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MEITO KANSHO

Juyo Bunkazai

Type: Tachi

Mei: Sukezane

Owner: Hayashibara museum

Length: 2 shaku 6 sun (78.8 cm)

Sori: 1 sun 9 rin (3.3 cm)

Motohaba: 1 sun 4 rin (3.15 cm)

Sakihaba: 6 bu 3 rin (1.9 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 3 rin (0.7 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu 3 rin (0.4 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 2 rin (3.1 cm)

Nakago length: 7 sun 4 bu 9 rin (22.7 cm)

Nakago sori: 7 rin (0.2 cm)

Commentary

This is a shinogi-zukuri tachi with an ihorimune. It is wide, and the widths at the moto and saki are different. It is thick and long with a large sori and funbari, and a short chu-kissaki. The jigane is itame mixed with ko-itame and mokume hada, and the entire jigane is well forged and tight. There are ji-nie, frequent chikei, mizukage, and jifu type midare utsuri. The entire hamon is high, and composed mainly of large and small choji mixed with gunome, ko-gunome, angular features, and togariba. There are frequent ashi and yo, a nioiguchi, some ko-nie, and some kinsuji. The boshi is a very shallow notarekomi, and on the omote the

point is a togari style. The point on the ura is a togari style and there is a komaru and return. The horimono on the omote and ura are deep bo-hi carved through the nakago. The nakago is ubu and the tip is ha-agari kurijiri. The yasurime are suji-chigai and there are three mekugi ana. On the omote near the first mekugi ana there is a two kanji signature which has scratches which came from whoever made the hi.

Sukezane is one of the representative master smiths from the mid-Kamakura period's Bizen Ichimonji school's peak period. He is supposed to have moved to Kamakura in Soshu along other smiths from the same area such as Saburo Kunimune and the Yamashiro smith Awataguchi Kunitsuna. These smiths were ordered to move to Kamakura by the Kamakura Shogunate. In the one of the oldest sword books we have, the "Kanchiin Hon Meizukushi", the Soshu kaji's genealogies are listed and Sukezane's name is shown as being one of the "Kamakura Ichimonji" smiths. At that time, Ichimonji school representative smiths were Yoshifusa, Norifusa and this Sukezane. These smiths all produced gorgeous choji midare hamon. Notably, Sukezane's jiba (jigane and hamon) compare favorably to the others, and exhibit a gorgeous active hamon with frequent nie, and show his unique magnificent exuberant style.

Sukezane's representative works are Nikko Toshogu's Kokuho "Nikko Sukezane", and this Kokuho Kishu blade which was handed down in the Kishu Tokugawa family (and now is owned by the Tokyo National Museum), and a Mitsui Bunko Juyo Bunkazai blade. The Kishu family blade has abundant nie, while the Mitsui Bunko sword has a clear nioiguchi and is a completely Bizen Den style work. The Nikko sword's characteristics fall in between these two.

Also, it was pointed out in a previous study, that this signature was made with a slightly fine chisel along the mune side. Many of Sukezane's swords are wide and large, and have vertical variations in the choji hamon with a dense nioiguchi, and these swords show Sukezane's style. On these swords, the signature is under the mekugi ana, near the center, and made with a thick chisel, and the kanji have

round shapes. The blades usually have either a standard width or a narrow gentle tachi shape, with a slightly small sized choji hamon.

This blade is wide and also thick, and there is an ubu nakago. This is a healthy tachi, and even with the long length, from the moto to the saki there are no defects or irregularities. Some areas have a well forged ko-itame hada, and the high quality of the forging work is clear. The choji midare hamon has small clusters of choji and large size variations in the hamon features. There are frequent ashi and yo and a really beautiful composition, and we can see Fukuoka Ichimoji's strong points and characteristic points.

