuba" by Seiryoken Katsuhira, subject the three Saké Tasters. This was ex Gilbertson, Boyle & G.G.Davies collections; it was bought by a private collector and is now in a collection which befits its magnificence and previous pedigree. The record for the sale was eventually attained by Lot 246. This was a fine sentoku tsuba, quite small however, but signed by the almost legendary Umetada Mioju. To judge this is quite beyond my knowledge, it certainly looked like the few illustrations one sees of such tsuba, but I'm willing to believe it. It soared to a record price of £1250, and it takes two to make a figure raise to those heights.

To the reader in far away places, how I often sincerely wish I was there too; this talk of hundreds and now over a thousand pounds for a tsuba must be depressing. (Unless he is sitting on a chest full!). But do not despair, above I have only made a story out of the high prices fetched. I haven't stressed enough that even in these sales tsuba and fittings sell for as little as £6 (lot 6); there were lots here which were around £10 and many under £20.

This was even more apparent in the afternoon at Christies, where the tsuba on the whole were not as magnificent, but where there were some good lots, of more than one tsuba. For example, Lot 94 "An interesting Namban guard derived from a European small sword guard; a pair of guards for a daisho with tea ceremony utensils; and three other guards". Six sword guards in the lot, of not bad quality, price fetched 30 gns., or if you prefer it £31.10.0d. What ARE Christies going to do when we go "decimal"? Anyway, to prove the point, do not despair, the above is only £5 a tsuba and sometimes in mixed lots it's less. Many single tsuba here of nice quality went quite cheaply averaging around the £30 mark. I think the top prices were for Lots 121, a heavy silver guard of three horses by Kanasugi Tomonaga, 420 gns. And Lot 123 a fine guard by Shoami Bokuden which I understand was somewhat of a rarity, 240 gns.

I cannot close this over-long report without remarking on the two remarkable swords at Christies about which there has been much trumpeting for at least the last two months. This is understandable because they were certainly designed to impress the beholder, dripping with gold and resplendant in glowing lacquer and coloured saseo, tsukaito, etc. Personally, I found their appearance disappointing. I had expected something magnificent in refined Japanese taste; I can think of two swords in the Far Eastern room at the Victoria & Albert Museum which adequately fit that description. In my impression, those at Christies were European in taste, the sort of thing which impressed the early tourists to Japan in the 1880's. The blades were kinzoganmei Nobukuni, and "generally attributed" to Kaneuji. What I cannot understand is, as these swords had recently come from Japan, and as it was announced weeks ago that they were expected to fetch something in the order of £5,000 each - why? - no documents to support the above attributions? "Documents lost" will not do, whatever secret motives are hinted at. To secure N.B.T.H.K. Shinsa in Japan costs about 30/-, sessions are held once a month or thereabouts. Why weren't these blades submitted for shinsa before leaving Japan? I'm no advocate of buying "with ears" but surely swords which are expected to fetch that kind of money ought to have more authentication than "generally attributed" - by whom, may one ask? In these days of ease in obtaining top Japanese expert opinion a good sword should have a "paper" when it leaves Japan. It is still only an opinion, but it is the best available.

In the event these two swords were seen to be sold for 2,600 gns. and 5,400 gns. each, although in the "Times" next day the Nobukuni was stated not to have reached its reserve price.

Finally from the meditative to the ridiculous I must end this sale report with a footnote to the previous report. This concerns the ultimate fate of the Bizen Ichimonji Norimune, sold in Sothebys last December for £2,000. A recent letter from Han Bing Siong contains the following passage. I quote - "In the Schweizerisches Zeitung of February 16 there was a photograph of the Bizen Ichimonji blade purchased by Dr. Zoellner. It was used to

cut the wedding cake of his daughter who married Dr. Christiaan Barnard! I don't believe Dr. Zoellner is a real collector of Nihonto. Probably he bought that blade only for the occasion of that wedding. If so, then it can be expected that the blade, now undoubtedly with some scratches, will turn up for sale again."

