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Tokubetsu Juyo Token

Type: Naginata naoshi tachi

Mei: Bizen koku Osafune ju Chogi

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 7 bu 8 rin (75.1 cm)

Sori: 6 bu 3 rin (1.9 cm)

Motohaba: 1 sun 1 rin (3.05 cm)

Sakihaba: 8 bu 7 rin (2.65 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu (0.6 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu 3 rin (0.4 cm)

Kissaki length: 3 sun 4 bu (10.3 cm)

Nakago length: 7 sun 5 bu 9 rin (23.0 cm)

Nakago sori: 7 rin (0.2 rin)

Commentary

This is a naginata naoshi tachi with an ihorimune. It is wide, and the difference in the widths at the moto and saki is not prominent. From the koshimoto to the upper part of the blade, the shinogi ji is wide, there is a large sori, and the blade has a slight saki sori, and there is a very long large kissaki. The jigane is itame mixed with mokume hada and nagare hada, and in some places, there is a slightly visible hada. There are frequent ji-nie, chikei, and pale midare utsuri. The hamon at the koshimoto is narrow with a small midare pattern, and above this, the hamon is primarily a ko-notare style mixed with ko-gunome, and some areas show a complex midare pattern. There are ashi, a dense nioiguchi, frequent nie, sunagashi, kinsuji, nie-suji, and in places at the top of hamon there are yubashiri. The boshi on the omote is

straight, and on the ura the boshi is a small or narrow midarekomi. Both sides are almost yakizume, and the tip has hakikake. The horimono on the omote and ura at the koshimoto are naginata hi carved through the nakago. The nakago is suriage and the tip is kurijiri. The new yasurime on the omote are katte sagari, and on the ura the yasurime are kiri, but the original yasurime are not visible. On the Omote's bottom half, the flat area has a large size long kanji signature.

The Soshu Den style established by Masamune spread all over Japan in the Nanbokucho period. In Bizen Koku the main focus was on a nioiguchi style. Bizen smiths such as Chogi, Kanemitsu, and Morikage broke away from their traditional style, and developed a "Soden Bizen" style. Among these smiths, the Chogi school was supposed to be the most prominent. It has been said that, "among the Bizen smiths, the one whose work does not look like Bizen work is Chogi". Chogi's work emphasizes nie hataraki and a free or unrestrained style and he is considered to be one of the Nanbokucho period's representative master smiths.

In the book "Kokon Mei Zukushi" on the "Bizen Osafune Genealogy" page where Chogi and his older brother are listed, their father is Mitsunaga, and grandfather is Sanenaga, and from similarities in their signatures, this is a persuasive argument. Compared with Kanamitsu, Chogi's school has fewer works. Confirmed works are dated from Jowa 6 (1350) to Koryaku 2 (1380) over a thirty year period. In the early half of the Nanbokucho period, Chogi's group used the Southern emperor's nengo names or dating system, and in the latter half of the period, they used the Northern emperor's dating system. Which dating system was used is supposed to have depended on which groups of samurai held power in the Bizen Koku area. In contrast, Kanemitsu consistently used the Northern emperor's dating system, and this is interesting. Judging from this, among the Osafune smiths, it is thought that the different schools or groups of smiths worked independently of each other.

Among Chogi's signed tachi, there are two Juyo Bunkazai blades. One is owned by the Tokyo National Museum, and is dated Koryaku 1 (1379), and there is an uchigatana with the same date. There are really very few dated works available. You can easily imagine what this means: later, years after these blades were made, because of their long lengths, many of them became greatly suriage and mumei. Also, Chogi has many tanto with lengths of 8 to 9 sun. He was active during the Enbun-Joji period, but he has very few of the period's typical tanto: hirazukuri with a long length, shallow sori, and hirazukuri wakizashi. On the other hand, we sometimes see small tanto with lengths of around 7 sun. Also, as pointed out, Chogi's characteristic "mountain and ear shaped features" in his hamon are seen most often on tanto. It does not matter what type of blade we examine, Chogi's work is recognizable and there are some large hamon.

This is a rare work for Chogi, and is a suriage naganata converted into a tachi. The itame hada has abundant ji-nie and chikei, the ko-notare hamon is a sosho-like style with a complex midareba, there are light and pale variations in the nioiguchi, large abundant nie, and kinsuji, nie-suji, and sunagashi, so there are abundant hataraki. This is a wide blade with a large kissaki and a magnificent shape, and a typical Soden Bizen work. In addition to being an altered naganata converted into a tachi, this is a very rare style of work, and is his only signed naginata. The signature is written in a relaxed large size, and with its style, this is a highly valued resource for the study of his work.