Also, the tip of the hi is close to the shinogi, and originally, both the blade's width and the kissaki's width were greater than we see today. There is a mid-Kamakura period unique inokubi kissaki, and a magnificent shape. In addition, the jifu-like dark midare utsuri is high, and in some places extends over the shinogi line, which is rare in this period.

The signature's location on this sword is above the original mekugiana (the second one) and made with a fine chisel. The entire hamon is a slightly small sized choji midare hamon, just like Bizen work, and is not typical, and this is a very informative work. Unfortunately the signature was scratched when the hi were made, but there is a rich hiraniku, a hamaguri-ha healthy shape, an ubu nakago, and an excellent jiba, and there is more than enough stunning workmanship to compensate for any wear or damage.

In January 23 of Showa 8 (1933), this was classified as Kokuho by the main Tokugawa family's 16th head Tokugawa Iesato. It is supposed to have been handed down in the Tokugawa Shogun family during the Edo period.

This will be exhibited in the exhibit "The Masamune Jutetsu: the Master smith Masamune and his students" in the Token Museum in Reiwa 6 (2024) from January 6 to February 11, and at the Fukuyama museum from February 18 to March 27, 2024.

Commentary and photos by Ishii Akira.

Shijo Kantei To No. 804

The deadline to submit answers for the issue No. 804 Shijo Kantei To is February 5, 2024. 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 February 5, 2024 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: Tachi

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 5 sun 3 bu (76.75 cm)

Sori: slightly over 9.5 bu (2.9 cm)

Motohaba: slightly less than 9 bu (2.65 cm)

Sakihaba: slightly less than 5 bu (1.45 cm)

Motokasane: slightly over 2 bu (0.65 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu (0.3 cm)

Kissaki length: slightly less than 8 bu (2.35)

Nakago length: 6 sun 8.5 bu (20.7 cm)

Nakago sori: slightly less than 1 bu (0.2 cm)

This is a shinogi-zukuri tachi with an ihori-mune. There is a narrow shape, the widths at the moto and the saki are different, there is a large wa-zori, funbari at the moto, and a small kissaki. The jigane is a slightly tight itame hada, there are abundant ji-nie, chikei, and pale bo-utsuri. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. The hamon is a suguha style mixed with ko-choji, ko-gunome, and komidare. The tips of the ashi do not become narrow, and in places some ashi are angled toward the nakago. There are frequent ko-nie, kinsuji, sunagashi, small uchinoke, tobiyaki, some muneyaki, and a bright nioiguchi. The nakago is ubu, and the tip is a yahazu shape (the original was kurijiri). The

yasurime are katte-sagari and there are two mekuigi ana. On the omote, under the first mekuigi ana and along the mune side, there is a slightly large sized gyosho style two kanji signature.

Juyo Tosogu

Gekka fugaku zu (design showing Mt. Fuji under the moon) kozuka

Mumei: Hirata Donin

This is a kozuka, and sacred Mt. Fuji is shown using beautiful shippo (cloisonné) work.

The shippo technique uses a metal ground covered with powdered glass, yu-yaku and the glass is fused onto the metal surface in a kiln. Using this technique with yu-yaku glass powder and heating in a kiln, it is possible to produce all kinds of images, This technique is old, we can see it in the Asuka period from Kengoshi-zuka kofuns (ancient tombs and burial mounds). In the Nara period, Shosoin treasured these items. After that period, the technique disappeared for a while, and then many shippo examples were supposed to have been seen after the Muromachi period.

In the beginning, Hirata Donin lived in Kyoto. In Keicho 16 (1611), following a command by Tokugawa Ieyasu, he became a Shogunate okakae smith (a smith or craftsman who worked exclusively for the shogunate), and later he moved from Suruga to Edo. There are various theories concerning the shippo technique, and it is thought to be from Korea, or independently developed in Japan. However, Hirata's technique is different from the opaque doroshippo materials used until that time. Hirata used transparent yu-yaku, and was able to produce a unique effect. The Hirata family handed the technique down as an "issi-soden" technique, which meant it was only taught to sons or direct successors, and until the end of the Edo period, the family worked directly for the Tokugawa shogunate.

