

**NBTHK SWORD JOURNAL**  
**ISSUE NUMBER 675**  
**April, 2013**

**Meito Kanshou**  
**Appreciation of Important Swords**

Classification: Juyo Bunkazai

Type: tachi

Mumei: Kanenaga

Owner: NBTHK

Length: 2 shaku 5 sun 4 bu 4 rin (77.1 cm)

Sori: 7 bu 9 rin (2.42 cm)

Motohaba: 9 bu 2 rin (2.8 cm)

Sakihaba: 5 bu 3 rin (1.6 cm)

Motokasane: slightly less 2 bu (0.57 cm)

Sakikasane : 8 rin (0.26 cm)

Kissaki length: 7 bu 9 rin (2.4 cm)

Nakago length: 6 sun 8 bu 5 rin (20.75 cm)

Nakago sori: 5 rin (0.15 cm)

**Commentary**

This is a shinogi zukuri tachi with an ihorimune, slightly thin, with a strong sori and a small kissaki. The jihada is ko-itame mixed with mokume hada, and in some places the hada is visible, but the entire jigane is refined. There are ji-nie, chikei, pale utsuri, and on the bottom half of the blade there are jifu utsuri. The hamon is based on a ko-choji hamon, and is komidare mixed with ko-gunome. On the upper half, the choji clusters are bigger, and vertical alterations are prominent. There are ashi, yo, dense thick ha-nie, fine sunagashi, and kinsuji. At the top, some parts of the hamon have small yubashiri, and in some places the nioiguchi is soft. The boshi is straight and shows a nie-suji nijuba. The omote has a komaru, and the ura is yakizume; both sides have hakikake. The nakago is ubu (although it appears that there were small alterations at the machi). The nakago tip is a kijimata style, and kurijiri, and the yasurime are kate-sagari. There is one mekugi-ana. On the omote above the mekugi ana, there is a two kanji signature made with a slightly thick tagane.

The Gojo school is representative of the old Kyoto school, and the Sanjo school is also an example of the old Kyoto style. Among the Gojo school smiths, Kanenaga and Kuninaga (who made the Tsurumaru sword for the emperor) are especially

famous. However, there are not many signed blades available from that school, and there are still many unknown details about the school. Some sword books listed Kanenaga's active period around Chogen (1028-37) and some listed it later around around Kempo (1214-19) and there is large gap between these dates, and there is no accepted fixed date. However, many people believe that Kanenaga worked around the Eien era (987-9) when Sanjo Munechika was active, and he was Munechika's student Arikuni's son, and that Kuninaga was Kanenaga's son or younger brother. The shape of this sword is elegant, the widths at the moto and saki are different, there is a small kissaki, a long length, and there is a typical beautiful tachi shape. Some parts of the jihada are visible, but the entire jigane is refined. The hamon around the monouchi has large vertical variations, but the entire hamon is based on ko-choji. It is a narrow hamon and there are soft areas in the nioiguchi which is seen often in Yamashiro school work at this time. This work has a good Ko-Kyoto style feeling. Beside this, the ubu nakago is valuable, and makes more the entire tachi more informative. The tachi is elegant and dignified, and this is a Kanenaga's master work demonstrating his high level of skill. Before the second world war, the tachi was classified as Kokuho and owned by Mr. Nakajima Kiyokazu who was president of the Nakajima Hikoki (aircraft) factory which was famous as the maker of the Japanese Zero combat fighter plane. After the war, this sword was owned by Mr Kimura Tokutaro, who was the minister of justice and of the defense agency, and in celebration of his 77th birthday, he donated this tachi to the NBTHK.

