

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

**Juyo Bijutsuhin**  
**Important Art Object**

Type: Katana  
Mumei: den Chogi

Length: 2 shaku 1 sun 7 bu 5 rin (65.9 cm)  
Sori: 6 bu 4 rin (1.93 cm)  
Motohaba: 1 sun 6 rin (3.2 cm)  
Sakihaba: 8 bu 3 rin (2.5 cm)  
Motokasane: 1 bu 7 rin (0.5 cm)  
Sakikasane: 1 bu 5 rin (0.45 cm)  
Kissaki length: 1 sun 8 bu 8 rin (5.7 cm)  
Nakago length: 4 sun 6 bu 2 rin (14.0 cm)  
Nakago sori: very slight

**Commentary**

This is a wide shinogi zukuri katana with an ihorimune, and the widths at the moto and saki are not very different. There is large sori with a large kissaki. The jihada is itame mixed with mokume. On the omote side the jihada shows a somewhat large pattern and in some places the hada is visible. There are ji-nie, chikei and midare utsuri. The hamon is gunome mixed with ko-gunome, choji, and togari. In some places, there are open valleys in the hamon, and it is a dense and narrow hamon. There are frequent ashi and yo, nioiguchi type ko-nie, and some kinsuji and sunagashi. On the ura side at the koshimoto there are yubashiri and a worn down nioiguchi. The boshi is a large midarekomi, the tips are sharp, and there is a komaru and return. The horimono on the omote and ura are bo-hi carved through the nakago, but on the omote at the koshimoto there is a trace of a soe-hi. The nakago is strongly suriage, the tip is a ha-agari type kurijiri, and the yasurime are suji-chigai. There are two mekugi-ana and no signature.

The Soshu school which was exemplified by Masamune became popular, and during the Nambokucho period was found all over the country. Originally, Bizen work had hamon in nioi (nioideki). However, it was influenced by Soshu work and nie appeared in Bizen work too. Many smiths such as Chogi, Kanemitsu, and Morikage developed a "Soden Bizen" style, which seems to have been derived from the old Bizen style.

Among these Bizen smiths, the Chogi school is the first on the list of smiths using this style. In particular, people used to say that "among the Bizen smiths, one whose work does not look like Bizen work is Chogi". His styles are well known, and show strong emphasis on nie hataraki, and a free or undisciplined look, and he is known as one of representative smiths of the Nambokucho period.

In the historical book "Kokon Meizukushi" in the "Bizen Osafune genealogy" section, Chogi is listed and he and his older brother Nagashige were sons of Mitsunaga and grandsons of Sanenaga. From their signatures this seems reasonable. Chogi does not have too many works compared with the Osafune mainstream smith Kanemitsu, but his signed work is dated from Jowa 6 (1350) to Koryaku 2 (1380), a 30 year period. It is known that in the early half of the period, he used to use the Nancho (Southern) court nengo, and in the latter half of the period, he used the Hokucho (Northern) court nengo. This choice of which nengo system to use is currently thought to have depended on which Bizen area bushi group followed which side (the North or the South court). Compared with Chogi, Kanemitsu consistently used the Hokucho or North court nengo. This is interesting, and among the Osafune smiths, different schools and groups are supposed to have followed one or the other courts depending on where they lived.

Chogi has only two signed tachi and these are both classified as Juyo Bunkazai. One is owned by the Tokyo National Museum, and the other is dated Koei 1(1342). There are also uchigatana with the same date, and there is a very small number of his works. You can imagine, that in later years, many of his very long tachi became o-suriage mumei. He has many tanto which are about 8 to 9 sun long. Although he was active during the Enbun-Joji period, there are a very few wakizashi, but they are sunnobi, hirazukuri, and close to 1 shaku long, wide, and with a shallow sori. Other than these works, we sometimes see small tanto around 7 sun long. Conventional opinion says that his characteristic mountain shaped or ear shaped gunome hamon are seen more often on his tanto. But regardless of categories, we see some hamon which are not too large.

This katana is wide, the widths at the moto and saki are not very different, and there is a large kissaki. This is from his active period during the mid-Nambokucho period, and has a characteristic strong dynamic shape. The hamon is not his characteristic large size style, but one of his other characteristic styles. There are well controlled nie which appear delicate, and more like a nioiguchi type. Because of this, there are clear ji-utsuri compared to his usual work, which shows a strongly notable Bizen Den characteristic elements. There is a similar tachi with this kind of nioiguchi type hamon and ji-utsuri, which is classified as Juyo Bunkazai (see the NBTHK issue number 424's "Meito kansho ") and this judgment looks reasonable.

