

**NBTHK SWORD JOURNAL**  
**ISSUE NUMBER 717**  
**October, 2016**

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

**Juyo Bijutsu Hin**  
**Important Art Object**

Type: Tachi  
Mei: Junkei  
Owner: Mori Kinen Shu-sui Bijutsukan

Length: 2 shaku 5 sun 6 bu 1 rin  
Sori: 9 bu 8 rin (2.95 cm)  
Motohaba: 9 bu 9 rin (2.8 cm)  
Sakihaba: 5 bu 6 rin (1.7 cm)  
Motokasane: 2 bu (0.6 cm)  
Sakikasane: 1 bu 3 rin (0.4 cm)  
Kissaki length: 8 bu 6 rin (2.6 cm)  
Nakago length: 7 sun 03 bu (21.3 cm)  
Nakago sori: 1 bu 3 rin (0.4 cm)

**Commentary**

This is a shinogi zukuri tachi with an ihorimune, a standard width, and the widths at the moto and saki are different. It is thick, there is a large koshizori with funbari, and there is a slight uchizori and a small kissaki. The jihada is itame mixed with mokume, and the entire hada is barely visible. There are ji-nie, frequent chikei, and on the omote's upper half there are pale jifu utsuri. The hamon is based on ko-midare, and has ko-gunome and ko-notare. There are frequent ashi and yo, dense uneven nie, frequent kinsuji, nie-suji, sunagashi, and yubashiri in places. The boshi is straight, but is mixed with kuichigai-ba, and the tip is yakizume. The nakago is ubu, the nakago tip is a very shallow ha-agari kurijiri and the yasurime are kate-sagari. There are two mekugi-ana, and on the omote side between the two mekugi ana (one is the original mekugi-ana) there is a two kanji signature in a large gyosho (formal) style toward the mune edge.

Since the early Muromachi period, there has been a theory that Junkei was Osafune Nagamitsu's priest name after he became a priest or monk. Examples were listed in books such as the Noami Hon, the Chokyo Meizukushi, and the Okin sho. But after the 2nd world war, this theory was questioned by some scholars. After examining Junkei's work, the opinions were that that he was a different person from Nagamitsu.

Today, Junkei's signed blades consist of two Juyo Bunkazai, two Juyo Bijutsuhin, and two Juyo Token, or all together, six blades. Although he is famous, few of his blades are known to exist. His characteristic points are a slightly visible jihada, ji-nie mixed with chikei, and not too much utsuri. His hamon are ko-midare with strong nie. His signature is a large size written in a gyo-sho style. There are no similar characteristic points for Nagamitsu.

From his wa-sori shaped blades and the nie style, another opinion is that he might have been a Ko-Kyoto smith. But today, he is categorized as a Ko-Bizen smith. But a remarkable Juyo Bunkazai blade (which belongs to the Tsuchiya family, and is described in the Meito Kansho in the number 239 issue of this journal in the December, Showa 51 issue) is quite different. The hamon has a high choji style hamon mixed with gunome, and this is similar to one of Nagamitsu's midare hamon, and there are nioiguchi type hataraki. The shape has a large sori with an inokubi style kissaki, and this type of shape is seen around the mid-Kamakura period. In the Meikan Junkei's active period is listed as being around the Bunei period (1264-75).

Usually, the Ko-Bizen school's latest works are considered to be around the early Kamakura period, but one Ko-Bizen smith, Tsunemitsu, has a dated work from Shoan 3 (1301). From this, we can imagine that a small number of this school's smiths were still working in latter half of the Kamakura period.

Also, in the Meito Kansho No. 528 in the Heisei 13 New Year's issue, in describing the history of Osafune Mitsutada, the former NBTHK department director Mr. Tanobe concluded that the Osafune school existed before or along with the Ko-Bizen school for several reasons, and one of the HBTHK's founders, Kunzan, had the same opinion. One reason is that the sword book "Honcho Kaji Ko" states that the Ko-Bizen Masatsune school stayed in the Osafune area, and one of their descendent smiths is Mitsutada. The "Kanchi-in Hon Meizukushi" lists Yoshikane who is recognized as a Ko-Bizen smith as working in the Bizen Osafune style, and also Mitsutada's son Sanenaga has Ko-Bizen style work.