This kozuka has a polished shakudo ground forming a background, with blue foothills, and a large Mt Fuji covered with pure white snow. The image also has red, green, yellow, and deep blue colors, and gold inlay showing the rock surfaces. There are silver inlays (suemon zogan) showing a crescent moon, and gold line inlays showing clouds. There is an abundance of colors, and careful elegant work. The subject is Mt.Fuji which has been shown in paintings and described in the literature since historic times. For Mt. Fuji, bright colors were used, which we never see in the work of other goldsmiths. It is an excellent work, with a fresh taste, radiant impression, and a suitable piece to use for the beginning of the year.

Commentary by Kujiya Naoko

The 3rd National NBTHK Convention: Participation in the Kantei-to Competition

The customary single vote kantei was held at the NBTHK national convention on the first day at the Daiichi Hotel Ryogoku's 4th floor hall.

The five swords shown at the Kantei To are described below. Participants submitted votes identifying the smiths, and the three award winners are listed below.

The winners received a certificate and a supplementary prize at the Memorial Celebration banquet.

The award winners were:

Ten-i: Ikenaga Junichi

Chi-i: Myoga Ryosuke

Jin-i: Iida Yoshio

Kantei To No. 1: Katana

Mei: Satsuma Kuni Hoki no kami Taira Ason Masayuki
Ou no ikaru tokoro ni ataru
Nakazukasa-taiu Fujiwara Ason Keitoku
Kansei 2 (1780) Kanoe Inu toshi haru 2 gatsu hi

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun

Sori: 6 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jigane: large itame hada, some nagare hada, and a slightly visible hada; there are strong ji-nie and chikei-like thick kawari-gane.

Hamon: chu-suguha; some areas show a slight notare pattern mixed with gunome and there are some togari. There are ashi, a dense nioiguchi, strong nie, rough nie, and a slightly crumbled nioiguchi which is uneven. There are yubashiri, nie-suji and kinsuji.

Boshi: straight with yubashiri, there are frequent hakikake near the tip, and the tip is round. There is a small return and muneyaki.

This blade has a standard width, and the widths at the moto and saki are different. There is a slightly large sori and a chu-kissaki. From this, some people voted for Koto work. It does seem to reflect Koto work, but there is no obvious funbari, and it does not look like any funbari has been lost.

Also, because the blade is thick from the moto to the saki, the blade is heavy, even with the presence of hi. There is a healthy shape, but the fukura is slightly poor, and considering the nikuoki and the healthy jiba (jigane and hamon), we should look at this as being a later work. Also, the area around the monouchi is slightly thin and the tip looks poor, and this is a characteristic of Masayuki's work

The jigane shows frequent chikei-like dark thick kawari-gane (irregular metal), prominent rough nie, and there are togariba with nie, imo-suru shaped thick strong dull nie-suji, and kinsuji. In addition, the nie are too rough, the clarity of the

nioiguchi is less than we see on Koto work, and there are a number of Satsuma's characteristic points.

The hamon is from Masayuki's early period, and sometimes we see copies of Shinkai's work. But his later work shows this less, and considering the shape, we suppose that this was a special order. Also, we shouldn't miss the fact that around the monouchi area, the midare hamon becomes gentle, and this is a characteristic point.

For another proper answer, some people voted for Motohira. In examining the forging, in some places we can see whitish lines in the hada, and this is a characteristic point of Masayuki and different from Motohira's tight moist appearing jigane.

Many people voted for Ippei Yasuyo. If it were his work, the shinogi would be high and the shinogi ji would be wide, and there would be influence from Naminohira which was strongly influenced by the Yamato Den. In addition, his forging shows ko-itame and the entire jigane is dark and different from this.