This has a full generous shape, an irregular active hamon, and a lot of hataraki such as ashi and yo. This katana is dignified and has a strong character. This is only around 2 shaku 1 sun, which is a short length for a sword, and has a carefully finished short nakago. From this, you can imagine, this katana became suriage during the Muromachi period for katateuchi (one hand) use, and this is interesting.

Explanation and photo by Ishii Akira.

## **No.710 Tosogu Kanshou Jujo Tosogu**

**Kachikachi yama zu (design from a folklore story) tsuba**

**Mei: Toryu-o**

**Kiyotoshi Hogan (kao)**

Toryusai Kiyotoshi is known as one of the “Bakumatsu period’s three best master smiths” along with Goto Ichijo and Kano Natsuo.

Following a Tokugawa Bakufu (shogunate) order, Ichijo stayed in Edo and worked there while Natsuo came to Edo at the age of 27 and worked as a gold smith. Both of them are from Kyoto and their styles are derived from Kyoto’s elegant cultural background, and many of their works are elegant and sophisticated.

Toryusai Kiyotoshi was born and raised in Edo, and was culturally a part of Edo. His styles are based on a fully mature Edo culture in that period, and his designs and carving are smart and refined, witty, and contrast to Ichijo and Natsuo.

His supposed to have been trained by a Bushu tsuba smith. However, his soe-mei or companion or alternative mei were “ryuji”, “jiryu”, “wareichiro”, and “Ikkashiki”, and he was self-taught and is supposed to have originated the Toryusai style.

The design theme used here is from the fairy tale “Kachikachi Yama”. He chose this fairy-tale theme, which seems to reflect Kiyotoshi’s own personality.

His work shows familiar animals and objects such as Bunbuku-chagama (a badger’s tea kettle), a badger’s harazutsumi (drum), and frog songs singing. He also designed cartoon-like images. These animals show a comical style, but with his dynamic composition, delicate carving and iroe (colored inlay), they are sophisticated and this shows Kiyotoshi’s Edo style character. The tsuba shows rich emotions in a familiar fairy-tale world with his original carving style.

Explanation by Iida Toshihisa

## **Shijo Kantei To No. 710**

The deadline to submit answers for the No. 710 issue Shijo Kantei To is April 5, 2016. 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 April 5, 2016 will be accepted. If there are sword smiths with the same name in different schools, please write the school or prefecture, and if the sword smith was active for more than one generation, please indicate a specific generation.

### **Information:**

Type: katana

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 2 sun 9 bu (69.4 cm)

Sori: 6 bu (1.82 cm)

Motohaba: 9 bu 9 rin (3.0 cm)

Sakihaba: 6 bu 4 rin (1.95 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 5 rin (0.75 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu 7 rin (0.5 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 1 bu 6 rin (3.9 cm)

Nakago length: 6 sun 9 bu (20.91 cm)

Nakago sori: none

This is a shinogi-zukuri katana with an ihorimune, a standard width, and the widths at the moto and saki are a little different. There is a slightly large sori with a chu kissaki. The jihada is itame mixed with nagarehada, and the entire jihada is tight. There are ji-nie and chikei. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. Some parts of the midare hamon have square shaped gunome. There are ashi, yo, a bright nioiguchi, frequent nie, nie-kuzure in some places, and sunagashi. The nakago is almost ubu (a little bit machi okuri, and the nakago tip is shortened). The nakago tip was originally kurijiri. The yasurime are kate-sagari, and there are two mekugi ana. On the omote side, towards the mune side on the ji, there is a long official title and name with two lines, and under this there is a kao. On the ura, a little lower than the omote mei, towards the mune side there is a date. This smith has some hamon which are higher than this one.

## **Teirei Kanshou Kai For New Year**

The swords discussed below were shown in the February 2016, meeting at the NBTHK headquarters building. This discussion presents answers concerning the makers of these blades.