This will be exhibited at the "Masamune Jutetsu: the Master Smith Masamune and his students" in the Token Museum in Reiwa 6 from January 6 to February 11, and at the Fukuyama Museum from February 18 to March 27.

Explanation and photo by Ishii Akira

Shijo Kantei To No. 802

The deadline to submit answers for the issue No. 802 Shijo Kantei To is December 5, 2023. 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 December 5, 2023 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 3 sun 5.5 bu (71.4 cm)

Sori: slightly less than 5 bu (1.45 cm)

Motohaba: slightly less than 1 sun (3.0 cm)

Sakihaba: 6 bu (1.8 cm)

Motokasane: 2.5 bu (0.75 cm)

Sakikasane: 1.5 bu (0.45 cm)

Kissaki length: slightly less than 1 sun 1 bu (3.3 cm)

Nakago length: 7 sun 1.5 bu (21.7 cm)

Nakago sori: none

This is a shinogi zukuri katana with an ihorimune. There is a standard width, and the difference in the widths at the moto and saki are not prominent. The blade is thick, there is a shallow sori, and a slightly short chu-kissaki. The jigane is a tight ko-itame hada, there are abundant ji-nie, and frequent fine chikei. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. The tops of the of choji in the midare hamon are all the same height. There are frequent long ashi, a dense nioiguchi, ko-nie, long kinsuji inside of the hamon, sunagashi, and a bright nioiguchi. The nakago is ubu. The nakago jiri or tip is a sharply angled ha-agari kurijiri, the yasurime are sugichigai with kesho yasurime. There are two mekugi ana. On the

omote, under the original mekugi ana along the mune side, and centered along the the shinogi ji. there is a slightly large eight kanji signature with a title, and made with a thick chisel. On the ura side there is a date and a kiritsuke mei (i.e. a signature which has been added later after the sword has left a smith or been altered).

Juyo Tosogu

Yatsu warabite (eight fern) sukashi tsuba

Kinzogan Mei: Matashichi

Hayashi Matashichi is supposed to be a founder of the Rinpa school which is one of four main Higo kinko schools. According to the “Higo Kinko Roku” he was born in Keicho 18 (1613) in Kumamoto, and passed away in Genroku12 (1699) at the age of 87 years. His ancestors came from Owari and they were gun smiths. His father Kiyobei followed Kato Kiyomasa and moved to Higo in Kumamoto. After working for the Kato family, Matashichi worked for the Hosokawa family. He was influenced by Hosokawa Tadaoki (Sansai) who was a person who promoted literature and martial arts, and he became a master smith among the Higo kinko smiths.

Matashichi’s style includes a well forged bright iron jigane which is one of his traits, and is listed in the “Higo Kinko Roku” with praise. His iron was described as exquisite and tightly forged, and there was nothing to compare to its beauty. This kind of iron ground was supposed to have a refined jigane with some type of characteristic rust or patina, and we never see this appearance on other iron tsuba. It has a so-called yokan (sweet bean jelly) color, reminding one of the sticky and moist properties of yokan.

There is an iron ground with a distinctive patina, and we can enjoy unique charm of Matashichi’s iron. The mokko shaped tuba has an exquisite shape and niku (volume), and is

dignified. The tips of the fern leaves have Matashichi's nunome inlay, and his excellent technique amazes us. Looking at it carefully, some areas of the inlay work looks like they are discontinuous, and we can feel Matashichi's excellent aesthetic sense. This exhibits Matashichi's solid and well developed sensibilities, as well as Matashichi's outstanding work, and his kinzogan signature is a valuable reference.

Commentary by Kugiyama Natsuko

October Token Teirei Kansho kai

Date: October 14th (second Saturday of October)

Location: The Token Hakubutsukan auditorium

Lecturer: Ooi Gaku

Kantei To No. 1: tachi

Mei: Bizen Osafune ju Kanemitsu
Kenmu 2 nen (1335) 7 gatsu hi

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 3 sun 5 bu

Sori: slightly over 7 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: ko-itame hada; in places it is mixed with itame; there are abundant ji-nie, fine chikei and pale bo-utsuri.

Hamon: mainly kataochi gunome; in places it is suguha with saka-ashi; there are some ko-gunome, square gunome, and togari. There are ashi and yo; on the omote around the center, there are intermittent leaf shape features. There is a bright nioiguchi, and some sunagashi.