## **Meitan Kansho**

### **Appreciation of fine tsuba and kodogu**

#### **Juyo Tosogu**

Ryusui hototogisu-zu (a design of a Cuckoo bird and moving water) kozuka  
Mei: Gyonen 73 sai (at age 73 years) Shozui

Hamano Shozui is known as a highly skilled master smith. He was born in Genroku 9 (1698) and studied under Nara Toshikazu and succeeded his teacher. He was admired as one of the four Nara master smiths, along with Nara Toshikazu, Yasuchika and Jo-i. He established the Hamada school, and trained many master smiths in the school which was prosperous. The school was very prosperous, and among the Edo goldsmiths, it were one of the best known groups, and was a rival of the Yokoya school. Shozui used many different styles, besides assuming his master Toshikazu's style. At the same time he absorbed the techniques and style of the Jo-i and Yasuchika schools. Later, he created many of his original excellent

works, with his dynamic takabori techniques. The subject of this “hototogisu” or Cuckoo Bird originates from an old tale referring to the bird singing so hard or intensely it is bleeding. This comes from an old Chinese story about the lord of Shoku, Tou. Tou turned to a hototogisu (Cuckoo) and he grieved that Shin destroyed his country Shoke, and cried “ kaeri yukuni shikazu” (there is no place to return to). This work shows the bird crying so hard almost his throat is almost ready to rupture, and Shozui is using to the full, his dynamic carving technique, and this is one of the best original pieces among his late works.

(Explanation by Kurotaki Tetsuya )

## Shijo Kantei To No. 675

The deadline to submit answers for the No. 675 issue Shijo Kantei To is May 5, 2013. Each person may submit one vote. Submissions should contain your name and address and be sent to the NBTHK Shijo Kantei. You can use the Shijo Kantei card which is attached in this magazine. Votes postmarked on or before May 5, 2013 will be accepted. If there are swordsmiths with the same name in different schools, please write the school or prefecture, and if the swordsmith was active for more than one generation, please indicate a specific generation.

### Information:

Type: wakizashi

Length: slightly over 1 shaku 7 sun (51.52 cm)

Sori: 3 bu (0.91 cm)

Motohaba: 1 sun 2 rin ( 3.1 cm)

Sakihaba: 6 bu 9 rin (2.1 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 5 rin (0.75 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu 5 rin (0.45 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 1 bu 9 rin (3.6 cm)

Nakago length: 5 sun 5 rin (15.3 cm)

Nakago sori: very slight

This is a shinogi zukuri wakizashi with an ihorimune, a slightly wide mihaba, and the widths at the moto and saki are different. There is a wide and high shinogi-ji, the kasane is thick, there is a shallow sori, a chu-kissaki, a large hiraniku, and is heavy or stout. The jihada is a ko-itame mixed with ko-mokume, and the entire jihada is a little rough. There are dense ji-nie, and fine chikei. The hamon and

boshi are as seen in the picture. There are ashi, yo, a dense nioiguchi, dense nie, and the entire hamon has a prominent type of nie. There are kinsuji, sunagashi, frequent thick nie, and a bright nioiguchi. The nakago is ubu, and the nakago tip is a pronounced kurijiri. The yasurime are higaki, and there is a one mekugi-ana. On the omote side, the nakago has a kanji signature under the mekugi-ana located towards the mune side. Many of this smith's jihada are dark, and often there are mon under the habaki.

## **Teirei Kanshou Kai For March**

The swords discussed below were shown in the March, 2013 meeting at the NBTHK headquarters building. This discussion presents answers concerning the makers of these blades.

Meeting Date: March 9, 2013 (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of March)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan auditorium

Lecturer: Kurotaki Tetsuya

During these meetings, five swords are displayed for examination. The blades can be examined, but the nakago are covered and cannot be seen (they are left in the shira-saya tsuka). After examining the 5 swords, the meeting attendees must decide who they think made the 5 swords which were available for examination, and submit a paper ballot with these names. The 5 swords seen in the January meeting are described below, and the correct names of the makers are presented, along with an explanation of important details which should lead a person to pick the correct swordsmith's name.

### **Kantei To No. 1: tanto**

Mei: Rai Kunitsugu

Length: slightly over 8 sun 4 bu

Sori: almost none

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jihada: tight ko-itamehada; there are dense jinie, fine chikei, jifu, and bo-utsuri.

