

# NBTHK SWORD JOURNAL

## ISSUE NUMBER 731

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### Meito Kansho: Examination of Important Swords

#### Classification: Jujo Bijutsuhin

Type: Katana

Mei: Hounou Izumo no kuni Hinomisaki-reijin  
Ono Hankei

Owner: Hinomisaki Shrine

Maintained at the Izumo City Museum of Culture and Tradition

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 5 bu 8 rin (71.45 cm)

Sori: 5 bu 9 rin (1.8 cm)

Motohaba: 1 sun 1 rin (3.05 cm)

Sakihaba: 7 bu 8 rin (2.35 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 2 rin (0.65 cm)

Sakikasane: 2 bu (0.6 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 6 bu 2 rin (4.9 cm)

Nakago length: 6 sun 4 bu 7 rin (19.6 cm)

Nakago sori: 7 rin (0.2 cm)

#### Commentary

This is a wide shinogi zukuri katana with a mitsumune, and the widths at the moto and saki are not too different. There is a wide shinogi-ji and the blade is thick. There is a large sori and a large kissaki. The jihada is itame mixed with a large pattern itame, and there are mokume-hada and nagare-hada, and in some places the jihada is visible. There are abundant dense ji-nie and frequent chikei. The hamon is based on notare mixed with ko-gunome. There are ashi, yo, a dense nioiguchi, dense somewhat uneven nie, kinsuji, nie-suji, and frequent sunagashi. Some areas around the edge of the hamon are rough appearing. There are tobiyaki and yubashiri, and the entire hamon has a somewhat worn nioiguchi. The boshi has a wide yakiba formed in nie-kuzure, and the entire boshi has prominent hakikake. The nakago is ubu, and the nakago tip is yaku-kengyo. The yasurime on the omote are o-suji chigai and on the ura they are gyaku-o-suji chigai. There is one

mekugi-ana. On the omote side on the center there is a shrine's name, and the ura has a four kanji signature.

There are historical sword books covering Hankei's history. According these books, he was born in Mikawa, his name was Noda Zenshiro Kiyooki, and in Tensho18 (1590) he moved to Edo at the same time that Ieyasu moved to Edo, but some people think he moved to Hachio-ji just outside of Edo. He became a student at the Agari Sohachiro school and improved his gunsmith skills. In Keicho 12 (1607) Ieyasu retired and moved to Sunpu and Hankei followed him. After Ieyasu passed away, he returned to Edo's Teppo-cho ("gun town"). The Agari school followed Ieyasu to Edo along with other Mikawa merchants and craftsmen, and worked as okakae (craftsmen who worked for the shogunate) gunsmiths, and had been working for Ieyasu since Ieyasu's time in Mikawa. The Agari school managed the gunsmiths along the Sumida river in Teppo-cho. According the sword book "Shinto Bengi", Hankei's family livelihood was gun making, and since his father's and grandfather's generation, the Noda family was working for the Agari school, and they were supposed to move west to Sunpu with Ieyasu. There is a theory that the reason Hankei followed Ieyasu to Sunpu was because Ieyasu ordered Agari Sohachiro (the head of the school) to move with him to his new residence and continue gun making, but Agari excused himself because of his advanced age, and recommended his student Hankei follow Ieyasu instead of him.

During Hankei's gunsmith profession, he used the name "Kiyooki" and today there are 15 of his guns left. The earliest one is dated Keicho 15 (1610) and the latest one is dated Keicho 20 (1615). Among these guns, there are a couple of honno guns (donated to shrines), which are at the Nukisaki Jinja (shrine) in Gunma, the Izumo Taisha (Izumo Great Shrine) in Shimane, and the Sumiyoshi Taisha in Osaka. Hinomisaki Jinja in Shimane which owns this katana has a honno gun dated Keicho 17(1612).

Associated or connected with the honno gun in Genna 4 and 5 (1618-19), the shrine has Hankei's own written paper and a thank you note both signed with the name Kiyooki. According to the papers, the idea for the honno (donated to the shrine) gun was the second shogun Hidetada's idea, and the shogunate requested Hankei to make the gun. However during the Kiyooki signature period, there are a few Hankei katana and wakizashi. It is not known if he made swords as a hobby, or for someone's order, but he signed with the same kao he used on his guns.