Boshi: from the above yokote, there is a gentle midarekomi; above this, the boshi is it straight with a komaru and short return.

This tachi has a standard width, and the widths at the moto and saki are slightly different. There is a standard thickness, a large koshizori, and the tip has sori. Although the blade is suriage there is still funbari present, and there is a chu-kissaki. From the shape, you can imagine that this is work from around the latter half of the Kamakura period to the early half of the Nanbokucho period.

The forging produced a moist appearing refined jigane, there are utsuri, the hamon is a nioiguchi type and mainly kataochi gunome. From these details, in voting, people concentrated on Bizen smiths and voted for Osafune Kagemitsu and Kanemitsu.

Both smiths made kataochi gunome midare hamon, and usually Kanemitsu's hamon are similar in size to Kagemitsu's, like we see in their tanto. However, this tachi, although it is Kanemitsu's work, the main kataochi gunome sizes are variable, and it closely resembles Kagemitsu's characteristic hamon. Considering the shape, the Kagemitsu answer is not a bad guess, and we treated Kagemitsu as a correct answer at this time.

However, if this were Kagemitsu's work, his ko-itame hada is refined, tight, and beautiful, and his tachi rarely have bo-utsuri, and many of his boshi are sansaku-boshi.

Kanemitsu has dated swords in Kenmu 1 (1334) and Kagemitsu has a sword dated Genkyo 1 (1321), and these dates are close, so we can imagine Kanemitsu was working to some extent under Kagemitsu's supervision. Kanemitsu's original hamon appear in the Nanbokucho period around the Jowa (1345-49) era. Possibly this tachi was made during the end of Kagemitsu's career, and Kanemitsu may have been trying to make a Kagemitsu style hamon.

Kantei To No.2 Tachi

Mei: Satsuyoshi Oku Motohira

Tenmei 3 (1783) Kinoe Tatsu 2 gatsu

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 9 bu

Sori: slightly less than 3 bu

Style: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: tight ko-itame hada; there are abundant ji-nie, and dull fine chikei.

Hamon: at the koshimoto, it is a chu-suguha style; above this it gradually becomes a wide suguha style. There is a wide dense nioiguchi, abundant nie and rough nie, some yubashiri, kuichigaiba, and nie-suji.

Boshi: very wide nioiguchi; it is yaki-kuzure and is an ichimai style; the point is komaru with a return, and the tip has shima-ba.

Motohira's early early Tenmei period (1781-88) work often has a tight ko-itame hada, a shallow wide notare and suguha hamon, or is a suguha mixed with ko-notare. There are strong ha-nie with a dense nioiguchi, kinsuji and sunagashi hataraki, which is similar to Inoue Shinkai's style. In this case, and in many cases, the widths at the moto and saki are different, there is a shallow sori, and a slightly short kissaki, which are Kanbun-Shinto traits.

This katana shows these characteristic points, but compared with Motohira's usual work, the hamon is wide, and the boshi is an ichimai style. This is modeled after Go Yoshihiro's work, and Shinkai considered Go Yoshihiro to be an ideal smith.

In voting, many people voted for Motohira. The shape, when examined from the side, looks like Kanbun Shinto. However, because Satsuma katana, have a large rich hiraniku, and notably prominent hiraniku, when compared with the same length Osaka Shinto blades, they are clearly very heavy. On this katana, some areas have very strong ha-nie mixed with rough nie, and the clarity of the nioiguchi is not as good as what is seen on Shinkai's work. Also, the Boshi's nioiguchi is very wide as sometimes seen in Motohira's work, but is rare in Shinkai's work.

A vote for Ippei Yasuo was not a bad answer. His shapes have a high shinogi, and are wide, with strong Yamato school characteristic points. His fine ko-itame hada is a visible hada and has a dark color when compared with Motohira's tight and moist appearing jigane.

Hoki no kami Masahiro has work modeled after Shinkai and Go, but rarely has a tight jigane, and has itame and large itame hada with nagare hada and a slightly visible hada. Many of his swords have visible forging lines and one can see the different types of steel used, and this is different from Motohira's refined jigane.

Kantei To No. 3: Katana

Mei: Fujiwara Tsunatoshi yaki with engraving

Katana mei: Kato Koretoshi kitae

Ansei 3 toshi (1856) 2 gatsu kichijitsu

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun

Sori: 6 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: tight ko-itame hada which is almost a muji style.