Hamon: ko-notare mixed with gunome, ko-gunome, koashi, yo, frequent ko-nie, kinsuji, sunagashi, and a bright and clear nioiguchi.

Boshi: straight; on the omote side it is yakizume, and on the ura side the tip is slightly sharp with a return.

Horimono: both the omote and ura have katana-hi with tsure-hi carved through the nakago.

This tanto is almost a standard size, but has a wide mihaba for the length, a thick kasane, and almost no sori, and from the shape, you can guess this is work from the end of the Kamakura to the early Nambokucho period. The jihada is a tight ko-itame, there is a refined jihada, dense thick ji-nie, fine chikei, a clear jihada, and bo-utsuri. From these characteristics, you can imagine this is Rai school work. The hamon is ko-notare mixed with gunome, there is a bright nioiguchi, frequent nie, kinsuji and sunagashi. From these details, among the Rai school, Kunimitsu and Kunitsugu's names come to mind. This is based on the wide notare hamon with strong nie and yubashiri, which is called a Kamakura Rai style. From the strong Soshu Den type work, among these two smiths, it is possible narrow this down to Rai Kunitsugu. In voting, there were some votes for the Rai Kunimitsu name. It is a very closed judgment, but if it were Kunimitsu, his hamon are often narrower, and his nie are a little more gentle appearing.

## **Kantei To No. 2: katana**

Mei: oite Nanki Shigekuni tsukuru kore

Length: 2 shaku 2 sun 4 bu

Sori: 5 bu

Design: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight itame mixed with mokume hada; the ura side has nagarehada and the hada is visible; there are dense thick ji-nie, frequent chikei, and a bright jahada.

Hamon: ko-notare mixed with gunome and choji. There are ashi and yo, a wide nioiguchi, dense nie, kinsuji, and sunagashi, mixed with a yubashiri type hamon, and a bright, clear nioiguchi.

Boshi: midarekomi, yakizume style, and the tip has hakikake.

This katana has funbari at the koshimoto, a wide mihaba, and the widths at the moto and saki are not much different. The kasane is a little thick, and there is a long chu-kissaki, and from this shape, you can judge this as Keicho period katana. Both the jihada and hamon have dense nie, and prominent hataraki such as chikei and kinsuji, and the hada is bright and clear. From these characteristics, this is a successful work in the Soshu Den style. At the same time, this has a high shinogi-ji mixed with nagarehada, and the boshi is yakizume style, and from this, you can see Yamato style characteristics. In Keicho times, the smith who mixed the Soshu Den and Yamato styles is Nanki Shigekuni. Nanki Shigekuni has two types of work, one is in the Shoshu Den master smiths image, and other style is a successful

Yamato Tegai school style and this katana shows Soshu Den work mixed with the Yamato style. If you look at the jihada carefully, the tight itame is mixed with a larger vertical mokume hada, and this is a characteristic of Shigekuni. In voting, some people voted for Kotetsu and Mondo no sho Masakiyo. Kotetsu is supposed to have respected Shigekuni, from this, the answer may be reasonable. But if it were Kotetsu's work, he was a Kanbun era smith, and the shape would be different from this, and Yamato style details would not be seen. If it were Mondo no sho Masakiyo, the shape would be a Satusma Shinto style with a heavy strong shape, and there would be more abundant strong ha-nie.

### **Kantei To No 3: wakizashi**

Mei: Hasebe Kunishige

Length: 1 shaku 7.5 bu

Sori: slightly less than 1 bu

Style: hira zukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jihada: visible itame hada; the hada towards the mune is nagarehada or a masame type hada; the entire jihada is visible; there are dense thick ji-nie, and chikei.

Hamon: narrow suguha; some parts are a small notare; there are frequent nie, the habuchi has hotsure, uchinoke, fine kinsuji and sunagshi,; there is muneyaki.