Junkei has some gorgeous blades, and because he is one of the Ko-Bizen smiths, some people call him a "Sue Ko-Bizen" smith working around the mid-Kamakura period, and this opinion is considered to be very reasonable.

Among Junkei's small number of works, this tachi has an ubu nakago, is long, has a large koshizori, a dynamic and very beautiful shape, and has a dignified feeling. The jihada is itame mixed with mokume, there is a slightly visible hada with a lot of chikei, and this presents a classic appearance. The hamon is based on ko-midare with dense nie, and is a Ko-Bizen style which is a rare example during his active period around the mid-Kamakura period. Also, some parts of the hamon are mixed

with ko-gunome and ko-notare, and this looks like Ko-Hoki work which is very interesting. However this is a rare example, in good condition, and a very well made Junkei tachi with a signature.

There are no supporting or documentary materials available, but the “Nihonto Bizen Den Taikan” book lists this tachi as the Ashikaga family’s Shimousa Kuni Kitsuregawa clan’s tachi.

Explanation and photo by Ishii Akira.

## **No.717 Tosogu Kanshou Tokubetsu Jujo Tosogu**

**Ryu zu (dragon design) mitokoro-mono**

**Kozuka and kogai mei: Mon Yujo kao with Ko-ryo**

**Menuki: mumei and attributed to Yujo**

I would like to introduce with admiration Goto Yujo’s mitokoro-mono. Yujo is famous as a founder of the Goto family. He worked for the eighth Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa and passed away in Eisho 9 (1512), at the age of 73 years. As part of the Higashiyama (Ashikaga heirlooms) treasures, many of his works are still preserved. Even today, he is famous as the best among the master goldsmiths. This work fully shows Yujo’s skillful workmanship, and many excellent details are seen everywhere. In the kozuka and kogai, the Kurikara dragon’s wrinkles on his stomach and forehead are seen as characteristics of Yu-jo’s excellent chisel work technique. The way the dragon is carved winding around the sankoe-ken, with a lively motion and shape, exhibits Yujo’s unique techniques. Also, the rich nikuoki (volume) and accurate detailed composition are apparent.

The menuki have two posts which is rarely seen in Yujo’s work or in the Goto family’s work. The dragon’s eyes are inlaid below the surface and they show Yujo’s characteristic points.

Beside this, the entire work has a feeling of sophistication, and no one can surpass the intensity and detail of his work. The first impression is of something simple, but the workmanship clearly exhibits his powerful techniques. We could say this all of the key properties or elements of Yujo’s work can be seen in this mitokoro-mono. The mitokoro-mono was put together from Yujo’s work by the Goto family’s 10<sup>th</sup> generation, Renjo. In the past, you can imagine that this was highly valued.

Explanation by Kurotaki Tetsuya

## Shijo Kantei To No. 717

The deadline to submit answers for the No. 717 issue Shijo Kantei To is November 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 November 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: 2 shaku 2 sun 6 bu (68.5 cm)

Sori: 7 bu (2.12cm)

Motohaba: 9 bu 2 rin (2.8 cm)

Sakihaba: 6 bu 9 rin (2.1 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 8 rin (0.85 cm)

Sakikasane: 2 bu 1 rin (0.65 cm)

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

Nakago length: 6 sun 5.5 bu (19.85 cm)

Nakago sori: 3 rin (0.1 cm)

This is a shinogi-zukuri katana with an ihorimune, a standard width, and the widths at the moto and saki are not very different. There is a large koshi-sori, the tip has sori, and it is very thick for the width. There is a chu kissaki. The jihada is itame mixed with a mokume and nagare hada, and the hada is visible. There are fine ji-nie, kawari testu type thick chikei in some places, jifu, and pale midare utsuri. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. There are small ashi, yo, nioiguchi type ko-nie, a narrow hamon for the width, and the entire hamon is small, and there are kinsuji and sunagashi. The horimono on the omote and the ura are bo-hi, the omote has a maru dome, and the ura is carved through the nakago. The nakago is suriage, the nakago tip is a very shallow kuri-jiri (and was originally kuri-jiri). The original yasurime are kate-sagari, and the newer yasurime are suji-chigai. There are two mekugi ana. On the omote side, towards the mune edge, there is a long kanji signature.