Commentary by Ooi Gaku

Kantei To No. 2: Tachi

Mei: Kunimune

Length: slightly less than 2 shaku 2 sun 8 bu

Sori: slightly less than 7 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: itame mixed with mokume; there is a slightly visible nagare hada; there are ji-nie, chikei, a dark colored ji, and jifu style clear midare utsuri.

Boshi: shallow notare, and the tip is round.

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

This is a Juyo token Bizen Saburo Kunimune tachi. Kunimune has two styles. One is a wide blade with a strong tachi shape, and there is a beautiful midare hamon composed mainly of choji. The other style has a standard or slightly narrow tachi shape, and a suguha style hamon mixed with ko-choji and ko-gunome. Kunimune is known to have a wide range of styles. This blade is slightly narrow, there is sori at the koshimoto, and even the tip has sori with a chu-kissaki. From the shape, this is work from the latter half of the Kamakura period. The jigane has clear utsuri, and this is supposed to be Bizen work. The jigane has nagare hada and the hada is visible, and it has a dark color. From this, we can recognize Bizen branch school characteristic points and this is different from main Osafune Bizen work with a tight itame hada and a bright and clear jigane.

Looking at the hamon, there are choji mixed with gunome. With a detailed examination, compared with peak Fukuoka Ichimonji's gorgeous choji, the choji groups or bunches do not show large and small sizes, and the hamon width varies only in some places. Inside the hamon, choji are mixed with many gunome. Also, there are no narrow waisted kawazuko choji which are seen in the work of smiths such as Osafune Mitsutada, early Nagamitsu work, and Hatakeda. This sword is nie-deki, and in places, the hamon become smaller, and is mixed with irregular shaped hamon features. Inside the hamon, there is a slightly visible hada which has whitish lines or details.

From the above characteristics, if you think of Kunimune's name, you can recognize that on the inside of hamon, these whitish lines or features are a characteristic Kunimune point referred to as "Bizen Saburo's whitish marks". But this sword's style is in between his two main styles, so it might be very difficult to judge with a single or one-time vote. People who came up with the correct answer have a very high level of perception.

Besides the correct answer, many people voted for Unjo, and Ko-Bizen and Ko-Ichimonji work. From the slightly narrow shape and jifu style utsuri, some voted for Unjo. If it were Unjo work, their typical hamon are a suguha style

mixed with ko-choji and ko-gunome. There are ashi and yo, saka-ashi, a tight nioiguchi with ko-nie, and the choji hamon is not prominent when compared to this hamon. Ko-Bizen and Ko-Ichimonji votes likely came from the clear jifu style utsuri and a classic looking hamon. But looking at the shape carefully, this blade has sori at the tip, but both of the above school's works would have a shape from no later than the early half of Kamakura period. They would have sori at the koshimoto, and the tip would "fall down going towards the point" (i.e. the sori would become more shallow going towards the point), and people should notice that.

Commentary by Takeda Kotaro

Kantei To No. 3: Katana

Mei: Omi daijo Fujiwara Tadahiro
Hizen Kuni Mutsu no kami Tadayoshi

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 5 bu

Sori: slightly less than 5 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

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

Hamon: choji mixed with gunome; some places have continuous long ashi and choji midare. There are areas mixed with togari shaped features, and yahazu shaped features. There are frequent long ashi and some yo. The midare valleys have a dense nioiguchi with nie clumps; there are small tobiyaki, kinsuji, sunagashi, and a bright nioiguchi.

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

This appears to be work from around Kanbun 9 to 12 (1669-72) judging from the signature. This is a Nidai Tadayoshi and Sandai Tadayoshi gassaku work. The

yasurime are katte sagari and slightly rough. The signature's bottom horizontal stroke in the last kanji is prominent and diagonal and slants to the right, and this is a major characteristic of the Sandai.

The shape has a standard width, the widths at the moto and saki are slightly different, the sori is shallow, there is a well proportioned wasori style, the kissaki is slightly long in an apparent Hizen style, and there is a good and well balanced shape.

