

**NBTHK SWORD JOURNAL**  
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**Meito Kansho**  
**Examination of important swords**

**Juyo Bunkazai**

Type: Wakizashi

Mumei: attributed to the Masamune school  
Owned by Mori Kinen Shusui Museum

Length: 1 shaku 7 sun 6 bu 2 rin (53.4 cm)

Sori: 4 bu 6 rin (1.4 cm)

Motohaba: 8 bu 8 rin (2.65 cm)

Sakihaba: 6 bu 5 rin (1.95 cm)

Motokasane: 1 bu 9 rin (0.55 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu 5 rin (0.45 cm)

Kissaki length: 9 bu 6 rin (2.9 cm)

Nakago length: 4 sun 2 bu 2 rin (12.8 cm)

Nakago sori: very slight

**Commentary**

This is a shinogi zukuri wakizashi with an ihorimune, a standard width, thin, and the widths at the moto and saki are not too different. There is a large sori and a chu-kissaki. The jihada is itame with some mokume hada, and the entire jihada is well forged. There are thick dense ji-nie and frequent chikei. The hamon is ko-notare mixed with ko-gunome, and in some places it is suguha. The entire hamon is a low midare hamon. There are ashi, a dense nioiguchi, dense rough small uneven nie, kinsuji, nie-suji, frequent sunagashi, and yubashiri. The boshi is yakikuzure, yakizume, and the entire boshi has hakikake. The horimono on both the omote and ura are bo-hi and soe-hi carved through the nakago. The nakago is shortened to a great extent (suriage), and the nakago tip is an iriyama-gata. The yasurime are a slightly shallow o-suji chigai and there are four mekugi-ana, and one is closed. On the omote side there are five mekugi-ana, but one mekugi-ana is not drilled all the way through the nakago. The blade is mumei.

Sagami no Kuni Goro Nyudo Masamune is known as a great master smith in the Japanese sword world. He is renown as a master smith outside of the sword

collector's world as well. He not only inherited Kunimitsu's and Yukimitsu's nie based Soshu Den style, but also elevated the sword into an art object. In the Edo period, he was known as one of the "three great master smiths" along with Awataguchi Yoshimitsu and Go Yoshihiro. The Edo period sword book "Kyoho Meibutsu Cho" lists the 235 best blades in Japan, and Masamune has 59 blades listed among these.

According to an old story, he is supposed to have passed away in the early Nambokucho period in Koei 2 (1343). Also according to the sword book "Meibutsu Edo Cho-mei (blades with long signatures)" there was supposed to be a Masamune blade which was lost in the Meireki period's great fire which was supposed to have had a date of Showa 3 (1343). From this fact, and following commonly accepted opinions, it is not a great mistake to consider Masamune's active period as being primarily around the end of the Kamakura period.

Today, his existing famous four signed tanto are the "Meibutsu Fudo Masamune" classified as Juyo Bunkazai, two emperor's family tanto called "Kyogoku" and "Daikoku", and "Honjo". The rest of his many blades are now largely suriage and mumei. His katana have a standard width and a chu-kissaki, or sometimes are wide with a long chu-kissaki. His jihada are moist appearing (uruoi), and there are dense ji-nie. He mixed soft and hard steels, and as a result there are many chikei. There were no restrictions or limits to the styles he used, such as we have seen in smith's work in later periods, and Masamune's work is natural appearing. If you see a Bizen choji midare hamon which is very clearly visually defined, a Masamune hamon could be described as having an "abstract beauty". Masamune's hamon exhibit all kinds of shapes and some might say there was no obvious limits or controls in defining the hamon. Dr. Honma's description of Masamune's hamon was expressed with one kanji "狂" which roughly translates as eccentric. His hamon are free or unconstrained, exuberant, and uncontrolled, but never lose their dignity. We could say that this really expresses his value, and this is the reason why Masamune's work is not like anyone else's.

Also, there is no question that his hamon nie are the best appearing, with small and large sized nie, strong and weak nie, interesting nie kuzure, and mixed with nie suji, yubashiri, and tobiyaki. But also, his hamon nioiguchi and nie work together, with a moist appearing nioiguchi. The wide and narrow nioiguchi width shows movement and variation, and many themes or variety appear in the hamon. Conventionally, people used to say that his hamon appeared like sumie (a brush and ink landscape painting) and was a dynamic hamon. This is his unique and most interesting point, and people recognized that no other smith was able to follow the high artistic level of his work.

