

# **NBTHK SWORD JOURNAL**

## **ISSUE 788**

### **September, 2022**

#### **Gendai Toshoku Ten**

#### **Tachi, katana, wakizashi, naginata and yari section**

#### **Prince Takamatsu Memorial Award**

Type: Tachi

Mei: Kiyohiro

Reiwa 4 nen (2022) 3 gatsu hi

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 4 bu 9 rin (74.2 cm)

Sori: 8 bu 4 rin (2.55 cm)

Motohaba: 9 bu 9 rin (3.0 cm)

Sakihaba: 6 bu 6 rin (2.0 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu (0.6 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu 7 rin (0.5 cm)

Kissaki length: 8 bu 7 rin (2.65 cm)

Nakago length: 6 sun 9 bu 6 rin (21.1 cm)

Nakago sori: 1 bu 3 rin (0.4 cm)

#### **Commentary**

This is a shinogi zukuri tachi with an ihorimune. The width and thickness are standard. The widths at the moto and saki are different, there is a wazori style sori and a short chu-kissaki. The jigane is a tight ko-itame hada, and there are ji-nie and pale utsuri. The hamon is chu-suguha, and some areas have a ko-gunome style hamon. There are frequent ashi and yo, suji-like hataraki in the center, a tight nioiguchi, and slightly fine even nie. Some areas have nijuba, and the entire hamon is bright and clear. The boshi is straight with a round point. The horimono on the omote and ura have bo-hi carved through the nakago. At the koshimoto, the omote has a goma-bashi, and the ura has koshi-hi. The nakago tip is a slightly shallow ha-agari-kurijiri. There is one mekugi-ana, and on the omote under the mekugi ana, and along the center, there is a slightly small sized kanji signature made with a fine chisel. The ura has a date inscribed in the same style.

The sword smith Morikuni Toshifumi comes from Fukui prefecture's Fukui city, was born in Showa 42 (1967), and is fifty five years old. During his childhood, he was fascinated by a sword making film which led to his interest in swords. From that time, his interest in swords and sword smiths remained, and in Showa 61(1986) he became a student of the late sword smith Miyairi Kiyomune. After 5 years with Kiyomune, in Heisei 3 (1991) he received his sword smith license. Three years later, he participated in his first exhibition, and in Heisei 7 (1995) he become an independent smith. The following year, seeking further technical improvements in his sword making skills, he become a student of his teacher's first son, the smith Miyairi Norihiro. After that, because he still desired to improve his skills, in Heisei 9 (1997) he became a student of Norihiro's teacher, the late Sumitani Seiho who was a Ningen Kokuho, and learned other skills such as making tosu. At exhibitions for small works, he received many awards including the Sankei Newspaper award.

In the Gendai Toshoku exhibitions, from 2016, he changed his hamon style from choji midare to his teacher Norihiro's suguha style. He exhibited suguha style work and received his first special prize, or the Prince Takamatsu Memorial award. Since then, his work has been modeled after Yamashiro Den's suguha hamon. Morikuni has received the special prize twice, which is evidence of his enhanced skills, and has continued to win prizes. At this time, in six years, he again received the highest award.

This tachi's width, thickness, and sori are all well balanced, and the blade feels comfortable and well balanced in the hand. The forging is a tight ko-itame hada and very refined, but is not a muji hada. One can see the fine pattern, and the blade seems to have a soft feeling. The hamon is chu-suguha mixed with a gunome style midare hamon. This is his Yamashiro Den style, and the tight nioiguchi is gentle with ashi and yo. Inside of the hamon habuchi, the entire hamon is bright and clear, and with the refined forging, the entire tachi has a clear and fresh look.

The nijuba and uneven ashi and yo, in addition to the suji shaped hataraki inside of the hamon, produces an interesting appearance and effect, so this is not a monotonous suguha work.

Dignity and refinement are necessary to receive high marks for a suguha hamon. In this work, the tachi's three elements, the shape, jigane, and hamon, have the appropriate refinement and dignity to receive the top prize.

Explanation Ishii Akira and photo by Imoto Yuki.