The jigane is ko-itame hada and uniformly forged. There are abundant nie, fine chikei, and a komenuka hada. The hamon valleys have groups of nie and a dense clear nioiguchi. In some areas there are thick ashi. The belt-like straight boshi is present along the fukura. The jiba (jigane and hamon) is really characteristic Hizen work.

The hamon is mainly choji midare and the tips of the long ashi are thick. Some places are mixed with gunome, and some of the hamon features are square shaped. There are yahazu style and togari style features in the hamon as well. There are vertical variations in the hamon, and the hamon is slightly irregular and shows strong variations. Below the yokote, the midare hamon is more settled or calm, and slightly straight, and this pattern continues to the boshi. If the hamon is somewhat small with prominent tobiyaki, it would be the sandai's typical work. Although it has a gassaku mei with the nidai, we see few of the nidai's characteristic points, such as choji groups which are slightly large, and some strong round shapes. In some places the tips of the ashi are pointed in the direction of the kissaki or nakago.

Another proper answer is waki-Hizen (branch Hizen) work. But those generally have a notably darker jigane, the hada is visible, and many of the midare hamon areas between the choji have a shallow notare shape connecting these features. If people voted for Tadakuni work, many his hamon are a dynamic midare with frequent sunagashi and kinsuji, his boshi are midarekomi, and there are strong hakikake and a long return.

Commentary by Ooi Gaku

Kantei To No. 4: Tanto

Mei: Yamato Shikkake ju Norinaga saku
Ryakuo 3 nen (1340) 3 gatsu hi

Length: slightly less than 9 sun 7 bu

Sori: 5 rin

Style: hirazukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: itame mixed with nagare hada; there are ji-nie, chikei, and nie utsuri.

Hamon: narrow suguha mixed with ko-gunome; there are kuichigaiba, uchinoke, and frequent ko-nie.

Boshi: straight, with a komaru; the tip has hakikake, and on the ura there are kinsuji.

Horimono: on the omote is suken, on the ura is a shobu-hi carved through the nakago.

This is dated Ryakuo 3, and is a Juyo Token Shikkake Norinaga tanto.

Looking at the jigane, nagare hada is emphasized on the the entire ji, the hamon has some kuichigaiba (the oshigata does not show this, but they are above the machi), and uchinoke. On the omote side, the carving is deep, the top of suken is slightly wide, and this is not Yamato branch school work. In addition, the gap between the habaki and blade is noticeable, and from this you can imagine the original thickness of the blade (i.e., the blade's original kasane or thickness which is still present on the nakago). We wish look at this as mainstream Yamato school work. Among the five main Yamato schools, there are details to consider such as the Senjuin school's characteristic classic look and rich vertical hataraki, the Teigai school's sophisticated bright jiba (jigane and hamon), the Toma school's strong nie, and the Hosho school's characteristic masame-hada. This tanto has no such obvious characteristics, so from eliminating

possibilities, the Shikkake school's name comes to mind. However, this tanto does not have the Shikkake characteristic continuous gunome hamon, and so one has to hesitate to decide about this. However, sometimes Norinaga's signed work is suguha, and this is one of those. Also, on the omote, on the shobu-hi horimono, the tips are not connected, and this unique style of horimono is seen in the work of other smiths too, and we should recognize it. In addition, among the five Yamato school's mainline smiths, Norinaga is the only smith who signed with a Nanbokucho period date. For a tanto, this blade is slightly wide and long with a slight sori, and this could be a detail to help with appraisal.