This blade is gentle looking for a Masamune wakizashi and we do not see a wild hamon. However, there is a moist appearing itame-had and chikei everywhere, and the refined forging is very special, and there is a delicate contrast of nie and bright nie mixed together, which is never seen in other Soshu Den master smith work. There are kinsuji and nie-suji, a dynamic boshi, and a feeling of intense movement,

but the entire blade still maintains its feeling of sophistication. Along with its reserve and quietness, there is an uplifting feeling. This is an admirable work from the Soshu Den.

Explanation and picture by Ishii Akira.

## **No.726 Tosogu Kanshou Juyo Tosogu Tsuba**

**Gama sennin (an old and wise person accompanied by a frog) kawazu gassen (battle)**

**Mei: Keio 2 (1866) Tora, 8 gatsu Katsumi (plus kao)**

The frog fighting season is early summer. On the omote's right side is a bright gold frog petitioning the Gama sennin (an old or wise person accompanied by a frog), and the sennin seems to be seriously listening. On the left side, a large frog is accompanied by another frog, and behind a rock this second frog extends his neck and appears to be a guard. Your eye is drawn to the ura side. Turn the tsuba over and there is a surprise: enraged frogs are energetically fighting. They put a lotus and sedge on a gold stick and fight vigorously.

In order to explain this scene, this is my feeling: On the omote side, the gold colored frog consulting the sennin is a princess frog. On the ura side, the entire country is in the midst of fighting, and one of the government frogs or official frogs is carefully watching this. This design is influenced by the Choju-jinbutsu-kiga, (a painting) in which all types of animals are personified. Katsumi is excellent at producing this kind of representation. The tsuba omote surface is done in a sukedashi takabori engraving with high volume surfaces, and the ura is a precise katakiri-bori engraving style. On the omote there is a lot of colored metal, while the ura side uses only use gold for accents. Both the omote and ura contain a delicate shishiai-bori engraving, and both sides show quite different textures. The complete story is shown very carefully and definitively.

Keio 2 is supposed to be when Katsumi retired. Looking at this work, and examining the excellent engraving work, it would seem that he had no reason to retire. From the nakago ana, the upper and lower parts have a red color, indicating that he belonged to the Toshusai school. From a young age, he studied at the Kano school, he liked Gidayu (old style songs and music), and studied Shibata Zeshin makie, and finally joined the Ito school. In his turbulent world he experienced many things, and many of his works are full of wit and are cheerful just like this one, which give us a very interesting impression.

His tomb supposed to be in the Yanaka Cemetery. I often pass by the area, and one of these days, I will take time to visit his tomb and pray.

Explanation by Kubo Yasuko

## Shijo Kantei To No. 726

The deadline to submit answers for the No. 726 issue Shijo Kantei To is August 5, 2017. 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 to this magazine. Votes postmarked on or before August 5, 2017 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.

### Description:

Type: tanto

Length: slightly over 9 sun 8 bu (29.8 cm)

Sori: 2 bu (0.61cm)

Motohaba: 9 bu 2 rin (2.8 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 3 rin (0.7 cm)

Nakago length: 3 sun 2 bu 7 rin (9.9 cm)

Nakago sori: 3 rin (0.1 cm)

The tanto omote is hira-zukuri, and the ura is kiriha zukuri, and there is a mitsumune. It is slightly wide, slightly long, and somewhat thick, and there is a shallow sori. The jihada is a itame mixed with mokume hada, and the entire jihada is visible. There are ji-nie, frequent chikei, there are different colored jifu type areas, and a slightly dark jihada. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. There is a little hotsure at the edge of the hamon, along with ko-ashi, frequent nie, some rough areas, kinsuji, and sunagashi. The horimono, on the omote is a katana-hi carved through the nakago, and above this there is a suken ukibori (relief). On the ura there is a kasanebori (two different carvings placed together) with bonji, kuwagata, and rendai. The nakago is ubu and the nakago tip is kurijiri. The yasurime are katte-sagari, and there are four mekugi ana. On the omote side, there are three lines of kanji, which describes the goal in making the tanto and the name of the iron which was used.