### OSHIGATA

Members may have difficulty in taking good rubbings. Member Nowell has sent me some beautiful 'rubbings'. He deposits carbon from the smoky part of a candle flame upon the tang and then sticks down a piece of Sellotape to which the carbon adheres. The sellotape is then removed and stuck down on a piece of white paper. It is a good alternative method with very clear results.

### SWORD POLISHING

The Society will arrange for the repolishing of swords in Japan. This will normally take about six months from despatch by our shippers in London to return here from Japan. The cost cannot be estimated exactly, depending on the length and condition of the blade and the services required. Very approximately it will be £40-£50 for a long sword, £25-£30 for a short sword at maximum. The services available are: Repolish; Shirasaya; Wooden Habaki; Tsunagi (wooden blade for mounts); Shinsa (certification of authenticity by N.B.T.H.K. panel of sword experts in Japan). A deposit of £25 is needed for a long sword, £15 for a short sword. There is no limit on the number of blades which can be sent at one time by one member. Each blade must have attached a label giving name and address of owner; swordsmith if signed; services required; repolish, shirasaya, etc. The estimated prices above include transport and customs clearance charges etc. which are divided between all members included in a batch of swords. The Society makes no charge or profit. Blades for repolish and deposits payable to the Society should be sent to K.D. Parker, 17, Strickland Row, Wandsworth, London S.W.18.

### 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.

SWORD PRICES OVER THE LAST 6 YEARS by S.R. EVID

Now that 1969 has come to an end it seems a good time to look at the increase of sword prices over the last few years. To do this I have taken the sales of one famous London auction house. This gives us a constant whereas more than one auction house brings in variables which you cannot mix together. You can repeat this for any other auction house and will get very similar percentage changes whereas individual prices will be different.

Though the true collector is not really interested in values (or so he says), it must be interesting for him to see that the money he spends on his hobby appreciates and the increase is very much more than he would get on present-day stock exchange investments.

It is much easier to produce an analysis of tsuba and fittings than of swords as the analysis can be restricted to individual schools whereas with swords some are in shirasaya and some mounted. The prices of the latter invariably depend more on the quality of the fittings than on the blades themselves. To get an average which shows trend, we should have quantity and where this does not occur and quality is on the average low we get the 1966 figure shown on the graph. As this figure is way out on a limb it has to be ignored. It is impossible to get a true assessment of trend unless you put into the auction the same sword each year and bought it back. As swords are individually so variable huge quantity on the market each year is the only true way to obtain a trend curve and of course, the quantity does not now exist.

