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**Meito Kansho**  
**Examination of Important Swords**

**Juyo Bunkazai**

Type: Tachi

Mei: Kanenaga

Owner: Shijo-nawate shrine

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 3 bu 2 rin (73.7cm)

Sori: 6 bu 7 rin (2.05 cm)

Motohaba: 9 bu 2 rin (2.8 cm)

Sakihaba: 5 bu 9 rin (1.8 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu (0.6 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu 2 rin (0.35 cm)

Kissaki length: 9 bu 1 rin (2.75 cm)

Nakago length: 4 sun 7 bu 5 rin (14.4 cm)

Nakago sori: 3 rin ( 0.1 cm)

**Commentary**

This is a shinogi zukuri tachi with an ihorimune, a standard width, and the widths at the moto and saki are a little different. There is a wide shinogi-ji, the blade is thick, and there is a large sori with a short chu-kissaki. The jihada is a tight itame, there are thick dense ji-nie, and fine chikei. The hamon is chu-suguha and mixed with ko-gunome. There are frequent ashi and yo, especially in the upper half where they are prominent, and thick even nie. The entire habuchi has hotsure, and there are some kinsuji, and some places at the top of the hamon have fine nie-suji. The boshi is straight, and the omote has an o-maru while the ura is yakizume, and both tips have hakikake. The nakago is suriage, and there are two mekugi-ana. The nakago tip's original style is unknown and the current nakago-jiri is kiri. On the omote side there is a two kanji signature with a small size "Kane" kanji, and a large size "Naga" kanji written toward the mune edge.

Among Yamato's five schools, from the latter half of the Kamakura period to the Muromachi period, the Teigai school was the most prosperous. The school's actual founder was Kanenaga, the smiths used the "kane" kanji, and the school was supposed to have been located around the Todaiji Teingai gate which is today's Nara City Teigai-cho, and it is because of this location they were called the Teigai

school. Among the smiths, Kanenaga's workmanship was the best and he has the largest number of signed blades. He has one Kokuho and six Juyo-Bunkazai including this tachi. His primary active period is supposed to have been around the Sho-o period (1288-1292). However, because many of his works are very classic in appearance, some people think he may have worked earlier.

His work is not easily comparable to the other Yamato schools. His jihada are not typical Yamato school nagare-hada, and his swords often have a very refined jihada, and he is known for his strong clear jihada. His hamon are common in the Yamato school, and features include kuichigaiba, niju-ba, uchinoke and hotsure. The boshi are either yakizume or have a shallow return and a omaru, and the tips have strong hakikake, and these are Yamato's characteristic points. His original characteristic hamon are low on the lower half of the blade, and in the upper half they become gradually wider, and sometimes the omote and ura sides are different. Another typical Kanenaga work was known by the Meibutsu "Konote-gashiwa" and was owned by Hosokawa Yusai, and then by the Mito Tokugawa family until Taisho 12 (1923) when it was lost in the Kanto earthquake and fire. Compared with other schools, Kanenaga's hamon have rough thick nie, and this produces a strong feeling in the quiet hamon.

The tachi's shinogi is not too high, but the shinogi ji is wide, and the blade is thick, and this is a common shape in the Yamato school. The jihada is itame, but is very tight and one almost does not recognize the pattern. This is his original jihada and produces a strong impression. There are excellent hataraki, dense ji-nie, and fine chikei. The hamon is based on chu-suguha, and notable points are frequent ashi and yo when compared with Kanenaga's usual work. The first impression reminds us of Shikakke Norinaga's master work. The degree of hataraki seen in this hamon is not seen in other examples. The ura side's muneyaki is seen in other examples too, and this could be considered part of his own evolving style or characteristic work. The ha-nie are not too rough or too fine, with thick even nie, and this helps produce a clear and bright nioiguchi.