The signature's gyaku-tagane (lines written in the opposite direction of calligraphy strokes) chisel marks are not prominent.

## Teirei Kanshou Kai For September 2016

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

Meeting Date: September 10, 2016 (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of September)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan auditorium

Lecturer: Hinohara Dai

### Kantei To No. 1: tachi

Mumei: Den Nagashige

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 5 bu

Sori: 4.5 bu

Style: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

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

Hamon: low yakiba; shallow ko-notare mixed with ko-gunome and ko-choji. There are frequent ashi, yo, nie, kinsuji and sunagashi.

Boshi: midarekomi; the tip is sharp; it is yakizume, and there are hakikake.

Horimono: on the omote and the ura there are bo-hi carved through the nakago.

This katana belonged to the main line of the Shimazu family. It was judged as being by Nagashige and was classified as Juyo Bijutsu Hin.

It is wide with a long kissaki, which is a Nambokucho shape. The jihada is a prominent itame but utsuri are not prominent. The hamon is based on ko-notare, mixed with ko-gunome and ko-choji, but the width of the hamon is very narrow, and in some places there are two continuous or fused square shaped gunome which are called "ear shaped gunome". There are strong ha-nie, and prominent kinsuji and sunagashi. The boshi is midarekomi, and the tip is sharp. The entire katana appears as a Soden-Bizen work, and in particular there are Chogi style characteristics.

Nagashige's masterpiece is a tanto dated Kinoe-Inu (Kenmu 1=1334), eto year, which is classified as Kokuho, and is supposed to be Honnami Kotoku's "sashiryō" (his own blade which he wore). The tanto jihada and hamon shows Chogi school characteristic points. But compared with Chogi's work, this tanto's hamon is very low, based on ko-notare and ko-gunome, and mixed with ear shaped gunome.

There are strong ha-nie and strong hataraki such as kinsuji and sunagashi, which shows similarities to the katana's characteristic points.

The hamon on other Nagayoshi's signed blades are often low, and from these characteristics, this was judged as Nagashige's work.

In judging this, people often bring up the names of Choji, Kanenaga, and Omiya Morikage.

Chogi has two styles, either a strong Bizen Den style, or a prominent Soshu Den style, but either one has a prominent wide hamon, and many of them have large vertical alterations in the hamon.

Kanenaga's name seems to come up more than Chogi because of the low width of the hamon. But in cases where mumei blades were judged as his, the hamon width was as large as Chogi's and his strong ha-nie are more prominent than Chogi's, and there were prominent kinsuji and sunagashi. These are characteristic points in judging his work.

Morikage has this kind of low or narrow width hamon, and his name is understandable from this. But his jihada are often mixed with strangely shaped mokume, and different colored jifu. His hamon often have uneven nie and a worn down nioiguchi. If you recognize ear shaped gunome, his name is more reasonable than the Chogi name.

This kind of comparison and explanation seems to be present in each area of this katana. At some time, we would like to compare each of these characteristics, and we will put out three Chogi, one Morikage, one Kanemitsu, for a total of total five blades in a forthcoming meeting.

For readers who could not to attend this meeting, if you have seen this kind of comparison a meeting, that would serve as a reference for these smiths.

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

Mei: Kunimune

Length: slightly less than 2 shaku 2 sun 8 bu

Sori; 6.5 bu

Design: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: itame mixed with nagare-hada, and the entire hada is visible. There are jienie, chikei, and midare utsuri which appear somewhat like jifu areas.

