

**NBTHK SWORD JOURNAL**  
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**Meito Kansho**  
**Examination of Important Swords**

Classification: Tokubetsu Juyo Token

Type: Tachi

Mei: Shigetsune (Ko-Bizen)

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 6 bu 3 rin (71.6 cm)

Sori: 8 bu 6 rin (2.6 cm)

Motohaba: 8 bu 6 rin (2.6 cm)

Sakihaba: 5 bu 6 rin (1.7 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu (0.6 cm)

Sakikasane : 1 bu 1 rin (0.35 cm)

Kissaki length: 7 bu 9 rin (2.4 cm)

Nakago length: 7 sun 3 rin (21.3 cm)

Nakago sori: 1 bu 3 rin (0.4 cm)

**Commentary**

This is a shinogi zukuri tachi with an ihorimune, a narrow width, and the widths at the moto and saki are a little different. There is a standard kasane, a large koshizori, and a small kissaki. The jihada is itame mixed with mokume hada, and the entire jihada is well forged, and only some places show a slightly visible jihada. There are dense ji-nie, and some pale utsuri. The hamon is a suguha style hamon mixed with ko-gunome, ko-choji, and square gunome. There are frequent ashi and yo, and these especially stand out in the upper half of the blade. There are some uneven thick nie. On the omote side, there are frequent kinsuji and sunagashi, and some places have small yubashiri. The boshi on the omote and ura are a shallow notare with a kuichigai hamon, and are yakizume. The nakago is suriage, the tip is ha-agari kurigiri, and the yasurime are a slight kate-sagari (old) and almost kiri (new). There are four mekugi-ana. On the omote next to the second mekugi-ana, on the mune side, there is a small sized two kanji signature.

According to the Meikan, Shigetsune is a Ko-Bizen smith. His active period is supposed to have been around the Kencho period (1249-56). He has very few

signed blades, and there are four rated blades: two Juyo Bijutsu Hin, one Juyo Token, and one Tokubetsu Juyo Token. His signatures are “Shigetsune” or “Shigetsune saku” in small sized kanji, and in all the “tsune” kanji the left side becomes a “十” kanji. His work is based on suguha, and a Ko-Bizen style. One of his works has a notable koshiha which is owned by the Seikado Bunko. This tachi is suriage, but on the omote side around the machi there was an obviously wider yakiba, and from this you can guess that the original hamon could be similar to a koshiha. Presently, we consider two types of koshiha: one is part of the hamon, and the other is utsuri which looks like the hamon. An example is Yoshikane’s blade where the koshiha is part of the hamon, and utsuri examples are Masatsune, Tadashige, Masazane, and other regional smiths like Awataguchi Kunitsuna (Meibutsu Onimaru Kunitsuna). There are not too many examples of koshiha, but sometimes they are seen in this period. The hamon koshiha examples are often seen in Muromachi period work. On this sword, the jihada is itame, with a small hada pattern, and the entire jihada is well forged and refined. The hamon is based on suguha, and primarily, in the the upper half, there are abundant hataraki, ashi and yo, a clear nioiguchi and the entire tachi is sophisticated. This reminds us of Masatsune’s work, with a classic look and at the same time it is elegant. Shigetsune is supposed to have not been a prolific smith, but he seems to have had an excellent level of skill. Every time we see work from a smith who is not famous, like this one, the work is different from the later Osafune smiths, but we can imagine that the Ko-Bizen smiths had a very high level of skill, and they were a large number of smiths. From this point of view, this is an excellent example. This sword has an origami (certificate) which was written in Genroku 8 nen by Honnami Mitsutsune with a daikinsu (value) of 10 mai.

Explanation and photo by Ishii Akira.

## Juyo Tosogu

Genpei kassen (battle) zu (images) mitokoromono (set of three fittings)

Kozuka mei : Goto Eijo (kao)

Ko-gai kinzogan mei : Goto Eijo (kao)

Menuki mumei: attributed to Goto Eijo

This is a Goto family 6 dai (sixth generation) Eijo mitokoromo. The mitokoromono depicts famous Genpei kassen (battle) scenes; the menuki shows Taira no Atsumori and Kumagaya Naozane in the battle at Ichinotani, the kozuka is Sato