Meeting Date: February 13, 2016 (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of February)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan auditorium

Lecturer: Kubo Yasuko

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

Mei: Kanemoto

Length: 2 shaku 2 sun 5 bu

Sori: 6.5 bu

Style: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

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

Hamon: the lower part of the hamon is gunome mixed with ko-choji and togariba; in some places four to five gunome are grouped together and appear as a sanbonsugi style. There are frequent ko-ashi, a tight nioiguchi, and ko-nie. On the habuchi there are fine sunagashi and yubashiri.

Boshi: on the yokote is a gunome; the boshi is almost straight and has a shallow notare and a komaru.

This katana is a little wide, and the widths at the moto and saki are not very different. There is a chu-kissaki, the blade is long, and the niku (the curvature of the ji) is flat, and there is a large saki-sori. From the shape, you can judge this katana as being from the latter half of the Muromachi period. The jihada is mixed with nagare or masame, and there is a whitish utsuri. The gunome hamon is mixed with togariba, and from these characteristics, the majority of people voted for Sue-seki smiths.

Usually the sanbonsugi hamon are stylized beginning with the nidai Magoroku Kanemoto, and this continued into the Shinto period. But Magoroku's sanbonsugi hamon are not perfect repeats of one type of group of small, big, and small togariba. Like on this katana, the gunome are mixed with ko-choji, togariba, and include not only three gunome, but four or five gunome forming one group, and this makes an interesting midare hamon. Beside this feature, compared with later generations or utsushimono sanbonsugi, there is a soft nioiguchi, and the habuchi has rich hataraki such as fine sunagashi and yubashiri and the entire hamon is charming and elegant.

People understood these characteristics well, and in voting there are many correct answers. As almost correct answers, some people voted for Kanesada (Nosada), and Kanefusa. This blade has a dynamic shape, and both the jihada and hamon are healthy. The Kanesada answer likely derived from his high ranking, but if it were his work, his jihada are the most refined among the Sue-seki smiths and many of Kanesada and Kanemoto's hamon have higher gunome and choji.

## Kantei To No. 2: wakizashi

Mei: oite Nan□ Shigekuni tsukuru kore

Length: slightly less than 1 shaku 2 sun 9 bu

Sori: 4 bu

Design: shobu-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame mixed with mokume; there are thick dense ji-nie, and frequent chikei.

Hamon: suguha with shallow notare; mixed with ko-gunome; the upper half to the boshi has a wider hamon. There is a dense nioiguchi, frequent ko-nie, and a bright and clear nioiguchi.

Boshi: yakizume; the ura has a slight return.

Horimono: both the omote and ura have futasuji-hi.

From the signature, this is a Suruga-uchi Nanki Shigekuni wakizashi made before he moved Kishu. Shigekuni had several styles. He uses the Yamato Tegai school suguha or a Soshu Den style notare hamon mixed with gunome. There is a dense nioiguchi, and both the jihada and hamon have a lot of hataraki, or the work has a mixture of the two school's characteristics. Either style was made with a high level of skill and the jihada and hamon are clear.

This is based on a suguha hamon, with a yakizume boshi, and at first impression reminds us of Yamato work. However, the itame hada is mixed with mokume, there is a tight jihada, there are thick dense ji-nie, frequent chikei, and a graceful shape. The upper half of the hamon is wider, and bright and clear, and these characteristics remind us of Soshu master smith work. Shigekuni's shinogi zukuri work has very few horimono, and if it has horimono, it is only bo-hi. Compared with this, his hirazukuri wakizashi have many kinds of horimono. This shobu zukuri wakizashi has well done futasuji-hi. Except for his shinogi zukuri work, many of his wakizashi are saki-sori like this one.

In voting, possibly people thought that the jihada is more refined than on his usual work. Many people voted for Shin-Kunisada and the Shodai Tadayoshi. These answers are understandable: the wakizashi has saki-sori, and Shin-Kunisada's work does too, but his hamon are more likely to be gunome. The Shodai Tadayoshi does not have many saki-sori shapes, and for both smiths, the boshi are very rarely yakizume. This is a yakizume boshi, but if we look at it carefully, the ura side has a slight return, and Shigekuni's boshi's omote and ura are not quite the same, but have slightly different shapes.

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

Mei: Hankei

Length: 1 shaku 7 sun 5 bu

Sori: 4 bu

Style: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jihada: itame mixed with mokume and nagarehada. There are fine ji-nie, frequent chikei, and pale utsuri.