In voting, quite a few people had the correct answer. Other answers were for smiths such as Ko-Mihara Masaie and Masahiro, and the Shodai Nobuie, and a fair number of people voted for them, and this is a reasonable point of view. If it were Ko-Mihara work, their utsuri does not reflect light strongly, and appear more like shirake utsuri. In addition, the clarity of their nioiguchi is not as good as we see on this tanto, and in addition, their jigane has prominent mokume hada. The Shodai Nobukuni answer is supposed to have resulted from observations which include the horimono. He is one of of Sadamune's san tetsu (three best students), and his rich hataraki such as nie, kinsuji, sunagashi, and the entire blade should have Soshu Den characteristic points.

Norinaga has three dated blades from Ryakuo 3 (1340), and all of them have a narrow suguha hamon, and one of them has his age of 68 years included in the mei.

Commentary by by Ishii Akira.

Kantei To No. 5 : Tanto

Mei: Yoshimitsu

Length: 7 sun 6.5 bu

Sori: uchizori

Style: hirazukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jigane: tight ko-itame hada; some areas are mixed with itame; there are abundant dense ji-nie, chikei, bo-utsuri and a bright and clear jigane.

Hamon: there is a yakikomi at the koshimoto and a chu-suguha hamon. some areas are mixed with ko-gunome; there are frequent ashi, ko-nie, uchinoke, nijuba and a bright and clear nioiguchi.

This tanto has a standard width and is small. It is slightly thick with an uchizori, and shows a shape from the latter half of the Kamakura Period. The jigane is a tight ko-itame hada, there are abundant ji-nie, a “nashiji hada”, and clear bo-utsuri. The hamon is chu-suguha with a bright nioiguchi. The boshi has a komaru and return. From the jiba (jigane and hamon) you can recognize this as Yamashiro work, especially from the Awataguchi school. Looking at details, there is a yakikomi at the koshimoto, and there are continuous small gunome, a style which is called “red beans”. The hamon width is narrower around the fukura, and furthermore, the boshi has strong nie, the nie appear to droop into the ji and form fine lines called “nie kuisagari”, and these details clearly show Awataguchi Yoshimitsu’s characteristic points.

Many people recognized the above characteristic points and voted for Yoshimitsu. Besides the correct answer, some people looked at the boshi as an “okina beard” (an old man’s beard), and voted for Shintogo Kunimitsu. If it were his work, there would be more emphasis on the ji-nie and chikei hataraki, and the jigane and hada would be stronger, and we would see more hataraki inside of the hamon such as kinsuji.

This tanto has the meibutsu “Nabeshima Toshiro”. The tanto’s story is described in the written literature, and it was handed down in the Saga clan’s Nabeshima family and then to the Tottori clan’s Ikeda family, and then presented to the Tokugawa Shogun family. Since then, when the Shogun’s

family had an male heir, during the son's genpuku (ceremony to celebrate reaching adulthood), he received this tanto and later would pass it down to the next generation.

Commentary by Kugiyama Naoko

Shijo Kantei To No.802 in the November 2023 issue

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 802 is a katana by Omi no kami Tadatsuna (nidai).

There is a difference in the widths at the moto and saki, there is a shallow sori, and a slightly short chu-kissaki, and this shows characteristic features of the Kanbun Shinto shape.

The jigane is a tight ko-itame hada, there are abundant dense ji-nie, frequent fine chikei, a very clear Osaka Shinto appearance, and well refined forging.

The hamon has an Osaka yakidashi which becomes gradually wider going forward from the moto. The boshi is straight, with a komaru and shows Osaka Shinto characteristic points. Also, the midare hamon is wide, the top of the choji midare hamon has an even height, there are frequent long ashi, the hamon is ko-nie deki with a bright dense nioiguchi. The style strongly reflects the work of the Shodai Tadatsuna, and is sometimes seen in the early work of the nidai (Ikkanshi Tadatsuna). Both of these smiths used two styles: one has continuous choji with long ashi, and the other style has valleys between between the individual choji, and the sides of each choji loop form the sides of the valleys, and there are no prominent ashi.