Tsugunobu's last fight at the Yashima kassen (battle); and the kogai is a Dan-no-ura shikorohiki (a famous fighting scene) design. Eijo was the sixth generation or the go-dai Tokujo's own son, born in in Tensho 5, and who passed away in Genna 3. At that time, the whole country was unified by Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu and the Momoyama culture was blooming. Maybe he was influenced by the era, but Eijo's works are mostly in a large size and spectacular. He produced many battle scene designs, and in particular, his dynamic armored warrior scenes are well done, just like this work. In the present day, among the all Goto family, Eijo has more armored warrior design work than anybody. He signed "Goto Masafusa (with kao)", "Goto Masamitsu (with kao)" and "Goto Eijo (with kao)", but very few of his signed works are left today. In particular, the kogai kinzogan-mei is excellent work which is never seen in the work of others, and an Eijo signed mitokoromono set is very rare. This mitokoromono is listed in the "Goto family kodogu tehikae (list)" which is owned by the Tokyo Art University. The tagane strokes, and all detailed characteristics are the same as this, and this is definitely Eijo's work. Looking at this carefully, each part of the mitokoromono's workmanship, engraving, brush strokes for the mei and kao, and every single detail shows Eijo's characteristic work. Today, this is a very rare Eijo mitokoromono with his own kinzogan-mei. Also, it shows Eijo's very high level of skill, and excellent workmanship.

Explanation by Iida Toshihisa

## Shijo Kantei To No. 682

The deadline to submit answers for the No. 682 issue Shijo Kantei To is December 5, 2013. Each person may submit one vote. Submissions should include 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 December 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: tachi

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 5.5 bu (71.36 cm)

Sori: 9 bu (2.73 cm)

Motohaba: 8 bu 3 rin (2.5 cm)

Sakihaba: 5 bu 3 rin (1.6 cm)  
Motokasane: 2 bu 1 rin (0.65 cm)  
Sakikasane: 1 bu 3 rin (0.4 cm)  
Kissaki length: 8 bu 3 rin (2.5 cm)  
Nakago length: 6 sun 4 bu (19.39 cm)  
Nakago sori: 1 bu (0.3 cm)

This is a shinogi-zukuri tachi with an ihorimune, a narrow mihaba, and the widths the moto and saki are different. There is a large koshizori with funbari, the tip is a little uchi-zori, and there is a small kissaki. The jihada is itame mixed with mokume, there is nagarehada, and the entire hada is composed with a large pattern and is visible. There are fine ji-nie, chikei and pale bo-utsuri. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. There are uneven kijimata type yubashiri and nijuba, ko-ashi, yo, fine nie, some places have a soft nioiguchi, and there are kinsuji and sunagashi. The horimono on both the omote and ura are futasuji-ji with marudome. The nakago is almost ubu (it is a little bit machi okuri), it has a kijimata shape, and the nakago tip is saki-kurijiri. The yasurime are kattesagari, and there are two mekugi-ana, and one is closed (the top of the nakago has a yahazu (tadpole like) ana). On the omote side, above the hole, the nakago has a two kanji signature on the mune side. In particular, the second kanji's shape shows the smith's characteristics. Also, the smith has two types of jihada, this one, and the other is a tight ko-itame with dense thick ji-nie and a refined jihada.

## **Teirei Kanshou Kai For October**

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

Meeting Date: October 12, 2013 (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of October)

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 sword smith's name.

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

Mei: Nakasone Okimasa

Kinzogan mei: Empo 3 nen U 3 gatsu 28 nichi  
Sunagawa Ibei Hisashige ( kao )  
Futatsu-do setsudan

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 7 bu

Sori: 4. 5 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame hada; there are thick dense ji-nie and chikei; the shinogi-ji has a masame type hada.

Hamon: the moto has a straight long yakidashi; there are gunome mixed with ko-gunome; the hamon is ko-notare; many areas have two continuous gunome. There are frequent nie, and some details or elements are grouped together or clustered together; there are kinsuji and sunagashi, and a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: on the omote is straight and oo-maru type, and ura is straight and komaru.

There is a standard mihaba, and the widths at the moto and saki are different.

There is a shallow sori, and from the shape, you can judge this as a Kanbun Shinto period katana. The jihada is tight ko-itame, there is a refined jihada, and the shinogi-ji has a masame hada. Also, the hamon has a straight yakidashi, and there is a gunome midare hamon, similar to a juzuba hamon. Both the jihada and hamon are bright. From these characteristics, you can imagine this being the work of some smith associated with Kotetsu. From the kinzogan date, this is Okimasa's early work. This is a Kanbun-Shinto shape, and there is a bright jihada and hamon, and this is well forged, and from these details the Kotetsu name is understandable.

Looking at the hamon again, there is Okimasa's characteristic two continuous gunome hamon, and the upper half has uneven nie, and is rough. Also, the boshi is not a Kotetsu boshi, and from these characteristics, I hope you can vote for Kotetsu's student Okimasa. In voting, some people voted for Kaneshige besides Kotetsu. If this were Kaneshige's work, usually his gunome hamon has a rhythm of one, two and one, two, and his hamon has prominent sunagashi, and we do not see yakidashi often.