This is an utsushi-mono, and the only existing utsushimono we have from this smith. Usually, his nakago tips are a kengyo type iriyamagata.

## **Teirei Kanshou Kai For June, 2017**

The swords discussed below were shown in the June, 2017, meeting at the NBTHK headquarters building. This discussion presents observations and comments about these blades.

Meeting Date: June 10, 2017 (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of June)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan auditorium

Lecturer: Hinohara Dai

Please note that this is a special meeting and there are 5 Kanshou To or swords for appreciation along with 5 Kantei To swords for study, so there are 10 swords being presented and discussed at this meeting.

### **Kansho To: there are 5 swords for the Kanshou group:**

Tachi: Mei Yasutsuna

Tachi: Mei Koretomo (Ko-Aoe); Tokubetsu Juyo Token

Tachi: Mei Yoshifusa with reference oshigata

Katana: orikaeshi-mei Norifusa; Juyo Bijutsuhin

Tachi: Mei Rai Kunitsugu; Tokubetsu Juyo Token

### **Kantei To: there are 5 swords for the Kantei group:**

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

#### **Juyo Bijutsuhin**

Mei: Kunimura

Length: 2 shaku 5 sun 7.5 bu

Sori: slightly less than 1 sun 1 bu

Style: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame mixed with some nagareha. There are ji-nie and whitish utsuri.

Hamon:suguha mixed with ko-choji and ko-gunome. There are frequent ashi and yo, ko-nie, and a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: the omote is straight and has a ko-maru; the ura has a small round tip and a large kaeri or return.

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

Mumei: Kanemitsu

Length: 2 shaku 2 sun 5 bu

Sori: 5 bu

Design: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

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

Hamon: notare type hamon mixed with gunome and ko-gunome. There are ashi, yo and ko-nie.

Boshi: midarekomi and the tip is togari or pointed or sharp.

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

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

Kinzogan mei: Morikage

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 3 sun

Sori: 5 bu

Style: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: itame hada mixed with mokume hada; the entire hada is visible; there are ji-nie, chikei and midare utsuri.

Hamon: based on a ko-notare hamon mixed with square shape ko-gunome, ko-gunome, and ko-togariba. There is a worn down nioiguchi and ko-nie.

Boshi: midarekomi: the tip is sharp and there is a return; there are hakikake.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are bo-hi sloping down towards the edge, and the tip of the hi drops down.

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

Mei: Bishu Osafune Moromitsu

Eiwa 2 (1376) nen 6 gatsu (below this the nakago is suriage)

Length: slightly less than 2 shaku 4 sun 2 bu

Sori: slightly over 6 bu

Design: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: itame mixed with nagare hada, and the entire jihada is visible. There are ji-nie, jifu, a dark jihada, and midare utsuri.

Hamon: ko-notare mixed with ko-gunome, ko-choji, and ko-togariba. There are ashi and yo, and the entire hamon is small. There are ko-nie, and sunagashi.

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

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are bo-hi sloping down.

### **Kantei To No 5: tachi Juyo Bijutsuhin**

Mei: Koryaku gan-nen (1379) 8 gatsu bi Kaneyoshi

Length: 2 shaku 1 sun 9 bu

Sori: 6 bu

Design: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame hada: there are fine ji-nie, and pale bo-utsuri.

Hamon: from the moto to the tip there is a continuous shallow notare hamon; there are ko-gunome and ko-togari.

Boshi: midarekomi with togari.

Up until this meeting, we have always had our usual Teirei Kansho Kai meeting, and showed Kansho To and Kantei To to the attendees, and provided the attendees with three chances to vote for the maker. Because this is our last meeting at the Yoyogi Token Museum, this will be a special session, and I will talk about how the characteristic tachi shape changes when going from the end of the Heian period into the Kamakura period and to the end of the Nambokucho period.

For this Kantei To meeting, we selected five blades covering the period going from the end of the Heian period to the early and late Nambokucho periods, and we will examine and compare them.

Of course, some of these blades are mumei or are mumei blades attributed to a specific smith, but we are exhibiting blades which should provide good examples of the shapes seen in these periods.