Hamon: based on gunome mixed with togariba; the features on the entire omote are large sized; the ura has a tight midare hamon. There are ashi, yo, a dense nioiguchi, dense nie, kinsuji, long sunagashi, and on the omote around the monuchi are long nie suji.

Boshi: wide yakikomi ichimai type; strong hakikake which become kaen; a long return which extends to become muneyaki.

Hankei's shapes were made in the Keicho period, and many of his hirazukuri blades are wide and similar to work by other smiths from the period. However, his shinogi-zukuri blades have a standard width and the kissaki are not large. His characteristic shapes have mitsumune, and the angle of the mune is steep.

As you know, he is supposed to have followed the Koto period's Norishige's style. His jihada are copied from Norishige's, and are itame mixed with large itame, the hada is visible, and there are thick chikei usually called "hijiki-hada". But this wakizashi's jihada is not so rough, and in voting people thought about this.

The hamon is based on gunome mixed with notare, and togariba. There is a dense nioiguchi, thick nie, the top of the hamon is soft, the hamon's lines are not clear, and there are kinsuji and long sunagashi, and this is his very unique style. Besides these details, the boshi is an ichimai style, there are strong hakikake which become kaen, and this is Hankei's characteristic point.

In voting, half of the people voted with the correct answer on the first vote. But from the fine jihada and long niesuji in the hamon, people voted for Satsuma smiths, and in particular, many people voted for Masakiyo. This is understandable, because sometimes Masakiyo's boshi have hakikake, but this boshi has frequent long kaen, and with the long return, it is very rare; also and his hamon are mixed with rough nie and a bright nioiguchi. Compared with Masakiyo, Hankei's nioiguchi are worn down and this is one of his characteristic points.

### **Kantei To No 4: tachi**

Mei: Nobufusa saku (Ko-bizen)

Shugaki (written in red ink): Tsuruno□ (kao)

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 2 bu

Sori: 5 bu

Design: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame mixed with mokume. There are dense ji-nie, fine chikei, and utsuri.

Hamon: yaki-otoshi at the moto, and above this based on suguha mixed with komidare. There are dense ko-nie, nie inside of the hamon, fine sunagashi, some kinsuji and mizukage at the machi moto.

Boshi: straight, with hakikake, and a komaru.

This is an ubu nakago, a narrow blade with a small kissaki, a large koshizori, and a classic shape, and from this, you can judge this as work from the end of the Heian period to the early Kamakura period. The Nobufusa name is seen on both Ko-bizen and Ko-Ichimonji work, and this is supposed to be Ko-Bizen work.

The jihada is mixed with jifu, the hamon is based on suguha mixed with kogunome, there are dense ko-nie, kinsuji and sunagashi, and this is very classic looking. Maybe from the yakiotoshi above the machi, people voted for Ko-Hoki smiths such as Yasutsuna and Sanemori, and old Kyushu work such as Bungo Yukihiro.

In Ko-Bizen work, it is definitely unusual to see yakiotoshi at the koshimoto, and the jihada and hamon have abundant nie, and from this, both answers are somewhat reasonable. But if it were Ko-Hoki, their shapes have a more pronounced hiraniku, the tips have uchizori which is not too prominent, and the jihada have a large pattern itame hada and usually a dark color. Just like this tachi, Ko-Bizen hamon are based on suguha mixed with ko-notare, kogunome and komidare. Ko-Hoki hamon are komidare with independent ko-notare, and kogunome, and especially in Yasutugu's hamon, there are spaces between gunome. If it were old Kyushu work, the jihada would be a gentle nagarehada, there is a unique moist appearing hada, and the hamon is soft.

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

Mei: Yasutsuna

Design: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 3 bu

Sori: 8 bu



Jihada: itame mixed with mokume and nagarehada. There are dense ji-nie, frequent chikei, a dark color jihada, and jifu utsuri.

Hamon: around the moto, the hamon is low, and there are frequent hakikake, yubashiri, and bo-utsuri: above the moto, it is a shallow notare mixed with choji, gunome, frequent ashi, and yo, dense nie, frequent kinsuji, and sunagashi; along the top of the hamon there are uchinoke and yubashiri.

Boshi: straight and yakizume; the tip has hakikake.

Horimono: on the ura side at the koshimoto, there are futasuji-hi carved through the nakago.