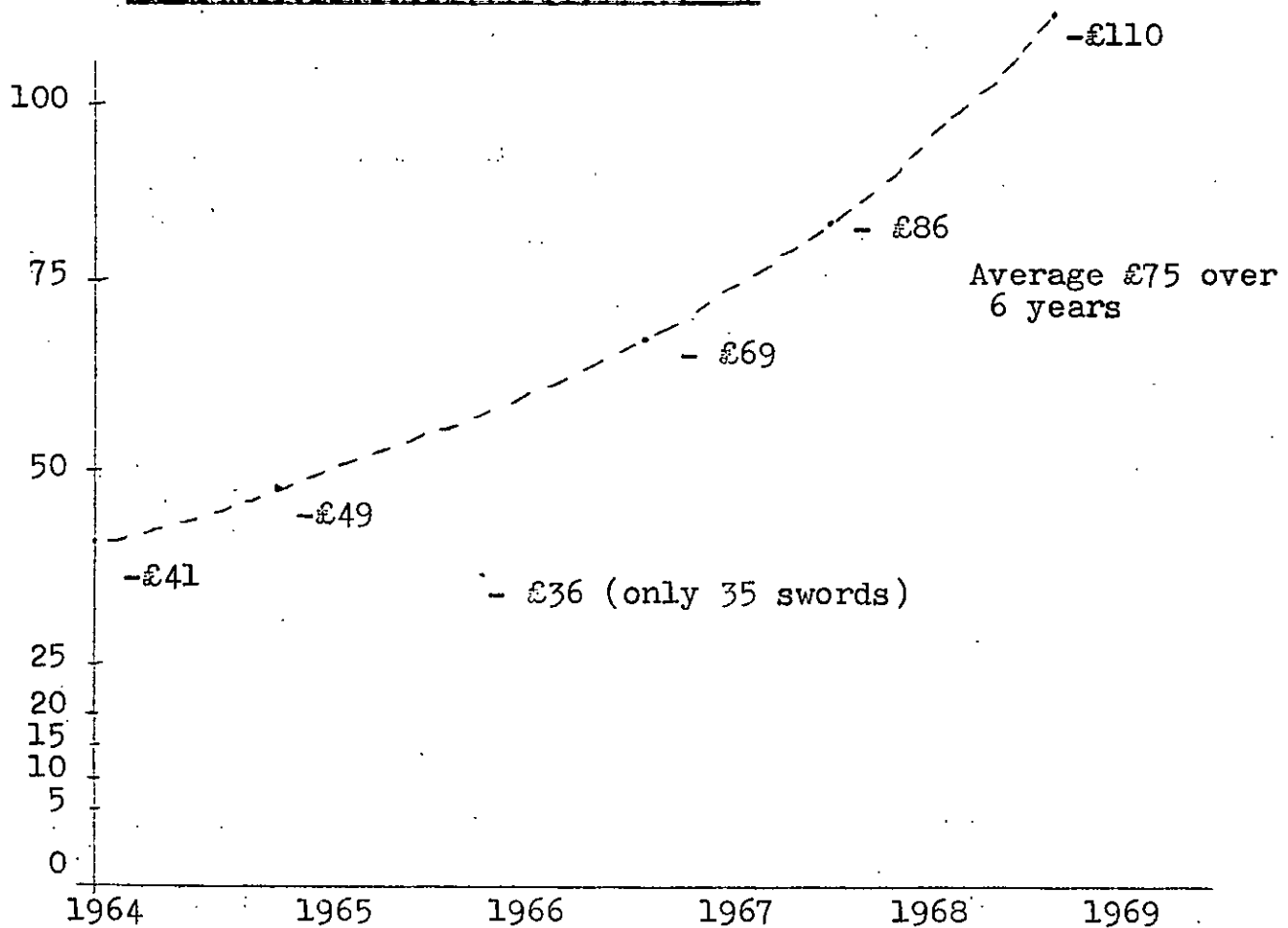
The interesting outcome from this exercise can be summarised as follows:

1. There were only 449 swords over the 6 years. This figure is quite low considering, though the 1969 figure is 47% more in numbers than any previous year. The increase of swords sold in 1969 can be due to two reasons, (a) the general credit squeeze and (b) the higher prices they are now fetching, bringing out more swords from collections on to the market.
2. The increase in prices, though very good, is still far less than the increase experienced in tsuba prices over the same period. It is very difficult to forecast what will happen to prices from what has already happened but I think it is safe to assume that sword price increases will accelerate as on the average, London prices are still lower than Japanese prices whereas with tsuba certain schools are now dearer in London than in Japan. Though prices in

Japan go up each year, there is still some way for London prices to go to meet the present Japanese prices.

3. The lack of faith in currency throughout all the world and inflation, like the poor being always with us, are causes of why antique prices are rising rapidly. This applies to all countries in the East and West.
4. Though higher prices are bringing more swords into this auction house, the supply of swords normally seen in provincial antique shops has been fast disappearing. Everywhere you go you now find supplies have dried up; where they are available, quality is very poor for the prices asked.
5. I have taken the figures back to 1964 as the Token Society was formed during that year and most collectors are only interested from that date onwards.

SWORD PRICES-LONDON-AVERAGE  
(PER SWORD OVER THE LAST 6 YEARS)



- £36 (only 35 swords)

No. of Swords  
68

47

35

90

77

132



ADVERTISEMENTS

WANTED - the other half of the Daisho to the following! If you have it please contact Sir Frank Bowden, Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire, and open friendly negotiations.