This view of the evolution of tachi shapes reflects my personal opinion and observations, and this is not the view of everyone on the NBTHK staff. Possibly many of the people who appreciate and study swords think this evolution in shapes was a natural and obvious evolution occurring over time. However, one Japanese sword researcher told me that the shapes of Japanese tachi and katana in the beginning were narrow, and as time passed, the shapes gradually became wider,

and then reached a maximum at one point. After reaching this maximal width, the shapes started to gradually become narrow again. Eventually, after reaching their narrowest widths, they became wider again. Then, over a period of history, the shapes of these swords again repeated this pattern.

Looking at the Nambokucho tachi and katana shapes in many sword books, we only see a large kissaki with the Embun-Joji period shape. However, if you look carefully at the swords here, there are supposed to be at least five different shapes represented in the 5 Kantei To we have here.

The first tachi is from the end of the Kamakura to the early Nambokucho period and has a standard width and kissaki. The second katana is wide with a long kissaki, and the shape is from around the early Nambokucho period. The third katana is the widest with a large kissaki, and is a typical Embun-Joji style, and that was the peak period in which we can see that type of shape.

Next, we see a different and changed shape which is narrow with a small kissaki. The fourth tachi is narrower than the Embun-Joji shape, has a smaller kissaki, and has an Eiwa (1375-78) period shape. Finally, with the fifth tachi, we see the most slender shape here with a small kissaki, and this is a shape from the end of the Nambokucho period. Of course there are many dated blades available from this period, and based on these, we can classify blades by using their shapes.

In Japan, there are not many dated swords from the end of the Heian to the mid-Kamakura period. From around the latter half of the Kamakura period in Sho-o 2 (1289), many of the dated swords we have are mostly from Bizen. Among the Nambokucho period blades we can define or recognize five styles. The Nambokucho period was only around 60 years long, and during this time, sword shapes changed in the manner described above.

The first part of the Shinto period is from the battle of Sekigahara to the end of the Genroku period (1600-1703), or about 100 years. In historical times, people clearly recognized or only classified some specific swords from this period as Keicho Shinto and Kanbun Shinto. However, from about 30 years ago, people began to classify Shinto shapes as 1) Keicho Shinto, work from around the Kanei to Shoho periods, 2) Kanbun Shinto, and 3) work from around the Jokyo to the Genroku period.

Even in historical periods, some researchers classified Shinto swords from around the Genna period (1615-23) as a characteristic style. They are similar to Keicho Shinto swords at the first impression. However, they are narrower than Keicho Shinto and have a smaller kissaki. But compared with the Kanei to Shoho (1624-54) period Shinto work, they are wide and the kissaki are large, and they define a transition period shape.

It is my personal opinion (and not an official NBTHK opinion) that it is reasonable to say that in the period around the Genna period (1615-1623), Shinto blades have a characteristic style. If I accept this theory, we can define five sword styles in these 100 years. Classifying a shape by examining small details is similar to observing styles in the jihada and hamon, and this can lead us to study other

aspects of the swords, and we can develop and improve our methods for examining and analyzing swords.

Twenty years ago, I started lecturing at NBTHK branch offices. At one of the branch lectures, I brought a Nanki Shigekuni katana to exhibit, and discussed the Keicho Shinto shape. One of the branch members observed that, for a Keicho Shinto, the width was one sun too narrow and the kissaki was small.

At that time, I thought that he was focusing too much on such small details, but today I think his observations were correct, and that this type of detail is important and can help us understand the swords and their history.

Among the Keicho Shinto smiths, we see many kinds of work. For example, Horikawa Kunihiro's active period was Tensho 1 to around Keicho 18 (1573-1613). Nanki Shigekuni's active time is supposed to have been around the end of Keicho to around Kanei 10 (1614-33). However, even though they are both considered to be Keicho Shinto smiths, they are almost one generation apart.

Kunihiro has many typical Keicho Shinto shaped blades. However, many of Nanki Shigekuni's blades have a narrower shape. Sometimes we see a Nanki Shigekuni work with a typical Keicho shape blade, and this is his early work or a Suruga-uchi blade (an early blade made when he was working in Suruga).

If we can define or recognize five styles in the Nambokucho period's 60 years, and the Shinto period's first 100 years, I wonder if it is possible to recognize or define additional sword shapes and details during the 140 years of the Kamakura period by paying attention to the early, middle and late periods. From the swords we have and reference oshigata, I personally would speculate that specific sword shapes existed in specific periods and suggest that defined shapes existed in periods from the end of the Heian to the early Kamakura; from around the mid-Kamakura period; the peak of the Kamakura period; after the peak of the Kamakura period; and the latter part of the Kamakura period. Today, the five Kansho To come from these periods.