Although this is a suriage tachi, there is still a two kanji signature left. There is a large koshizori, a sophisticated shape, a narrow shinogi-ji, and pronounced hiraniku. From the shape, this is from the end of the Heian to the early Kamakura period and is characteristic of Yasutsuna and other Ko-Hoki smiths' work. The jihada is itame mixed with mokume and nagarehada, there are dense ji-nie, frequent chikei, a dark colored jihada, and the jifu utsuri is very good and this could be one of the elements suggesting a vote for Yasutsuna.

But the hamon is different from Yasutsuna's usual midare hamon. The hamon is wide, there is a shallow notare mixed with choji and gunome, and there are frequent ashi and yo, which remind us of Yamashiro and Bizen work.

From this, considering the presence or absence of yakiotoshi, such as on the No. 4 blade, in the first vote, people voted for Rai and Osafune school smiths.

This tachi's hamon and other elements, instead of Ko-Hoki's characteristic rustic beauty, show a more elegant style and this could be confusing.

But please consider that the shape and the jihada, and also the hamon's hataraki at the koshimoto show strong Ko-Hoki characteristic points.

From considering this, in the second and the third votes, many people voted for Ko-Hoki smiths. Among the school's smiths, some people voted for O-hara Sanemori. Sanemori's work has horimono, and several of the horimono are around the koshimoto, and so the opinion is justifiable. Besides this, it is hard to find characteristic points, and part of the hamon reminds us of the Dojikiri blade, so at this time, it is acceptable if you look at this as Ko-Hoki work.

## **Shijo Kantei To No 708 (in the, 2016 New Year's issue)**

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 708 in the January issue is a tanto by Hosho Sadaoki.

This tanto has a standard length and width and is uchizori. From the shape you can judge this as being from the mid- to late-Kamakura period.

This has a well forged tight itame hada, and there are dense ji-nie. The hamon is suguha, and on the habuchi, there are hotsure, nijuba, and kuichigaiba, frequent

nie, and it is bright and clear. The boshi is yakizume with hakikake. From this characteristic work, the majority of people voted for Sadaoki. Besides his name, almost none of the voters missed the Hosho school.

Among the Hosho school tanto, there are some with bo-utsuri. Sometimes their characteristic utsuri is seen in the middle of ji, from the bottom to the tip, and consists one masame line (from forge welding). This utsuri appears in different locations between the hamon and shinogi.

Among the school's works, like on the Kokuho classified Kuwayama Hosho, the utsuri appears along the masame hada lines, and produces a stripe-like appearance.

In the Koto period, masame hada forging on the entire blade is never seen except on Hosho school work. Because of the forging methods used, we can say this kind of utsuri is very characteristic and does not appear often in work from other schools.

In the Shinto period, Yamashiro Daijo Kunikane worked in a style similar to Hosho. This is not a universal opinion in the Token world, but some people call this a characteristic "Kunikane kawari tetsu".

On one of Kunikane's katana, close to the shinogi, there is one single forge welded line going from the machi to the tip of the point, and the hamon side and jihada both extend away from this line.

During WWII, Sendai suffered from many air raids, and many Kunikane blades were in fires. People took advantage of this to cut and analyze these damaged blades.

From these examinations, people found that Kunikane's tsukurikomi (the method of assembling or forging the composite sword), besides having standard sanmai forms, also had some other types of san mai structure or tsukurikomi (see figure 1). In this case, the mune area steel had lower carbon levels, and the hamon area steel was composed of high carbon kawagane type steel.

I have read a report that the forge welding line where the two types of steel meet is a little under the shinogiji. Thus, depending on the forging method and different carbon contents used in the steels, this kind of kawari tetsu can appear.

I read this report about 30 years ago. I have seen these swords, but in my opinion there is only a small number of them.

Sometimes, Kunikane produced excellent works as good as Hosho work. Possibly he wanted to reproduce Hosho utsuri, and used this tsukurikomi or forging method to do this.

We have learned all of the Hosho smiths' names, and their styles are very similar to each other, and so judging individual names is difficult. Because of this all Hosho smiths' names are treated as correct answers.

Considering the shapes, many of Sadaoki's works are smaller, Sadayoshi's larger sizes are prominent. Sadakiyo made both small and large sized works.

Explanation by Hinohara Dai