His full transition to becoming a sword smith and changing his name to "Hankei" is supposed to have occurred between Genna 6 (1620) and Kanei 1 (1624). The Kongo Sanmai-in Temple in Wakayama has two blades with the Hankei signature classified as Juyo Bunkazai. Along with these swords there are papers with Hankei's name, (although some people think the papers were written by someone else for him), dated Kanei 1(1624), and also Hinomisaki jinja (shrine) documents.

Hankei's "han" kanji has two shapes or styles called "ro-mata" and "ru-mata", and usually the ro-mata style is seen in his earlier work. The kanji on the Kongo Sanmai-in sword is in the ru-mata style, so possibly he used the his ro-mata kanji style for only 4-5 years which is a short time.

This katana shows his early ro-mata kanji style. The details of how the honno-to (sword) at Hinomisaki Shrine arrived there are uncertain. However, since he produced honno guns for donations to shrines, it is thought that the swords came from Hankei to show his faith or dedication to the shrine. Sumiyoshi Taisha has the same kind of honno-to which is classified as Juyo-bunkazai. Usually Hankei's shapes are wide but the kissaki are standard proportions. The Sumiyoshi Shrine's sword is wide, long, has a large kissaki and a dynamic shape. This katana has Hankei's characteristic style, with a wide machi, prominent chikei, a large pattern jihada, and a hamon with abundant nie. Some parts of the hamon's nioiguchi are not clear, the entire hamon nioiguchi is worn down, there are prominent kinsuji and sunagashi, and a robust strong shape. However, his characteristic small gaps or breaks (ware) in the jihada are not seen. He donated the honno-to to the shrine, and he signed on the omote and ura, and signed the shrine's founding family name "Ono" which he usually does not do. For a honno-to this is an elaborate work, and has the feeling of a masterpiece.

The Hinomisaki Shrine is listed as the "Misagi Shrine" in the "Izumo kuni fudo-ki" (records of the natural features of Izumo)" and is supposed to have been founded in Nara period or earlier. The shrine is known for the unusual composition of its upper and lower shrines: the upper shrine (Kami-no-miya) is dedicated to the diety Susano-no-mikoto, and the lower shrine (Hishizumi-miya) is dedicated to Amaterasu-omi-no-kami. The shrine has had peaks and valleys during its existence, but since its founding, it has received respect from the imperial court and shogunate and has been prosperous. In the Meiji period they received a large amount land from the government, next in size to the Izumo Taisha shrine's land area. The shrine has a special ceremony "Shinken-Hoten" every year at the end of the year. According to the book "Japanese gods, shrines and holy ground in the Sanin" written by Tanigawa Kenichi and published by Hakusui-sha in Showa 60, the diety Susano-no-mikoto killed a mythical serpent Yamato-no-orochi, and recovered the Amano-murakumo-no-tsurugi (the Kusanagi-no-tsurugi or from the serpents tail. The Ono family's main god has been in the shrine since ancient times, and their ancestor Amano-fukine-no-mikoto consecrated the tsurugi (tachi) to Amaterasu omi-no-kami for his mission. The Ono family has held the shrine's ceremony since the earliest historical times from December 25<sup>th</sup> for 7 days. The chief priest prays, and on mid-night on December 31, he climbs Amakazu Mountain in front of the shrine by himself, and performs a ceremony. The shrine's ceremony has been continued without a break since ancient times to today. Whatever the weather is, even heavy rain and snow, the sky becomes clear as soon as the ceremony starts, and the chief priest's ceremonial clothes never become wet. Indeed, this is an appropriate shrine to have this masterpiece sword.

Explanation and picture by Ishii Akira.

## No.731 Tosogu Kanshou Juyo Tosogu

Choji with shika zu (clove blossom and deer design) ko-gai

**Mumei: Komino**

One of my acquaintances sent me an image of NBTHK's old museum building just before its demolition, and possibly when this article comes out, there will be no more building but just an empty lot. All of the sudden I felt lonely, and decided to write about this kogai.