Hamon: choji mixed with gunome, and the hamon width has few high and low variations. There are yubashiri everywhere, tobiyaki in some places, ashi, yo, a bright nioiguchi, frequent nie, and the entire hamon is worn down; there is hada visible in the hamon in some places, and there are kinsuji and sunagashi.

Boshi: slightly midare and with a komaru.

Horimono: on the omote and the ura, there are bonji at the koshimoto.

Bizen Saburo Kunimune's masterpieces have two styles. One is wide, with an inokubi kissaki, a dynamic tachi shape, and a hamon based on choji, and has an active gorgeous midare hamon. The other style is a slightly narrow tachi shape, and a suguha type hamon mixed with ko-choji and ko-gunome.

Among the gorgeous midare hamon, the best tachi, (for example the tachi classified as Kokuho owned by the Aoyama family) can be compared with other Bizen smiths' work. Kunimune's hamon can be compared with Fukuoka Ichimonji smiths such as Yoshifusa's most gorgeous hamon. Kunimune's choji clusters are larger and the hamon is narrower. The choji are not juka-choji where the choji are tadpole-like in shape, and the tops come close to each other. Kunimune's choji are narrow bottomed choji, and show low and high variations with a midare hamon. Kunimune's midare hamon shapes are similar to those of Hatakeda Moriie, Osafune Mitsutada, and Nagamitsu's early work such as the hamon on the Meibutsu Tsuda Totomi Nagamitsu. Compared with Nagamitsu's mid-period work, based on round top choji and gunome, Kunimune's hamon are wider, there are not as many prominent gunome, and his choji form larger clusters and are gorgeous. From these considerations, this kind of work is supposed to have been done around the Bunei period (1264-74).

This tachi shows Kunimune's choji midare hamon. Compared with his most gorgeous choji hamon, this is a slightly gentle hamon, mixed with a large amount of gunome, and the blade is a little narrow.

This seems to be not too similar to mid-period Nagamitsu work, and is more likely something which is between his two types of styles.

This has strong nie, and the jihada and hamon show Kunimune's characteristic points everywhere, and this work is well executed. But judging this is a bit difficult. From the hamon's similarities, some people voted for Nagamitsu. From the narrow shape and utsuri some people voted for Unjo.

The Nagamitsu answer is understandable. But the jihada is itame mixed with mokume and the entire hada is visible. This is branch Bizen school work and is different from mainstream Osafune's tight itame, bright steel color, and refined jihada.

Kunimune's characteristic hamon have some square shaped choji and saka-ashi and this tachi shows this. Also, we would like to note that some jihada is visible in the hamon, and the entire hamon is whitish.

The Unjo hamon on their best works are suguha mixed with ko-choji and ko-gunome. There are saka-ashi and yo, a tight nioiguchi with ko-nie, and usually we never see such a prominent choji hamon.

From the shape, this is work from the latter half of the Kamakura period, and from the midare utsuri this is from the Bizen area, and from the jihada, this is branch Bizen work. From the hamon, this is mid-period Nagamitsu style work. Considering these details, by the third vote, most people should vote for Kunimune.

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

Mei: Bizen kuni ju Osafune Sakyoshin Munemitsu  
Jiro Saemon-no-jo Katsumitsu  
Eisho 5 nen (1509) 2 gatsu kichijitsu

Length: 1 shaku 7 sun 6 bu

Sori: 3 bu 8 rin

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame hada; there are fine ji-nie and midare utsuri.

Hamon: based on open valley gunome and mixed with choji and square shaped gunome. There are tobiyaki in some places, ashi and yo in some places, a bright nioiguchi, ko-nie, sunagashi and kinsuji.

Boshi: midarekomi, midare and with a slightly long return.

Horimono: on the omote at the koshimoto there is a shin no kurikara; on the ura at the koshimoto there is a shikestu and rendai.