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

Mei: Sadaoki

Length: 8 sun 5. 5 bu

Sori: uchizori

Design: hirazukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight masame hada. There are thick dense ji-nie, fine chikei, and bo-utsuri.

Hamon: based on hosonaru (narrow)-suguha, mixed with ko-gunome, ko-notare, some hotsure and kuichigaiba. There are abundant ko-nie, and under the machi is yakikomi.

Boshi: straight, yakizume and with hakikake.

This tanto is by a Yamato Hosho school smith, Sadaoki. There is almost a standard length, a standard mihaba, and uchizori. It is thick for the mihaba, and from the shape, you can judge this as late Kamakura period work. Also the unique jihada is a characteristic of the Hosho school. The jihada is a well forged masame hada, and around the fukura, the masame pattern moves up to the mune side, and at the habakimoto, it moves down to the hamon side. Some places have vertical lines called masa-ware (split), and the wave-like jihada is a the school's characteristic jihada. This is a characteristic Hosho original work, and strongly shows masame hada. The hamon is suguha mixed with ko-gunome; there are nie on the habuchi; and prominent hotsure and kuichigaiba, and beautiful small nie everywhere. This shows Sadaoki's characteristics without hesitation. Among the Hosho school, Sadaoki's tanto are usually from 7 sun to about 8 sun, or a small size. Sadayoshi's tanto are approximately 9 sun, and many of them are wider. Sadakiyo's tanto are of two types, either over 9 sun with a large size, or less than 7 sun with a small size. But at this time, judging from the jihada and shape, if the answer is a Hosho smith, all of them treated as correct answer.

### **Kantei To No 3: katana**

Mei: Mondo-no-sho Fujiwara Masakiyo (with Ichiyo Aoi mon)

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 5.5 bu

Sori: 4.5 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itamehada; some places are mixed with ohada. There are dense thick ji-nie, and frequent chikei.

Hamon: ko-notare mixed with gunome and togariba. There are nijuba and sanjuba, and the upper half has strong nie, and imozuru type long nie-suji.

Boshi: the omote is a shallow notarekomi, and the ura is midarekomi; both sides have a komaru and frequent hakikake.

This katana's foremost character is its dynamic shape. The mihaba is wide, there is a large hiraniku, and there is a heavy massive feeling, which is a Satsuma-to characteristic shape. The jihada is itame with frequent ji-nie, and the hamon is based on notare mixed with gunome, and Satsuma's unique togariba are everywhere. There are prominent ara-nie, and from these details you can judge this as a Satsuma-to. As a Satsuma-to smiths candidate, the names of Masakiyo, Yasuyo, Motohira, and Masayoshi come to mind. If this were Yasuyo, the jihada is a tight ko-itame, it is slightly rough, and with a darker color. His hamon are either a notare type suguha, or suguha type hamon mixed with well spaced gunome. If this were Motohira and Masayoshi, their jihada are often contain belt shaped areas of different colored metal or kawari-tetsu. Masakiyo's hamon are based on notare, gunome, and togariba, which is the same as Motohira and Masayoshi. But his hamon have nijuba and sanjuba, and there are intermittent yubashiri. His boshi have abundant hakikake and kaen (flame) shapes, and his hataraki and variations are more prominent than Motohira and Masayuki, and his work shows more ambition or exuberance. Considering these characteristics, I hope you can vote for Masakiyo.

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

Mei: Saito Toshinori motome ni o-zu (ordered this)  
Bizen-no-suke Fujiwara Munetsugu saku-kore

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 4 bu

Sori: 5. 5 bu

Design: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame, becomes a muji type; there are ji-nie.

Hamon: based on mixed gunome and choji. There are long ashi, a tight nioiguchi and nioiguchi type ko-nie.

Boshi: both omote and ura are midarekomi with a komaru, and return.

At first, please pay attention to the shape of the katana. The katana's widths at the moto and saki are not much different, there is a shallow sori, a long kissaki and a poor hiraniku. This is a heavy katana, and with a dynamic shape, and from these details, you can imagine this is Shinshinto work. The jihada is a fine tight ko-itame, with a so called kagami-tetsu (mirror-like jihada). The hamon is based on gunome and choji, and there is a 3-4 sun interval with a repeated hamon. The boshi is midarekomi. If this were work by Taikei Naotane, his gunome hamon have a square shape, and you do not see a regular repeat hamon; there are also ji-utsuri. Also, the utsuri blends into the jihada. If this were work by Tsunatoshi, his hamon have yakidashi, and his shapes often have a large sori and funbari. If this were Suishinshi's Bizen-Den work, the entire hamon would have smaller gunome and

choji and saka-ashi. In addition, around the koshimoto, the hamon are soft. This is a dynamic shape with a muji type jihada, and also a repeat pattern in the hamon. From these characteristics, one should vote for Koyama Munetsugu.