The NBTHK has a small tosogu collection when compared to the sword collection, and I would say it has almost nothing. Some people entrust their collection to the NBTHK and this is our lifeline. Every time we have an exhibition, we have to visit collector's homes seeking items for the exhibit. This kogai is one of a very few tosogu items acquired since the NBTHK museum was founded. Also, this is the first old kogai I looked at, and I appreciate another encounter with this kogai.

This is a good example from the Muromachi period and of Ko-Mino characteristic work. This is slightly narrow, ubu (in its original unaltered condition), and has a long shape. The neck part (the part at the top of the hilt leading to the ear cleaning implement on the top) is narrow, and from the neck to shoulder (the top of the hilt section) there is a gentle slope. From the trunk ("do" or hilt portion) to the kijimata (top of the blade portion) to the tip (at the bottom of the blade portion) the kogai is well rounded but has a minimal nikuoki. Compared with the front, the back is flat, and the entire kogai is classically elegant and at the same time a dynamic work. The top of the kogai with its ear cleaning implement is prominent with its straight lines. There are very fine nanako, and this is a good example of the Mino school's work. Each type of work is supposed to follow certain standards, but the kogai has many subtle individual details. High quality old kogai made before the Muromachi period have a special charm, and if they are made by different schools, there are some similarities, but usually there are one or two different or unique characteristic points. This kogai was classified as Juyo Tosogu in Showa 50, and at that time this was called an autumn flowering plant with a deer design. But if you look at it carefully, this kogai does not show an autumn flowering plant, but seems to show choji (clove) seeds and flowers.

In my opinion, the best depiction of deer in the art world is in Koetsu's writing and Sotatsu's picture called "Shika shitae waka kan". The art showing this kind of work is scattered, and half of the collection of Masuda Donou, a collector, went to the Seattle Museum, and half went to several famous museums in Japan. The work on Sotatsu's picture shows a magnificent and strong group of deer which seem to melt into the black ink painting. It is a masterpiece, and exhibits a real Japanese feeling. But the deer on the kogai may be more cheerful and welcoming. Autumn is about over, and now the New Year is coming, along with the time for the new museum's opening exhibit.

Explanation Kubo Yasuko

## Shijo Kantei To No. 731

The deadline to submit answers for the No. 731 issue Shijo Kantei To is January 5, 2018. 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 January 5, 2018 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 9 bu (69.39 cm)

Sori: 5 bu (1.52cm)

Motohaba: 1 sun 04 rin (3.15 cm)

Sakihaba: 6 bu 8 rin (2.05 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 6 rin (0.8 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu 5 rin (0.45 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 2 bu 7 rin (3.85 cm)

Nakago length: 7 sun 1 bu (21.51 cm)

Nakago sori: slight

This katana is a shinogi-zukuri style with an ihorimune. It is wide, and the widths at the moto and saki are not too different. The shinogi-ji is wide, and the shinogi is high. The blade is thick, there is a slightly large sori, a chu-kissaki, rich hiraniku, and this is a heavy katana. The jihada is a ko-itame mixed with ko-mokume, and entire jihada is rough. There are dense ji-nie, frequent chikei, and a slightly dark jihada. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. There are ashi, yo, a dense nioiguchi, abundant nie, prominent rough nie, kinsuji and fine sunagashi. The nakago is ubu and the nakago tip is a pronounced kurijiri. The yasurime are higaki, and there is one mekugi ana. On the omote side, under the habaki there is a mon, and under it there is long signature toward the mune edge.

Many of this smith's works have prominent thick niesuji.

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

The swords discussed below were shown in the November, 2017, meeting at the NBTHK headquarters building. This discussion presents answers concerning the makers of these blades.

Meeting Date: November 11, 2017 (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of November)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan auditorium

Lecturer: Kurotaki Tetsuya

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

Mei: Rai Kunimitsu

Length: 2 shaku 2 sun 7.5 bu

Sori: 8.5 bu

Style: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight itame, and in some places it is mixed with a large pattern jihada.

There are dense ji-nie, fine chikei, jifu, and nie utsuri.