In the latter half of the Muromachi period, around the Eisho to Taiei periods (1504-27), katate-uchi uchigatana were very popular. These had a length of about 2 to 2.1 shaku, a standard width, and the widths at the moto and saki were not much different. The upper half has a sori, there is a chu-kissaki, and the nakago is short. This blade is 1 shaku 7 sun 6 bu, which is slightly short, but has exactly the uchigatana shape, and almost no one would miss the period.

The jihada is a tight ko-itame, there is a bright steel color, and this is a made to order Sue-Bizen blade which is well forged and with a refined jihada and midare utsuri. The hamon has open valley gunome mixed with choji and square shaped gunome, and there is a bright nioiguchi and ko-nie. The boshi is is midarekomi. This is from around the Eisho to Taiei period (1504-1527), and a Sue-Bizen masterpiece. The choji hamon is prominent and this gassaku (joint or collaborative) work between Munemitsu and Katsumitsu shows the gassaku smith Katsumitsu's personality.

In some places, the midare hamon has saka-ashi, and this is a notable characteristic point. The omote shin-no-kurikara, and the ura's shiketsu and rendai horimono are typical Sue-Bizen horimono.

This is a typical Sue-Bizen masterwork, and most people voted for the correct answer.



#### **Kantei To No 4: wakizashi**

Mei: Yamato shu ju nin Kuro Saburo Shigekuni kyo  
Sunfu-shugo oite Kii-shu Myoko-san saku kore  
Habo tame Tsuzuki Kyudayu Ujikatsu saku kore  
Genna 8 nen (1622) Tsuchinoe 8 gatsu kichijitsu  
On the mune: Kirimono Tenka-ichi Ikeda Gansuke Yoshiteru

Length: 1 shaku 3 sun 7 bu

Sori: 3 bu 3 rin

Design: hirazukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jihada: itame hada mixed with mokume and nagare hada, and the hada is visible. There are dense ji-nie, frequent chikei and a clear jihada.

Hamon: notare hamon mixed with gunome; the upper half of the hamon is wider, the habuchi has hotsure and kuichigaiba. There are ashi, yo, a dense nioiguchi, thick nie, a bright and clear nioiguchi, and frequent kinsuji and sunagashi.

Boshi: shallow notarekomi, the tip is sharp, and there are frequent hakikake.

Horimono: on the omote and the ura are katana hi, on the omote the hi is finished with kaku-dome, and on the ura the hi is finished with marudome. Inside of the katana hi in relief on the omote is a shin-no-kurikara, and on the ura there is a descending dragon.

This is a Nanki Shigekuni wakizashi, called “Tenka-ichi ( number one in the world) no Nanki” and “Ikeda Gansuke Yoshiteru no Nanki”. Among his wakizashi, this is a superior masterpeice, and famous for its detailed and dynamic horimono.

This is so famous, that instead of using this for kantei-to ( judging and identification), it is more likely to be used for a kansho-to item (for appreciation).

The reason that we show this wakizashi often for kantei kai, is that even among Nanki Shigekuni’s Soshu Den work, this is a masterpiece, and we like to recognize and examine his masterpieces together.

The jihada is itame hada mixed with mokume, there are dense ji-nie and frequent chikei. The hamon is a shallow notare mixed with gunome, and in some places there are hotsure and kuichigaiba. There is a dense nioiguchi and dense nie. The jihada and hamon are very bright and clear, and there are frequent kinsuji and sunagashi. Among Kunishige’s Soshu Den work, this is modeled after a classic Go Yoshihiro blade and we see that influence everywhere.

Right after Shigekuni moved to Kishu in Genna 7-8 (1621-1622), this was supposed to have been a special order from a Kishu clan vassal. He made four masterpeice wakizashi with unusually long signatures and this is one of them.

Among these four wakizashi, three have very detailed horimono, and this is one of those three.

Besides this wakizashi, Shigekuni made other types of horimono such as one inside of a katana hi with bonji and kurikara, another inside of a katana hi with bonji and a suken, soe-hi, bonji and suken, and pairs of suken (straight ken) with different lengths and wide points. Besides these examples, Nanki does not have many detailed horimono.