There are abundant ji-nie and a bright jigane.

Hamon: at the moto there is a diagonal yakidashi; there are choji mixed with gunome, there are frequent ashi, in some places there are yo; there is a tight and bright and clear noiguchi.

Boshi: straight and with a komaru.

This is a gassaku work by Kato Tsunatoshi and Koretoshi, a father and son, and the katana is a dai from the pair's dai-sho. This has a very rare carving, and "kamunagara" means "according to God's will", and so you can imagine that this was made as a special order. This katana has clear Tsunatoshi and Koretoshi characteristic points which are

typical of their work, and people were not confused in identifying the smiths.

In the Shinshinto period, work modeled on Ichimonji style choji midare hamon sometimes have a tachi shape with a large sori, and this is one of those examples. Because this is not an old work, and it is thick at the saki or point. There is a small hiraniku, and a healthy shape, along with a slightly poor fukura, and shows Shinshinto characteristic points very well. Also, Tsunatoshi's swords often have a narrow shinogi ji for their width.

The forging is a muji style, and the sword is bright and fresh looking. The hamon is primarily a nioiguchi type with choji and ko-choji mixed with gunome, ko-gunome and with a midare pattern. The hamon features are a constant size (each feature is about 3 sun 2 bu high) and the hamon pattern repeats, and form a constant pattern, and you can easily imagine that this is Kato Tsunatoshi school work. Notably, Tsunatoshi's hamon at the moto often have a gradually wider diagonal widening called an Osaka yakidashi.

Many of Tsunatoshi's boshi were midare, but around the Tenpo to Koka (1830-1847) period this style started to appear less often, and around February of Ansei 2 (1855) when he started to make gassaku blades with Koretoshi, most of his boshi become komaru.

Many people voted for Koyama Munetsugu. However, his yakidashi are rare, and most of his boshi are midarekomi.

Besides these smiths, some people voted for Hamabe Toshinori whose hamon are choji midare and who has straight boshi, which are commonly seen. However, most of his hamon have small sized fist shaped choji, and he has no repeat hamon patterns, and most of his swords have an Edo style yakidashi.

Yokoyama Sukenaga's hamon, in some areas, have the same kind of hamon features, but do not have the repeats in the pattern, and many of his yakidashi are an Edo style yakidashi.

Kantei To No. 4 katana

Mei: Hizen kuni ju Mutsu no kami Tadayoshi

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 3 sun 5 bu

Sori: 6 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: tight ko-itame hada; there are abundant ji-nie, frequent fine chikei, some shingane appear, and there is a bright jigane.

Hamon: chu suguha; there is a dense nioiguchi which has a belt-like shape. There are frequent ko-nie, and a bright and clear nioiguchi.

Boshi: straight, with a komaru tip. The tip has some hakikake, and there is a long return.

This katana is wide, and the difference in the widths at the moto and saki is not prominent. There is a standard thickness, a slightly large sori, and a chu-kissaki. The shape is a Hizen shape and well balanced. The forging is a tight ko-itame hada with abundant ji-nie, but compared with Awataguchi and Rai work, the jigane's uruoi (moist appearance) is not good, and because of this it is called komenuka hada. There are fine chikei, and in some places the shingane is visible.

The hamon is a chu-suguha with abundant ko-nie and is bright. The edge of the nioiguchi does not fade away into the ji or hamon, and forms a clear belt-like shape. The boshi is parallel with the fukura, and is straight with a komaru. From these details which show very well the Hizen characteristic points, most people voted for a correct or a good as correct answer in the first vote.

The third generation's work sometimes has Kanbun Shinto characteristics, and the period's characteristic shape, and in this case it is easy to see. But the shape, the width, the slightly large shinogi ji and the heavy weight are often seen in the Shodai's work, many people voted for the Shodai Tadayoshi and Musashi Daijo Tadahiro (the same smith).

However, if it were the five kanji Tadayoshi period Shodai work, the forging would have a slightly visible hada, real suguha are less common, and the hamon are a notare style and sometimes mixed with nijuba and kuichigaiba.

The Musashi-daijo Tadahiro viewpoint is not too bad. There are strong chikei like we see here, and no prominent nijuba, kuichigaiba at the edge of the hamon, and a long boshi return with a firm stop, and this kind of work is seen often in the 3rd generation's work. Also, both the jigane and hamon are clear, and from these details, the 3rd generation should come to mind.