Hamon: based on suguha and with ko-gunome, ko-choji, and gunome. There are frequent ashi and yo, abundant nie, kinsuji, sunagashi, and some yubashiri-like tobiyaki. There is a bright and clear nioiguchi.

Boshi: straight, and on the omote there is a komaru and return; the ura has togari ; both sides have fine hakikake around the tip.

At the koshimoto, the funbari is not very pronounced, and from this, you can judge this blade as being a little surigae. However, the entire tachi has a large sori, and is a wa-zori style, and from this you can see it is work from the latter half of the Kamakura period, and a Rai school characteristic point.

The hamon is based on suguha and has ko-gunome, and ko-choji. There are abundant ashi and yo. In some places, yubashiri-like tobiyaki form nijuba. There is a bright and clear nioiguchi. On the omote side in the center, there are "Kyo-saka-ashi". This means there are ashi slanted from the kissaki towards the nakago, the reverse direction of most slanted ashi or saka ashi. There are also abundant hataraki.

Looking at the jihada, the entire jihada is a tight itame, and there are nie utsuri extending from mune towards the hamon, and they appear to be dropping down

towards the hamon. The boshi is straight, the tip has komaru, and there is a gentle appearance.

From these characteristics, it is possible to judge this as Rai school work. The inside of the hamon has prominent round gunome, there is a chu-kissaki which is long, and from this, the Rai Kunimitsu name comes to mind.

In Genroku 12, on December 3, the fifth shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi visited Yanagisawa Dewa-no-kami Yasuaki who later changed his name to Yoshiyasu. At that time his son Yasusada, using the name Yoshisato, received the Juyoni title from the shogun. From the old sayagaki, at this same time we know that Yasuaki received this tachi from Tsunayoshi. Also Tokugawa shogun officials recorded this event in the "Tokugawa Jiki" and "Kansei Jushu shoka fu". This means the sayagaki writing is correct and consequently has a high value.

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

Mei: Rai Kunitsugu

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 4.5 bu

Sori: 1 sun 1 bu

Design: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame; some places have a dark kawari-tetsu steel. There are frequent ji-nie, fine chikei, and pale bo-utsuri.

Hamon: suguha with a shallow notare mixed with ko-choji, and ko-gunome. There are some kyo-saka-ashi, frequent ko-nie, and a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: straight, with a komaru and small return.

This tachi has a narrow shape with a chu-kissaki. The moto has funbari, there is a large koshizori, and the tip has sori, which suggests this shape is from around the end of the Kamakura period, and overall the entire tachi has a wazori curvature.

Please recognize these major Rai school characteristic points.

Examining the jihada we see that it is a tight refined ko-itame hada. There are abundant dense ji-nie, and pale bo-utsuri. The hamon is suguha mixed with ko-choji, ko-gunome and is a somewhat small hamon. There are also some kyo-saka-ashi and muneyaki. The jihada and the hamon show Rai school characteristic points very well. Rai Kunitsugu is legendarily one of Masamune's ju-tetsu (10 best students). His swords have a wider shape, and a Soshu-den type midare hamon with strong nie. That is why he is called "Kamakura Rai".

On the other hand, he also made narrow elegant shapes with suguha based gentle hamon which reminds us of his teacher Rai Kunitoshi, just like this tachi. In voting, many people were confused about this. In this vote, because of the very similar styles, Rai Kunitoshi and Ryokai's names were treated as correct answers. Kuniyuki and the 2 kanji Kunitoshi were treated as almost correct answers.

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

Kinzogan mei: Enju Kunitoki, Futatsudo saidan

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 6 bu

Sori: 6 bu

Style: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame, there is some nagarehada. There are ji-nie and fine chikei.

Hamon: chu-suguha mixed with choji and ko-gunome. There are frequent ashi and yo, ko-nie, kinsuji, sunagashi and it is bright and clear.

Boshi: on the omote and the ura it is a shallow notare; the omote point is an o-maru style while the ura is a komaru and both sides have a short return.

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

This katana does not have much funbari at the koshimoto, and this supposed to be suriage. The original shape has a standard width, and the widths at the moto and saki are not very different. The kissaki is a chu-kissaki, and though it is suriage, it still has a wa-zori shape. From this you can judge this work from the latter half of the Kamakura period.