1. KATANA. Han-dachi mounts. Fuchikashira and kojiri in plain silver. Tawaro-byo and shiba-biki in plain silver inlaid flat with surface of lacquer. Strapped with two seme in silver chased with diagonal lines. Tsuba, mokko shape, shakudo nanako with gilt rim; decorated tiger and bamboo in gold. Menuki, grape vine in shakudo and gilt. Hilt bound with blue/green tsukaito with "herringbone" weave. Scabbard curious guri lacquer, grey ground polished down to black shapes with gold outline. End of hilt and scabbard have distinct taper. (Blade signed, Sukesada).
2. KATANA. Han-dachi mounts. Full mounts, all in iron including kurikata and three seme above kojiri, also has iron sori-tsuno. All mounts decorated with scattered cherry blossom in flat inlay, in solid gold or gold outline. Fitted with iron kodzuka and kogai en suite. Tsuba, iron pierced with a design of cherry blossom, bamboo and strings, gold details. Menuki, gilt dragons. Hilt black tsukaito. Scabbard, plum colour with raden green, fine textured lacquer. Good silver gilt habaki, has large cherry blossom one side, circular two barred Mon on reverse. (Koto blade, no signature).
3. WAKIZASHI. Han-dachi mounts, full with two seme between kojiri and shiba-biki. Fuchikashira and all mounts shakudo nanako with gilt edge, closely decorated with gilt chrysanthemums and leaves in Goto Mino style. Tsuba, slightly elongated mokko form, pierced and decorated with mixed flowers in gilt on a shakudo nanako ground, cherry blossom, chrysanthemums, peonies and narcissi. Menuki, lotus leaf in gilt and shakudo. Kodzuka shakudo and gilt, heavily decorated with rectangular "swastika" mon and diamond shaped "leaf" mon. Black tsukaito, black ishime scabbard. (Koto blade, unsigned).
4. WAKIZASHI. Han-dachi mounts, simple, no "extras", decorated in simple traditional rectangular mi-parti form, all in shibuichi. Tsuba, mokko shape, plain ishime shibuichi, no other decoration. Kodzuka, shakudo nanako ground with a gilt Ho-wo bird in relief. Menuki, bow and quiver of arrows shakudo and gilt. Hilt bound with blue/green tsukaito. Scabbard plum colour raden lacquer with Tokugawa mon in gold hiramakiye, two on outside, one on reverse. (Blade signed Kanekiyo, has bonji and invocation in characters on blade).

TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN STATEMENT OF INCOME  
AND EXPENDITURE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 1969

	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Payments</u>
Balance in Hand B/Fwd. Cash	24.12. -.	
Bank	229. -.10.	
Subscriptions	206. 7.10.	
" Bad Debt		3. 3. -.
Journals, Programmes, etc.	7. 2. -.	
Postage	14.13. 8.	43. 4. 2.
Catalogues (Exhibition)	21.10. -.	
Film Show ("Throne of Blood")	16.10. -.	16. 7. -.
Sword Accessories	35.16. 6.	67. 1.10.
" " Bad Debt		4.12. -.
" Repolishing (Customs Fee)		14. -.
" " (Travel, Phone, etc.)		6.11. 9.
Meetings (Room Hire)		33. 2. -.
Bank Charges		5. -.
Printing and Stationery		164.18. 6.
Office Equipment		30.10. 9.
Nihon To Newsletter Service	42. -. 7.	50.16. 6.
Accountancy		10.10. -.
Balance in Hand C/Fwd. Cash		13. 4. 4.
Bank		152.12. 7.
	<u>£ 597.13. 5.</u>	<u>£ 597.13. 5.</u>

Secretary: (Signed) C.Dale.

Treasurer: (Signed) W.Baxter.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please see Addendum list to Main List of Members.

NEW MEMBERS

We have much pleasure in welcoming the following new members to the Society. Their full addresses appear on the Addendum List attached.

Vleeracker Luc.,

Professor Arnold Frenzel.,

S.Allan-Yorke.,

Nathan Rosenbloom, M.D.

Lester E.Brandt.,