Kantei To No.5: Katana

Mei: Shinano kuni ju oite Echizen Sukemune saku
(This smith's signature later changed to
Kunikiyo)

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 3 sun 6 bu

Sori: slightly less than 6 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: itame hada; there is a visible hada; the hada is zanguri (rough) hada; there are ji-nie, dull chikei, and a dark jigane.

Hamon: shallow notare mixed with ko-notare; some areas have a gunome style hamon; around the monouchi area there are round gunome; there are ashi, a dense nioiguchi with slight wide and narrow variations; there are nie; some areas are uneven; there are yubashiri, hotsure, kinsuji, and a slightly worn down nioguchi.

Boshi: straight; the tip has some hakikake; the point is komaru and there is a return.

In Kyoho 4 (1719), following the Kyoho Shokoku sword smith law, the government asked for a sword smith listing in each domain. In the same year, a record of the Kunikiyo

family's genealogy was compiled (the original version was lost during an air raid in Fukui) by Shimada Kuhachiro, the 4th generation Yamashiro no kami Kunikiyo. According to that document, the shodai Kunikiyo (Sukemune) lived in Shinano Kuni's Mizu-uchi County during the Tensho period (1573-91), and he was supported by Matsudaira Tadateru. However, when the lord of the area was changed, Kunikiyo lost his support and became a ronin (with no master or position). In Genna 2 (1616), Matsudaira Tadamasa moved into the same area of Matsushiro formerly occupied by the lord Tadateru, and Kunikiyo was officially supported again. In Kanei 4 (1627), he received the Yamashiro Daijo title.

There is a signed blade "Shinano Kuni Zenkouji kore ju Sukemune saku" without a date, and in Genna 4 (1618) his lord Tadamasa moved to join Echigo Kuni's Takada clan and there is a signature "Echigo Takada ju Sukemune saku".

The signature clearly changed during this period from Sukemune to Kunikiyo because he has a dated Kanei 5 (1628) oshigata, and it appears to be at this same time when he received the Yamashiro Daijo title. Considering that in Genna 9 (1623), Tadamasa moved to Echizen, we can guess that this katana was made between Genna 9 and the Kanei 3 or 4 period (1623-27).

Actually, in this katana, the widths at the moto and saki are different, and close to the koshimoto there is a slightly large sori with funbari, there is a slightly short kissaki, and this style is called Kanei Shinto. In the Hosokawa school, he is supposed to have been a latecomer to the group, and the theory that Kunitoshi was his actual teacher is understandable.

The forging has a visible itame hada, and appears dry and rough, and has the northern country's characteristic dark color. The hamon is based on notare, and the nie and the nioiguchi have wide and narrow variations. The entire nioiguchi is worn down and there are color or intensity variations, and this shows the Horikawa school's characteristic features.

Therefore, among the Kanei period's active Horikawa school smiths, people recognized the dark jigane, the fact that the Shodai Kunikiyo has many midare hamon, and voted for the correct individual name.

As another proper answer, Kunitoshi has shapes which are close to a Kanei Shinto shape, and many shallow notare hamon mixed with gunome, and Nosada style hamon, and his forging shows a tight hada.

Kuniyasu's jigane is supposed to have the most visible hada among the Horikawa school smiths, and around the monouchi area there is a round hamon feature which is a good example, but his shapes are supposed to Keicho Shinto shapes, and his jigane are not as dark as this.

Shijo Kantei To No.800 in the September, 2023 issue

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To is a wakizashi by Hasebe Kuninobu.

This is a hirazukuri wakizashi, which is wide, long, and thin. There is a shallow sori and also a short nakago and this is called an Enbun-Joji shape, which is a characteristic shape from the peak of the Nanbokucho period. It is notable that thinner blades are often seen in the work of the Hasebe school. Besides the Hasebe school, thin blades are also seen in the work of the Bitchu Aoe school and the Bingo Hokke school.

The jigane has a large itame pattern, a visible hada, and contains chikei along the hamon edge, and the mune side has strong nagare and masame hada and this is characteristic for the school. Also, along the hamon border, there sometimes is a line which is supposed to form along the border between the kawagane steel and the hamon, and this forging line appears clearly as a long line. Because of this, the hamon is clearly separated from the ji, and there are long kinsuji and sunagashi along this region.