The jihada is a tight ko-itame, there are fine chikei, ji-nie, and a bright jihada. The hamon is chu-suguha, there is a clear hamon and there are saka-ashi.

From the shape, jihada, hamon, the katana is probably Rai or Enju work. Actually, some people voted for Rai. But some places have a rougher surface, which we usually never see in the Rai jihada, there are no bo-utsuri, and there is not much hataraki compared with Rai work, and from these details, it is possible to narrow possibilities to the Enju name.

For the purpose of comparing this with the No.1 tachi, we bought this katana to this kanteito meeting. We hope you clearly understand the difference between these two blades' jihada and hamon.

This is from the former chairman Suzuki Kajo's collection, and is classified as Juyo Token.

### **Kantei To No 4: tanto**

Mei: Yoshimitsu

Length: 7 sun 2 bu

Sori: uchizori

Design: hirazukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jihada: tight ko-itame with some mokume-hada. There are abundant dense ji-nie, fine chikei, and bo-utsuri.

Hamon: based on a narrow suguha with ko-gunome; the hamon is narrow around the monouchi. There are small hotsure on the edge of hamon, yubashiri, a bright nioiguchi, frequent ko-nie and kinsuji.

Boshi: straight, with a komaru; the tip has fine hakikake and nie-suji.

This is an Awataguchi Yoshimitsu tanto. It is a little small, has a standard width, is uchizori, and from the sophisticated shape, you can judge this as mid-Kamakura period work. The jihada is a tight ko-itame, the iron is clear with a blue color, there are abundant ji-nie, and there is a very refined jihada. From the jihada, you can guess it was made one of several master smiths such as Rai Kunitoshi, Shintogo Kunimitsu or Awataguchi Yoshimitsu.

While keeping these names in mind, let's examine the hamon. The entire suguha hamon is gentle, and also sophisticated. Around the fukura area the hamon width becomes a bit narrow, and the yakidashi has a suggestion of a line of red beans and is a ko-gunome hamon. Among these smiths just mentioned, from these characteristic points, it is not too difficult to pick the name Toshiro Yoshimitsu.

Please examine the entire blade, and hopefully you will appreciate the beauty of the jihada and hamon and high level of perfection in this work.

## **Kantei To No 5: tanto**

Mei: Kunimitsu (Shintogo)

Length: 8 sun 2 bu

Sori: slight

Design: hirazukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jihada: itame mixed with mokume. There are thick dense ji-nie and bo-utsuri.

Hamon: chu-suguha with ko-ashi, a nioiguchi and frequent ko-nie.

Boshi: on the omote and the ura it is straight; on the omote there are nijuba, and on the ura it is kuichigai; both tips are sharp with a komaru and a long return.

This is a Shintogo Kunimitsu tanto. Since it is Shintogo's work, there is sori, and from this some people voted for Nambokucho smith names. Actually, this is an unusual shape for Shintogo's work.

But the main point is the jihada. The jihada is a tight itame, there dense abundant nie, frequent chikei, and strong forging, and we could say these are Shintogo's true characteristics. Also, there is a tight itame hada, and some places have ayasugi hada, and this is also one of his characteristic points.

On the omote and the ura, the gomabashi horimono are seen in Awataguchi work, and from this, some people voted for Awataguchi work. From the shape, and nijuba hamon, some people voted for Enju.

For a Shintogo Kunimitsu work, the tanto's jihada and hamon nie are gentle, the hataraki in the hamon, such as kinsuji are less abundant, and it is a quiet work. From this, the Awataguchi and Enju names are understandable. However, the jihada has fine chikei hataraki, there is some ayasuji hada, the hamon at the koshimoto has fine kinsuji, and these are usual Shintogo characteristic points. In addition, around the boshi we see what is called "Okina's beard" if you look for it, and this is a Shintogo Kunimitsu characteristic. This is a major characteristic point to use to narrow down the choice of Kunimitsu as the maker of this tanto.

We exhibited this tanto here, and hopefully you can recognize the difference in the jihada between this work and the No.4 tanto.