Compared with Yasutsuna's tachi with a narrow shape and a small kissaki at the end of the Heian to the early Kamakura period, a Ko-Aoe Koretomo tachi is wider with an inokubi kissaki. The hamon is wider than usual for Ko-Aoe work, and there are prominent choji in a beautiful active hamon. There are Ko-Aoe tachi examples from the early Kamakura period which are wide, such as the Kitsune-ga-saki Tametsugu classified as Kokuho. At a Tokubetsu Juyo level shinsa, it was concluded that this blade was made before the mid-Kamakura period.

As a typical inokubi kissaki example from the peak of the Kamakura period, I consider the Fukuoka Ichimonji Yoshifusa to be a reference or standard. Regarding the inokubi kissaki shape, other researchers have said that they were only made from the mid-Kamakura period and primarily from around the Koan period (1278-87), which is a very short time to define a characteristic shape. This theory's main foundation is built on a Kunitoshi tachi owned by the Tokyo National Museum with a two kanji signature dated Koan 1 (1278).

Considering Kamakura period tachi shape classifications, I cannot actually prove my ideas. The reason is that there are very few dated works available. The Niji (two kanji signature) Kunitoshi works include many inokubi kissaki examples.

In Kyoto work, among the six Awataguchi brothers, Kuniyasu's and Kunitsuna's work has a few wide blades, although there are mumei tachi which are judged as Awataguchi. Usually among their signed tachi, we do not see wide blades with an inokubi kissaki. From the Rai school, the Niji Kunitoshi's father Kuniyuki has an inokubi kissaki example. However, Kuniyuki does not have many inokubi kissaki, and most of his swords have a standard width or are wide.

Some historical sword books list Kuniyuki's inokubi kissaki work from Shogen 1 (1259) and Buno (1260). If he made inokubi tachi at this time, that means that smiths continued making this style to the end of the Koan period (1287) for less than 30 years. If Kuniyuki was active from the mid-Bunei period (1264-74) until the end of the Koan period, that was less than 20 years. In the next Sho-o period (1288-92), tachi with a standard width or close to a standard width become mainstream.

From these observations, this theory about inokubi kissaki appears reasonable: i.e. they were made for between 20 to 30 years as a mainstream shape or style.

The next Norifusa katana can be compared to Yoshifusa's typical inokubi kissaki tachi: it is narrow, and the kissaki is small. This type of shape is described at the NBTHK as slightly wide, and the widths at the moto and saki are not very different, and there is a short inokubi style chu-kissaki.

Of course this shape is not from the latter half of the Kamakura period. This is a mid-Kamakura shape. But in same mid-Kamakura period, if we compare this with the Yoshifusa tachi, the shape is different.

Similarly, in the Nambokucho period, typical Enbun-Joji shapes are seen only during a short period; in the mid-Kamakura period, a typical inokubi kissaki is seen over a short period. That period is supposed to represent the peak of Kamakura period work. After that, the tachi shape is supposed to change from narrow to wide again, and then change to narrow again.

These stories are speculation, because as I explained, there are almost no dated works available.

On the other hand, in this period with almost no dated work, from styles and signatures one person has classified details and matched them with specific periods.

In historical times people used to say that Mitsutada swords had inokubi kissaki and kawazuko-choji. Nagamitsu's works have a standard width, and have choji mixed with gunome. Today there are some opinions that judging from the shape and style, Nagamitsu's work could be classified into four distinct styles using their shapes as a guide.

For undated works like these, if we can analyze and classify a smith's work by style, signature, and other details, we may be able to understand more about sword history and fashions and trends, and provide a more organized or systematic history for the evolution of Japanese swords. Hopefully in the future we

will find more examples and documentation and will be able to more fully understand and document the evolution of Japanese swords.

This is the last Teirei Kanshio Kai meeting at the Yoyogi Token Museum, so we are having a special meeting format today.

This is an unusual presentation for this last meeting here at Yoyogi. The next Teirei Kanshokai will be in November at the new museum in Ryogoku. From November, we will return to our usual meeting format.