This tachi belongs to the Shijo-nawate Shrine in Osaka city. The shrine is dedicated to Kusunoki Masanori's (the "big sir Kusunoki") first son Kusunoki Masatsura (the "small sir Kusunoki") along with other 24 loyal heroes. In Shohei 3 or Jowa 4 (1348), Masatsura died in a battle with the Ashikaga army, and in Meiji 23 (1890), the Meiji government built a shrine where he died. The tachi was donated by Inaba Masakuni, who was the last lord of Yamashiro Kuni's Yodo clan, (he was the 16th lord) and also was the Kyoto Shoshidai (the Shogunate's military governor). In the Meiji government, he was a chamberlain and the first director of the secretariat.

In the "Tokugawa Jikki (official record)" of Lord Joken-in (the Shogun Tsunayoshi) in volume 4, the page for December 8 of Genna 1 (1681) states that "We prayed at Momiji Yama's Genyu-in (Ietsuna's) tomb; attendants included Inaba Mino-no-kami Masanori and 80 other persons". Inaba Masakuni's family were daimyos of Mino for 13 generations dating back to the Inaba family's 3<sup>rd</sup> lord. The record also states that "Inaba Mino-no-kami Masanori directed construction of the tomb, and for

compensation, he received the Kanenaga tachi". Momiji Yama was located inside of Edo castle, and contained the tombs of successive shogun's along with their treasures and books. When Shogun Tsunayoshi visited Ietsuna's completed tomb, he gave this Kanenaga tachi to Inaba Masanori as a reward for supervising the tomb's construction. Since then, for over 200 years, the Inaba family has taken care of this tachi, and with this history, this is an important sword.

Explanation and photo by Ishii Akira.

Note: The signature's image is from an exhibit in the Osaka City Museum of "Kinki Area Meito" in Showa 60 (1983).

## **No.715 Tosogu Kanshou**

### **Tokubetsu Juyo Tosogu**

**Botan shishi zu (peony and lion theme) mitokoromono  
Kozuka and kogai mei: Somin with kao  
Menuki mumei : Somin**

**This set is accompanied by a Meiwa 5 (1769) Tomosada origami (paper)**

This is a Yokoya So-min shishi design mitokoromono set. Somin used to be called the "Founder of Machibori" (work or carving for others outside of the shogun and daimyo class).

Somin was the Yokoya family's 3<sup>rd</sup> son, and grandson of Yokoya Muneoki ( the first generation Muneoki) who worked for the Bakufu under the Goto family in the early half of the Edo period around the Shoho period (1644-1647). Somin was born in Kanbun 10 (1670) in Edo. In the beginning, he worked for the Bakufu as did his grandfather, but later he resigned from this position. After that, his work was based on Goto style techniques, but was very free and with a style that did not follow the school's particular rules. He acquired a Genroku period taste and his original style received great praise. Under the Somin school, excellent craftsmen arose such as Yanagawa, Omori, and Furukawa. Then from these people, many branches originated such as Ishiguro, Kikuoka, and Inagawa, and this continued until the Bakumatsu period. This is why Somin was called the founder of Machibori work.

This style of a mitokoromono set with a shishi and botan design is seen Goto family work. Somin liked to use this design, but the shape of the shishi, the impression of its face, mane, and fur are carved quite differently from the Goto family style. This is Somin's original style and is called a "Yokoya shishi". The

shishi carving is rich and elegant, and full of energy and lively motion. The back side is not very different from Goto family work, but the menuki's chikara-kane (supports or posts) have a triangle shape and this shows one of his characteristic points.

The menuki has an origami, in which Somin's adopted son the nidai Muneoki Tomosada wrote that this is made by Somin. Along with Machi-bori gold smiths, other people were asking for an origami, and this tells us something of Somin's popularity at that time.