This was the first Token Kansho Kai at the new Token Hakubutsukan auditorium, and beside these kantei to, we exhibited another five blades for kansho-to (swords for appreciation):

1. Tachi: Mei, Kunimura (Enju)
2. Mumei Katana: Den Ryokai
3. Katana: Mei, Nakasone Okisato Kotetsu Nyudo  
Kinzougan: Banji 4 nen Uguki 19 nichi  
Yamano Kanjuro Narihisa (kao)
4. Katana: Mei, Nakasone Okimasa  
Kinzogan: Enpo 3 nen U 3 gatu 28 nichi  
Sunagawa Ibei Hisashige (kao)
5. Katana : Suishinshi Masahide

We also mentioned the location of Suishinshi Masahide's tomb.

His tomb is located in Saikoji, about 1 kilometer south of the new NBHTK museum in Sumida-ku, Chitose. However, the name on the tomb is "Suishinshi Amahide". The tomb's location is in Saikoji which was established in Keicho 10 (1606) for the Jodoshu sect.

In the new museum, next to the entrance, there is a bulletin board with information about exhibits which are being planned for the purpose of introducing sword smiths and gold smiths who were associated with this part of Tokyo, i.e. Sumida-Ku.

In addition, at the entrance there is an exhibit introducing sword making, the tatara, polishing, and koshirae and the mounting process, and these will be illustrated with videos. During the exhibit period, we will looking for new ideas for future exhibits.

## Shijo Kantei To No. 729 (in the October, 2017 issue)

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 729  
is a tanto by Awataguchi Yoshimitsu

This tanto has a standard width and thickness and an uchizori tanto shape, and from from this you can judge this as being work from the mid- to latter half of the Kamakura period.

Yoshimitsu has several types of jihada: a typical nashiji-hada, and a ko-itame hada mixed with a large pattern jihada and the hada is visible, just like this tanto.

Yoshimitsu was good at making suguha hamon. At the habaki-moto there is a continuous gunome type hamon, around the fukura, the hamon is narrow, and around the kissaki area the jihada has flowing lines of nie called “Yoshimitsu’s kuisagari”, and these are his characteristic points.

Comparing Awataguchi work with Rai school work, the Jihada and hamon are stronger and bright and clear, and there are more hataraki in the hamon, and this indicates more highly skilled work.

In looking at strong jihada and hamon, the Awataguchi jihada and hamon are described as having a tight jihada like a tightly hammered ko-itame jihada; a deep blue colored jihada; there are abundant ji-nie, and very clear bo-utsuri. The suguha type hamon has frequent bright ha-nie, and both, the jihada and hamon, are bright and clear, and at a glance, you can recognize Awataguchi work.

At a glance this tanto looks like a Rai Kunitoshi tanto, but if you examine it carefully, the visible ko-itame hada is more prominent than the Rai jihada, and there are more ji-nie hataraki than in Rai work.

The hamon at a glance, looks like Rai Kunitoshi, but if you examine it carefully, the Awataguchi hamon ashi and yo hataraki are finer than Rai work, and over the nioiguchi we see dense ko-nie. The ha-nie forms very fine hataraki, and kinsuji and sunagashi hataraki are seen inside of the hamon, and we feel this is more highly skilled work.

This is my personal opinion. Instead of looking at this as typical Awataguchi work, you should examine it carefully under good lighting, and gradually you can recognize the beauty and highly skilled work. What do you think?

Yoshimitsu’s signature is characteristic and flowing, and has been highly appreciated since historical times. The sword book “Kokon Mei Zukushi” lists Dai Sa’s outstanding signature, and comments it is “as good as Yoshimitsu’s”.

Yoshimitsu’s signature’s are not always the same. This signature seems to be less flowing than usual for his mei. Of course Japanese sword signatures are made using a chisel or “tagane” and that makes it different from writing with a brush.

This is my personal opinion, but in looking at the chisel marks in Yoshimitsu’s signatures and following the chisel strokes and lines that they form, Yoshimitsu’s work reminds me of excellent calligraphy brush strokes and have an elegant

feeling, and this is why his signature has been highly appreciated since historical times.

This tanto is an example of his typical work, and the majority of people voted for the correct answer.

Explanation by Hinohara Dai