## **Shijo Kantei To No. 788**

The deadline to submit answers for the issue No. 788 Shijo Kantei To is October 5, 2022. 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, 2022 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: Tanto

Length: slightly less than 7 sun 2 bu ( 21.8 cm)

Sori: uchizori

Motohaba: 5 bu 9 rin (1.8 cm)

Motokasane: 1 bu 7 rin (0.5 cm)

Nakago length: 3 sun 4.5 bu (10.5 cm)

Nakago sori: 7 rin (0.2 cm)

This is a hirazukuri tanto with a mitsumune. There is a standard width, a slightly small size, the tanto is uchizori, and there is a sophisticated tanto shape. The jigane has a ko-itame hada mixed with mokume and a large pattern hada, and the hada is visible. There are abundant dense ji-nie, fine chikei and nie utsuri. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. The hamon is mixed with ko-gunome, there are small ashi, yo, a nioiguchi with frequent ko-nie, and small kinsuji and sunagashi. The jiba (jigane and hamon) elements are strong, bright and clear. The nakago is ubu, and the tip is kurijiri. The yasurime are katte-sagari. There is one mekugi-ana. On the omote, under the mekugi-ana on the center, there is an elegant two kanji signature made with a fine chisel.

## **2022 Gendai Toshoku Ten engraving section**

### **Kunzan award**

**Hakuju-zu (cypress design) Tsuba**

**Mei: Seiji saku Gakuko (learning from an old work) Mizunoe Tora (2022)**

The word “gakuko” means that a current craftsman is learning from an older piece of work and hoping that the old item will remain present for the modern world to appreciate, and also that the craftsman is helping to preserve the older work and bring it to the public’s attention again.

The gold smith Umetada Myoju left many master works. We can also say that the inspiration for this work is one of Umetada’s masterpieces.

The tsuba’s maker is Seiji Yanagawa who lives in Chiba prefecture and is well known as a mukansa sword polisher, who has polished many important swords, and is highly skilled polisher. In addition to his polishing skills, Yanagawa has a genius-level talent for making tsuba, and has exhibited a tsuba every year in the Gendai Toshoku Ten exhibition’s engraving section. His first tsuba was exhibited in Showa 60 (1985), so he has been exhibiting his tsuba work for about 40 years now, and has received many awards such as the excellent work award and the hard work award. Until now, he has focused his efforts in following Tomei’s tsuba where an abundance of millet grains can be seen. Yanagawa has been an active exhibitor and regular winner of awards and has an abundance of experience in producing tsuba.

This work utilizes his experience, and he has succeeded in working in Myoju’s style for the first time. In producing this tsuba he said producing the proper colors required a lot of difficult work, and his efforts have succeeded wonderfully.

As I mentioned above, although Yanagawa is a mukansa level polisher, tsuba making has never been simply a hobby for him. Yanagawa is excellent craftsman in both fields, polishing and tsuba.

Explanation by Kurotaki Tetsuya

## **Shijo Kanteito 786 in the July Issue**

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To is a tachi by Osafue Moromitsu dated Eiwa 2 nen (1376).

Morimitsu is a one of the Kosori smiths working in the late Nanbokucho period.

He is a late Nanboucho period smith, and does not belong to the mainstream schools such as smiths like Kanemitsu, Chogi, Motoshige, Omiya work, and Yoshii work. The work of smiths who do not belong to the mainstream schools is called Kosori work.

Many of the Kosori jigane are itame mixed mokume and large patterned itame, the entire hada is visible, there are jifu mixed in the dark jigane, and sometimes pale utsuri appears like we see on this tachi, and there is an impression of this being a less refined work.

You can see Kosori hamon which show continuous square gunome and are based on notare and midare hamon. But many of these Kosori works contain other kinds of hamon such as ko-midare, ko-gunome, ko-togariba, and choji, and the entire hamon will be small and be a complex midare hamon, just like we see on this tachi.

In this kind of work, often the hamon's width will be very low for the blade's width, and we can say that this is a characteristic point.

Kosori boshi are often midarekomi, and the tip is very sharp.

In voting, a majority of people voted for Moromitsu, and some voted for other Kosori smiths such as Tsunehiro and Hidemitsu.

The Kosori smiths' works are similar to each other, and it is difficult to judge an individual name, so all Kosori smiths' names were treated as a correct answer.

Masamitsu is a Kanemitsu school smith, but many of his works are similar to Kosori work, so his name was treated as a correct answer.

For identifying Kosori work, Oei Bizen smiths such as Morimitsu and Iesuke are not basically correct answers. However, Morimitsu's and Iesuke's work dated in the Oei period's single digit years are sometimes very similar to Kosori work, and both names with dates in the Oei period's single digit years are treated as correct answers.

For Explanation by Hinohara Dai