Boshi: both the omote and ura are straight with a round tip and a long return; there are hakikake.

This wakizashi is a typical shape for its time. It has a wide mihaba, long size, thin kasane and shallow sori, and many wakizashi with this shape are seen around the Enbun and Joji eras. Considering the period, please look at the jihada. This is itame hada with prominent mokume hada, and the hada towards the mune side has masame hada. The hamon is suguha which is unusual for this smith, and has hotsure, and maybe this results from the from the masame hada. From the moto to saki the hamon is almost same width. Next is the boshi. The tip of the boshi has a large round shape, and the return intermittently comes down to the bottom half of the sword, and from these characteristics, the Hasebe name comes to mind. The Hasebe character is apparent from the thin kasane. Among Enbun–Joji type hira wakizashi, such a thin kasane shape is seen in works from the Nambokucho period smiths. Besides the Hasebe school we see this kind of work in the Bitchu Aoe school and the Bingo Hokke school. If it were Hokke work, the jihada would be whitish, and if it were Aoe work, the jihada would be different. In voting, some people voted for Rai Kunimitsu and Hasebe Kuninobu. But if were Rai Kunimitsu's work, his jihada is more refined, and the kasane is not as thin as on this tanto. If it

were Kuninobu's work, suguha work is very rare, and many of his works will be in the school's original hitatsura style.

#### **Kantei To No 4: katana**

Mei: Hizen kuni ju nin Iyo no jo Minamoto Munetsugu

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 3 sun 4 bu

Sori: 4 bu

Design: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: itame mixed with mokume and nagarehada; the hada is visible, and there are dense ji-nie and frequent chikei.

Hamon: based on gumome mixed with ko-notare; there are togari and vertical variations; there is a dense thick nioiguchi, thick nie, ko-gunome, frequent ashi, yo and a gorgeous hamon. There are rough nie, kinsuji, sunagashi, and the habuchi has yubashiri.

Boshi: midarekomi; the omote has a slightly sharp tip; the ura is an o-maru style with hakikake.

Iyo no jo Munetsugu was active during the Keicho period in Hizen. However, his work was quite different from the Tadayoshi school and he is classified as a very unique smith. This katana has a wide mihaba, and the widths at the moto and saki are almost the same. There is a large kasane (the blade is thick), a shallow sori, a chu-kissaki, and a long shape, and from the shape, you can guess this is a Keicho shinto katana. The jihada is based on itame hada, mixed with mokume and nagare hada, and there are frequent chikei, jifu, and a very visible jihada. The entire hamon is wide and composed of gunome mixed with ko-notare, togariba, and strong vertical variations. This has an active and beautiful hamon. There are kinsuji, sunagashi, tobiyaki, and muneyaki. This is different from Tadayoshi school hamon, and the midare hamon has prominent togariba, and there are Soshu Den type strong ha-nie, and these are characteristic Iyo no jo Munetsugu characteristics. In voting, some people voted for Hankei. He is a Keicho shinto smith also, but many of his blades have a standard mihaba, and his jihada have prominent thick hijiki tetsu (dark chikei).

#### **Kantei To No. 5: katana**

Mei: Sakakura Gonnoshin Terukane

Empo 8 nen 2 gatsu kichijitsu

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 7 bu

Sori: 4 bu

Design: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame; there are dense thick ji-nie and chikei.

Hamon: straight yakidashi at the moto; toranba mixed with ko-notare and yahazu gunome; under the yokote there are three continuous gunome; there are ashi, a strong nioiguchi, frequent ko-nie, and some kinsuji; there is a bright and clear nioiguchi.

Boshi: straight with a komaru.