The hamon has frequent nie, and is primarily a notare style mixed with ko-notare, gunome, and a midare hamon. Along the entire blade there are frequent tobiyaki, yubashiri, and muneyaki and the blade is hitatsura. Because of the forging as I mentioned above, the kinsuji and the sunagashi are more prominent, and some in places these features are parallel with the hamon edge. The entire hamon is a gentle midare, but the main notare and midare hamon width from the moto to the saki is constant, and this is characteristic of Kuninobu's work.

The boshi has frequent hakikake, and the point's shape is based on a large round style. The tip on the omote and ura are round, and the return connects with the muneyaki which continues intermittently to the machi.

In addition to the Enbun Joji shape, considering the characteristic jiba (jigane and hamon), it is possible to look at this as Hasebe school work.

Kuninobu has many blades around 9 sun to 1 shaku 1 sun long, the same as Kunishige. But as we mentioned in the hints, he also has work with a length of 6 sun 8.5 bu long (the 48th Juyo Token) and notably small sized work. Kuninobu also has a different style of work which consists of a blade 1 shaku 3 sun 5 bu long (classified as Juyo Bunkazai, and owned by the Atsuta shrine), and also wide large blades. Beside these, among his short blades, he is known for a 7 sun 3.5 bu long tanto classified as Juyo Bunkazai and owned by the Atsuta shrine, and a 7 sun 2.5 bu long Juyo Bunkazai tanto owned by the Itsukushima Shrine.

Kuninobu's midare hamon are mixed with angular shaped hamon features and yahazu style features, and sometimes these hamon features are connected or bridged by a narrow hamon, and the features repeat. It is pointed out, compared with Kunishige, many of his midare hamon produce a slightly angular impression, and the kantei-to has this characteristic in the monouchi area.

If you can catch these characteristic points among the school's smiths, it is possible you can reach the maker's identity of Kuninobu. Many people voted for the correct Kuninobu answer.

However, the kantei-to at this time, does not differ in places from Kunishige's work, and around 70 people voted for Kunishige. So it appears that the details of Kuninobu's characteristic style is still not clear to many people. At this time, we treated both names as correct answers.

Also, in recent years, Kunishige's 1 shaku 3 sun 5.5 bu long wakizashi was named as the 50th Juyo token. However, an accurate precise length for this blade is unknown, but the koshirae has a total length of 62.4cm, and is owned by Kongobuji Temple, and is a Juyo Bunkazai hirazukuri wakizashi with an exceptionally long blade. On the other hand, Kunishige's smallest tanto seems to be slightly less than 8 sun 2 bu, and is the 30th Juyo Token. On the average, Kunishige's tanto have lengths which are shorter than Kuninobu's. Kunishige has long hirazukuri wakizashi like Kuninobu, but remember that Kuninobu's large sizes involve not only the length, but also the width.

In discussing their signatures, for both, a common characteristic point is on the center of the Nakago's narrow tip: between each kanji, the space is short. However, their kuni kanji are different. The interior of Kunishige's kuni kanji has either a “王” or “玉” shape and Kuninobu made changes in the interior of the old style kuni kanji. The center of the kuni kanji has a vertical line or a line falling to the left side, and next to the left side there are three dots. The right side has lines similar to the hiragana “te”, “ro”, or “3” and this is a characteristic point.

Besides the correct answer, some people looked at this as Nanbokucho hitatsura work, and voted for Soshu Akihiro. Akihiro is known for small sized items when compared to Soshu Mitsuhiro. But in this period Soshu Den work does not

have many prominently thin blades and their masame hada forging is not obvious.

Also Soshu Den's usual hamon are gunome mixed with prominent choji, and the hamon width gradually becomes wider going to the point. In addition, in many of these works, the kinsuji are not straight and twist to become entangled with the itame hada. The boshi tip is sharp, there is a long return towards the machi, but this is not seen in most of their work.

The Hasebe school has some horimono, but the Soshu school has more horimono.

However, for a reference, I would like to mention Hiromitsu and Akihiro's large and small sized work. Hiromitsu has a 1 shaku 4.05 sun Juyo Bunkazai wakizashi dated Enbun 5 (1360), a tanto dated 8 gatsu hi, and tanto with a length of 9 sun 5 bu which was the 56th Juyo Token. Akihiro has a 1 shaku 4 sun 6.5 bu wakizashi which was the 49th Juyo Token, and and an 8 sun 4 bu tanto which is Juyo Bijutsuhin.

Beside these, a few people voted for Sue Bizen and Shimada school work, but if it were work from the latter half of the Muromachi period, many are thicker, and have a saki-sori, and so it is necessary to pay attention to the shape.

Explanation by Ooi Gaku.