Some token books state that Nanki has made all types of horimono, but most of his detailed horimono are concentrated on these three wakizashi, and in most of his work we do not see much horimono.

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

Mei: Tsuda Omi no kami Sukenao  
Genroku 2 sai 2 gatsu bi

Length: 2 shaku 26 bu

Sori: 5 bu 5 rin

Design: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame; there are fine ji-nie, and chikei.

Hamon: straight yakidashi at the moto, and above this there are o-gunome with notare, and which begin to form toranba. There are ashi, a dense nioiguchi, dense nie, a bright and clear nioiguchi, kinsuji and sunagashi.

Boshi: straight and with a komaru.

This is an example of a Tsuda Sukenao toran-ba.

The shape is a Shinto shape from around the Jokyo to Genroku (1684-1703) periods. The jihada is a tight ko-itame with dense ji-nie which shows typical Osaka Shinto refined forging, and shows his characteristic gunome type toran-ba.

Sukenao's toran-ba's characteristic points are the midare hamon in which the low and high areas are not prominent. Also, people pointed out that his midare hamon valleys are quite wide.

Sukenao's midare hamon heights at the low and high areas of the hamon are not very different. This means that the distance from the top (highest part of the hamon) to the bottom of the valleys (lowest part of the hamon) are not very large. If

you look at a the hamon shape, this is somewhat similar to Minamoto Masao's narrow gunome midare hamon.

In Sukenao's hamon, the distance from the valleys to the top of the gunome or choji is small. In case of Sukenao's suguha hamon, often his hamon widths are wider than his teacher Sukehiro's. This seems to be a common trend for toran-ba too.

This is a typical Sukenao work, and many people had the correct answer in the first vote.

### **Shijo Kantei To No 715 (in the, 2016 August issue)**

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 715 in the August issue is a katana by Tataru Nagayuki.

Nagayuki has a relatively small number of dated and signed blades. Sometimes they are dated a little later than the Kanbun and Empo periods, such as in the Tenna and Jokyo (1681-1687) periods.

Possibly because of this, he has two styles: one is a standard size typical Kanbun Shinto shape. The other has a slightly large sori and a shape from the Jokyo to Genroku period. Among them, sometimes, there are outstandingly long blades like this katana.

Nagayuki's jihada are a tight refined ko-itame hada. There are fine ji-nie, chikei, and sometimes midare utsuri.

Nagayuki's early works have a short length of around 2 shaku 1.2 sun with sori in the upper half, and this is a shape from the latter half of the Muromochi period, or a katate-uchi uchigatana shape. The hamon are double gunome which is a copy of the Sue-Bizen smith Sukesada's Hamon. In the case of a choji midare hamon like the one on this katana, this style hamon is often mixed with an open valley midare hamon and this is a major characteristic point.

Nagayuki's choji midare hamon are mixed with open valley choji, the hamon's width at the high and low points are not very different, the choji clusters are close to each other, and the hamon from the moto to the point has a fairly even width, and there is a gorgeous midare hamon.

There are frequent ashi and yo, a tight nioiguchi, and both the jihada and hamon are bright and clear.

Many of Nagayuki's boshi are midarekomi, the tip is sharp, and there is a return.

This is typical of his work, and a masterpiece, and the majority of people voted for Nagayuki. Besides Nagayuki, a few people voted for Fukuoka Ishido smiths such as Korekazu and Moritsugu.

Among the Ishido school smiths, many katana are wide, and the widths at the moto and saki are different, and there is a large sori. Their jihada are itame, and the entire jihada can show nagare and masame hada. Their hamon are based on

gunome described as something “like a squid’s head”, and the middle of the choji clusters swell up or balloon up, and the tip of the boshi is sharp. There are unique saka-choji and a midare hamon.

In some places their hamon have a very high reach and almost extend over the shinogi, and the round shapes (something like yo) inside of the hamon produces an appearance that suggests it is not hard. Their boshi are midarekomi with a long return.

Explanation by Hinohara Dai