The width at the saki (point) is narrow for the width at the moto (above the machi). There is a shallow sori and a chu-kassaki, and from the shape, you can judge this as Kanbun Shinto work. Along with this Kanbun period shape, there is a beautiful Osaka jitetsu, and the hamon is toran-midare. If you look at the hamon carefully, there are yahazu type gunome mixed with the midare hamon, and under the yokote, there are three continuous gunome. Also, the mune angle is sharp, and from these characteristics, you can identify this as a work by Terukane and this katana shows Terukane's character very well. The hamon valleys have prominent sunagashi, and this is a typical Terukane characteristic. There are many sword smiths who made Toranba hamon. Sukehiro is supposed to have created the style, and to have been succeeded by Terukane, Sukenao, and Ikkanshi Tadatsuna, and later Shinshinto smiths such as Suishinshi Masahide continued the style. Maybe because of this, many people voted for smiths who worked with toranba hamon. Many people voted for Sukehiro. But if it were work by Sukehiro, his midare hamon are often mixed with square shaped gunome. If it were Sukenao's work, his hamon are not toran, but a toran style o-gunome hamon. Some people voted for Etchu no kami Takahira. If it were his work, his hamon are based on notare hamon mixed with gunome, and on midare hamon mixed with square shape gunome. In the case of this katana, at first, observe the toran midare hamon, and then look at the characteristic jihada and hamon, and you can vote for Terukane.

### **Shijo Kantei No 673 ( in the February, 2013 issue)**

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 673 in the February issue is a katana by Tegarayama Masashige (dated Kyowa Gannen ki )

This katana's jihada is a tight ko-itame; the hamon has a yakidashi at the moto, and with the toran style midare hamon, you can narrow down choices for the smith's name. This is either by an Osaka Shinto smith (such as the originator of



this style hamon) Tsuda Echizen-no-kami Sukehiro, or a Shinshinto smith. This has a wide mihaba, and the widths at the moto and saki are not much different. The blade is thick and the jihada is a tight ko-itame in a muji style, and from these details, it is possibly a Shinshinto katana. There are two type of toran midare hamon: one is like surging waves (with triangular shapes), and is called a wave type toran. The other style is a large continuous gunome hamon with large vertical variations, and becomes toran shape: this is a gunome midare type toran hamon. This katana's midare hamon has prominent large top gunome, and some parts of the toran shape are not triangular shaped, but more like a gunome, so this is the second type of toran midare hamon. In Shinshinto times, there are three smiths who made this kind of style: Suishinshi Masahide, Ichige Tokurin, and this smith Tegarayama Masashige. Masashige's toran hamon are mixed with togariba, and this is known as one of his characteristic points.

Suishinshi Masahide's toran style blades have poorly shaped hiraniku, and a long chu-kissaki which are Shinshinto characteristics, but his shapes are close to Kanbun Shinto shapes. Around Kansei times, smiths who made toran style hamon, like on Masashige's katana, are often wider, and the widths at the moto and saki are not much different. They are thick with a shallow sori, which is a strong or aggressive shape. In general, Masashige's boshi are straight, with a komaru and return. His nakago tips are a relatively shallow iriyamagata, his yasurime are o-sujichigai, and his nakago kesho migaki is like the overlapped two sides of a kimono. There is also very unique kesho migaki work, and under the mune machi, the nakago also has some kesho migaki work. These are characteristics of Masashige's work. Many of his signatures on the omote side have a long mei and are located towards the mune edge, and the ura side has a date. It is relatively rare to see saidan mei (cutting tests) like the one on this katana. In voting, most people voted for Masashige. Besides the correct answer, many voted for Echizen no kami Sukehiro. Possibly people thought he represented the toran midare hamon smiths, and he also has a unique kesho yasuri pattern (called kozutsumi, which is like a fukusa pattern used for wrapping incense). His shapes are a little different in the early half of his career than in the latter half, but basically there is a standard mihaba, the widths at the moto and saki are different, and there is a chu-kissaki, which is a Kanbun Shinto shape. His jihada are the same ko-itame, but never become a muji type, and the ko-itame pattern is clear, and there are fine chikei hataraki. Also, his toran midare hamon contain waves, his midare hamon are mixed with square gunome, and his nakago tips are usually iriyamagata.

Explanation by Hinohara Dai