This regular meeting format began around Showa 20 (1945) in the Tokyo National Museum, and later moved to the Yoyogi Token Museum and it has been there for 50 years now.

Initially, Dr. Honma Kunzan and Sato Kanzan and many other lecturers gave their talks here.

My first attendance at this meeting was 35 years ago, and there were four senior lecturers then. They were Tanobe Michihiro, Takayama Takeshi, Kobayashi Terumasa and Suzuki Takuro. These are my personal recollections, and I greatly enjoyed working under them and learning from them.

We appreciate all of the people attending these meetings and we are happy that they continued to attend for all of this time until today. We greatly appreciate our fortune and opportunities and wish to thank all of the people who have participated over all of these years.

Our next meeting will be in November at Ryogoku, and we look forward to seeing you there.

## **Shijo Kantei To No. 724 (in the May, 2017 issue)**

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 724 in the May issue is a katana by Omi daijo Tadahiro dated Kanei 2 (1625).

This blade is slightly wide, and the widths at the moto and saki are not very different. It is an almost standard length, but the sori is somewhat large and about 6 sun. There is a chu-kissaki.

The jihada is tight ko-itame, there are thick dense ji-nie, fine chikei, and a unique jihada which is Hizen's komenuka hada. The hamon is suguha with a very clear wide belt-like nioiguchi, and there are nie. The boshi is parallel to the fukura, and there is a komaru and return.

This is a typical Hizen-to suguha work. The style was supposed to have been established around the Shodai Tadayoshi's Musashi Daijo Tadahiro period.

In voting, a majority of people voted for Omi Daijo Tadahiro. Besides his name, some people voted for Musashi Daijo Tadahiro (the Shodai Tadayoshi).

As I explained the Shodai Tadahiro has many suguha swords like this. His nakago tip is iriyamagata, the yasurime are kiri, but he does have a few katte-sagari yasurime swords. So at this time, the Shodai Tadahiro (the Shodai Tadayoshi) is treated as a correct answer.

But the Shodai's Tadayoshi period nakago tips are kurijiri, and most of his yasurime are a shallow katte-sagari or katte-sagari. He made all kinds of suguha hamon including classic style suguha hamon. It is likely that he made only a few with this kind of belt-like style suguha hamon.

For an almost correct answer, a few people voted for the Sandai Tadayoshi. In his early work, there are iriyamagata nakago tips, but later nakago tips are kurijiri. His yasurime are always katte-sagari, and this is different from the hints.

However, the Sandai Tadayoshi has long, wide, strongly shaped swords, a style which we almost never see in the Nidai's work. His jihada has prominently strong chikei hataraki. His jihada and hamon both have very abundant nie, and many of the nie are bright and clear. Some of his suguha are excellent, and better than the Nidai's.

The Hizen To characteristic points since the Shodai Musashi Daijo Tadahiro's period are: the widths at the moto and saki are not very different; a large sori; and a prominent Hizen To unique shape. This style was inherited by the Nidai Tadahiro, the Sandai Tadahiro, Masahiro, Yukihiro, and Tadakuni.

The Nidai Tadahiro's active period was from the Kanei to the Genroku period which was a long career. Among the Shinto smiths, and even among historical Japanese sword smiths, he produced the largest number of swords, and many of his swords are available today.

The shapes are a unique Hizen To shape. There are almost no typical Kanbun Shinto shapes or the Jokyo to Genroku period Shinto shapes. Sometimes we see Kanei to Shoho period Shinto shapes, but there are very few of these.

This katana is dated Kanei 12. Among the large number of swords he produced, the Omi Daijo does not have very many dated swords. But we have seen his dated swords from the Kanei, Shoho, Keian, Sho-o, Meireki, Banji, Kanbun, Empo, and Tenna periods. There are a notable number of dated swords from Kanei period. From my experience, about half of his dated swords are from the Kanei period. Also, during his career, many of his excellent works seems to have been made during the Kanei period.

Explanation by Hinohara Dai

**NOTE CONCERNING THE SHIJO KANTEITO MAILING ADDRESS:**

Since the Token Museum is moving, the address to send the Shijo Kanteito card to will change. From the September issue (No.728), the address will be at the new location in Sumida-ku, Tokyo.