Among the characteristic points, one thing I would like to pay special attention to is a line in the middle of the midare hamon where there are long kinsuji and sunagshi. This line almost cuts through the choji and ashi, and continues

intermittently from the moto to the saki. This feature either appears regularly from the moto to the saki, or in places, and continues along the jigane as chikei and whitish forging (or hada) lines. This is on the junction or boundary where the steel used for the hamon meets the steel used for the sides of the blade when the hon-san mai construction method is used. This feature appears not only midare hamon, but also in sugaha hamon, and kinsuji lines appear along the junction between the hamon and jigane area steels.

The nakago tip is a sharply angled ha-agari kurijiri. The signature is on the center of the shinogi ji, along the mune side, and has slightly large sized kanji made with a thick chisel. The title in the mei is "Awataguchi" and this is an eight kanji signature, and this is common for both the shodai and the nidai. However, the shodai's yasurime are a steep sujichigai, and sometimes are a large sujichigai. The nidai's yasurime are sujichigai and a shallow sujichiagai, and from around Kansei 8 (1668) many of his works have kesho yasuri.

We do not know the date of the shodai's death, which would be the year the nidai became the head of the family. However, there are gassaku katana from Kanbun 4 (1664), and the nidai signed his name as Tadakuni. Also in Kanbun 9 (1669) the Shodai reached his 60th birthday, and this was included in a mei. From this, there is a theory that around this time, the nidai became the head of the family (Token Bijutsu No.329 has an article about Awataguchi Omi no kami Tadatsuna by Ogasawara Nobuo and Iida Toshihisa).

The shodai Tadatsuna has a blade dated Keian 1 (1648) that states his age is 39 years. The nidai has a dated blade from Kanbun 2 (1674) when he was 19 years old. From this, we can deduce that this katana was produced in Enpo 2 (1674), when the Shodai was 65 years old and the Nidai was 31 years old. According to the above theory, this is the nidai's work. However, the shape is Kanbun Shinto, and the even tops of the choji midare hamon are formed as well as they are in the Shodai's work, and this is supposed to be

during the transition period around Kanbun 8, and it is difficult to distinguish between the shodai and the nidai's work. In addition, the nidai's excellent horimono work is not present, so we treated either the Shodai or the Nidai answer as a correct answer. (Note that many horimono are seen after Genroku 3 (1690) by the Nidai using the name Ikkanshi).

Besides the correct answer, Ishido school work, Hizen-to school work, and the Chounsai Tsunatoshi name appeared, but those smiths used a different nakago shape. If it were Ishido school work, utsuri should be present, and if it were the Hizen To work, long ashi and a choji midare hamon with no yakidashi would be seen. If it were Chounsai work, there is supposed to be a characteristic repeat pattern with fixed intervals in the hamon.

From the ha-agari-kurijiri shape of the nakago tip, some people voted for Horikawa school work, and among those with choji hamon work, the Kunisuke name was prominent. If it were the shodai Kunisuke's work, many of his blades have a prominent sori, there is funbari, and a Kanei Shinto shape. His hamon, rather than being described as choji midare, are more likely to appear as a Shin Kunisada style gunome mixed with choji, and the choji are prominent. There is a dense nioiguchi, but it is rare to see an almost uniform or even width, like this blade, and around the top of the hamon there are sometimes tobiyaki, as we see in work by Shin Kunisada, and he has no kesho yasuri.

The Nidai Kunisuke (Nakakawachi) has hakoba style hamon mixed with continuous ko-choji, which is similar to a fukushiki midare hamon, and fist shaped choji are prominent. some of his nakago have kesho yasuri, and some blades have tanago bara nakago shapes and the tip is very narrow.

Some people voted for Ishimi Daijo Kunisuke, but his yakidashi and choji midare hamon are very rare. Usually his hamon are notare mixed with gunome, or suguha mixed with ko-gunome, gunome, and gunome-choji. Many of his

signatures were made with a fine chisel and yasurime are suji-chigai.

Commentary by Ooi Gaku.