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

Mumei: Kunihiro

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun

Sori: slightly over 6 bu

Design: shinogi zukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jihada: itame mixed with mokume hada, the hada is visible. There are ji-nie and chikei.

Hamon: shallow notare mixed with gunome and konotare. There is a worn down nioiguchi, frequent nie, kinsuji and sunagashi.

Boshi: both omote and ura are midarekomi, with a komaru and hakikake.

Horimono: both the omote and ura sides have futasuji-hi carved through the nakago.

This is a wide blade, and the widths at the moto and saki are almost the same. There is a shallow sori, and an o-kissaki. From the shape you can judge this as either a Nambokucho, Keicho-Shinto or Shinshinto period katana. Now, look at the jihada. The jihada is itame mixed with mokume, and the entire jihada is visible. There are dense ji-nie, chikei, and a rough jihada. If you catch the jihada's character, then immediately, the Horikawa school name comes to mind. If you examine the hamon, this is based on a shallow notare and gunome, and from the monouchi to under the yokote, the hamon becomes wider. Also, the ha-nie are bright and worn down, and the nioiguchi width varies and is wide and narrow, and these details are seen often in Kunihiro's work among the Horikawa school smiths. Most of people recognized these characteristics and voted for Kunihiro. Keicho Shinto period smiths such as Kunihiro supposedly idealized Soshu Den master smiths' work. This sword is thin and has a characteristic jihada and hamon, and a classic look, so some people voted for Nambokucho period Shidzu work. From this point of view, we can say that Kunihiro's work was successful. This is a katana which reaffirms Kunihiro's high level of skill.

### **Shijo Kantei To No 680 (in the 2013 September issue)**

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 680 in the September issue is a tanto by Minamoto Kiyomaro.



From the signature, this was made around Kaei 7, and is a Minamoto Kiyomaro tanto. It is wide, long, and thick, with a shallow sori, and poor fukura, and from this shape, you can judge this as Shinshinto work. Part of the jihada has a flowing masame pattern. There are dense ji-nie, frequent chikei, and some places have strong bright nie, kinsuji and sunagashi. The boshi is midarekomi, the tip is sharp, and from these characteristics, nobody missed the fact it is Kiyomaro school work. Around the Tenpo, Koka, and Kaei periods, Kiyomaro worked consistently in his Soshu Den's ideal Shizu style. Kiyomaro's work around Tenpo and Koka have gunome-midare hamon with prominent choji hamon, and comparatively, the peaks of the midare hamon are spaced close to each other, and often there are frequent kinsuji and sunagashi. But around Kaei period, inside of the midare hamon, choji are not prominent, and the hamon are a larger gunome midare hamon, and the kinsuji and sunagashi are more gentle. His boshi are either midarekomi with a sharp tip or a sharp tip with hakikake. The nakogo tips are kurijiri, and the yasurime are sujichigai to osujichigai. Many of his signatures are on the omote side, and are "Minamoto Kiyomaro" with three kanji inscribed under the mekugi-ana towards the mune side. Sometimes he signed with the two kanji "Kiyomaro". Most of Kiyomaro's works have a signature and unsigned work is often seen after the Kaei period. Most people voted for Kiyomaro. Other almost correct good answers were Kurihara Nobuhide and Saito Kiyondo. Nobuhide's hamon are square shaped large gunome and the top of the hamon is mixed with ko-gunome, ko-choji, and ko-togariba- mixed with choji, and these are complex uneven hamon. Around the Kaei period, his early hamon do not have prominent square shaped gunome. Also his hamon are lower, and his gunome hamon are small and gentle. Kiyondo succeeded in faithfully working in Kiyomaro's style around the Kaei period with his gunome type work, so from this the answer is understandable. But his jihada and hamon are not as bright as Kiyomaro's and his boshi return has frequent bright kinsuji type hakikake, which we call "raising a hamon just like using a comb". Besides the correct answer and equivalent good answers, a number of people voted for Horikawa Kunihiro. This answer could be derived from considering that this is a katakiriha tsukuri tanto which is rare for Kiyomaro; it has Soshu Den type work, and has a two kanji signature under the mekugiana. But usually Kunihiro's tanto are never seen with a poor fukura, and also long ashi are not seen. His early Tensho uchi work is based on gunome, ko-gunome and togariba, with tobiyaki and muneyaki, which reminds us of Sue-Bizen hitatsura work. His latter Horikawa uchi work have mainly shallow notare hamon mixed with gunome, which is modeled after Soshu Den master smith work.

Explanation by Hinohara Dai