Explanation by Iida Toshihisa

## **Shijo Kantei To No. 716**

The deadline to submit answers for the No. 716 issue Shijo Kantei To is October 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 October 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: tachi

Length: slightly less than 2 shaku 3 sun 1 bu (69.99 cm)

Sori: 7 bu (2.12cm)

Motohaba: 8 bu 3 rin (2.5 cm)

Sakihaba: 4 bu 8 rin (1.45 cm)

Motokasane: 1 bu 7 rin (0.5 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu (0.3 cm)

Kissaki length: 7 bu 4 rin (2.25 cm)

Nakago length: 6 sun 4 bu (19.4 cm)

Nakago sori: 7 rin (0.2 cm)

This is a narrow shinogi-zukuri tachi with an ihorimune, and the widths at the moto and saki are different. There is a large koshizori even though the blade is suriage. The tip is uchizori, and there is a small kissaki. The jihada is itame mixed with mokume, and the hada is visible. There are dense ji-nie, frequent chikei, and a bright jihada. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. There are frequent

ashi and yo, a bright nioiguchi, dense nie, and frequent kinsuji and sunagashi. The nakago is suriage, the nakago tip was originally kurijiri. The yasurime are katte-sagari, and there are three mekugi- ana. On the omote side, above the third mekugi-ana (the original mekugi-ana) towards the mune edge is a two kanji signature.

Many of this school's works have jifu- utsuri.

## **Shijo Kantei To No 714 (in the July, 2016 issue)**

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 714 in the July issue is a tachi by Ko-hoki Yasutsuna.

This tachi is narrow, and the widths at the moto and saki are different. There is a large koshizori with funbari, the tip has uchizori, and there is a small kissaki. From the shape you can judge this as work from the end of the Heian period to the early Kamakura period.

In that period, the main schools were the old Yamashiro schools such as Sanjo, Gojo, and Awataguchi, the Bizen school's Ko-Bizen and Ko-Ichimonji groups, the Bitchu school's Ko-Aoe, Kyushu's classic school with smiths such as the Bungo school's Sadahide and Yukihiro, Satsuma's Ko-Naminohira, and Yasutsuna's Ko-Hoki school.

Each area's work included narrow elegant tachi shapes just like one described for this Kantei To. These groups all had classic ko-midare type hamon and these are common characteristics.

Among these schools' workers, there were many with a bright jihada and hamon, and with sophisticated work such as that seen in the Go-kaden's main schools such as Yamashiro and Bizen. Features can include a dark slightly blue jihada, chirimen-hada, a ko-midare hamon with a worn down nioiguchi, and some influence of "country-like styles" (non-mainstream work or details) seen in Bitchu Ko-Aoe work.

The Ko-Hoki school's jihada are large itame and mokume patterns, a dark color, and a visible hada when compared with other schools. The school's hamon nioiguchi are worn down, and inside the hamon the jihada is visible. There is a more country-like look, and this tachi's jihada shows their characteristic jihada.

In this period, other schools' hamon are a characteristic classic ko-midare style. However, Ko-Hoki hamon show a ko-midare type hamon mixed with independent ko-gunome, sometimes ko-notare, and this a characteristic point. Yasutsuna work is known to have notably less ko-midare activity, and is based more on ko-gunome and ko-notare, and becomes a midare hamon.

Also, the hamon is yaki-otoshi at the koshimoto, which is not seen often in Ko-Bizen work, and this is a Ko-Hoki characteristic point.

In voting, a majority of the people voted for Yasutsuna. As an almost correct answer, a few people voted for Yasuie.

A well known example of Yasuie's work is the Kuroda family's tachi which is classified as Kokuho. For Ko-Hoki work, the ko-choji hamon is prominent, and the upper half of the hamon shows more vertical alterations when compared with the lower half, and also has much more hataraki. Yasuie's work is more gorgeous than Yasutsuna's and technically proficient, but besides the Kuroda tachi, he has very few extant works.

A long time ago, there was a person who had a Yasutsuna tachi. His tachi was just like this tachi. He only knew of Yasutsuna's ko-midare style hamon, and he was worried that it could be an old saiha (re-tempered) hamon. When an expert told him that Yasutsuna has this kind of hamon and this really was Yasutsuna's work, he was very happy.

Explanation by Hinohara Dai