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Meito Kansho: Examination of Important Swords

Juyo Bijutsuhin

Type: Katana

Mei: oite Osaka Izumi no kami Kunisada

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 7 bu 2 rin (74.9 cm)

Sori: 6 bu 4 rin (1.95 cm)

Motohaba: 1 sun 7 bu (3.25 cm)

Sakihaba: 8 bu 1 rin (2.45 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 1 rin (0.65 cm)

Motokasane: 1 bu 7 rin (0.5 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 6 bu (4.85 cm)

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

Nakago sori: 3 rin (0.1 cm)

Commentary

This is a shinogi zukuri sword with an ihorimune. It is thick and wide, and the difference in the widths at the moto and saki are not prominent. There is a slightly large sori, the sori at the bottom half is relatively prominent and there is a long chu-kissaki. The jigane is a tight itame hada. There are abundant dense ji-nie, frequent chikei, and the entire jigane produces a feeling of being hard steel. The hamon has a straight yakidashi at the moto, and above this, it is mainly a choji style hamon mixed with ko-gunome, togariba, and a large section of crumbled nie (nie-kuzure) under the yokote. There are frequent ashi, a dense nioiguchi with abundant even ko-nie, some slight tobiyaki, and a bright and clear nioiguchi. The boshi is straight, the point is a komaru, and there is long return on the ura. The horimono on the omote on the bottom half is inside of a frame and is a shin no kurikara relief. On the ura there are two bonji, and under these, a gomabashi. The nakago is ubu. The tip is ha-agari kurijiri and the yasurime are a strong sujichigai. There is one mekugi ana. On the omote under the mekugi ana along the mune side there is a long signature.

We should mention that the Shodai Kunisada (Shin Kunisada) is the sword smith who build the foundation for Osaka Shinto along with the Shodai Kunisuke. In examining Kunisada's genealogy, Saikyo Temple in Miyazaki city is supposed to have the most detailed material. Also, before the war, this genealogy was investigated by many experts.

Kunisada was born in Tensho 17 (1589), the son of Hyuga Koku Inoue Yoshimitsu who later became a monk and changed his name to Dogen, and his birth mother is

supposed to have passed away when Kunisada was young. When he became an adult, he went to Edo and became a student of Edo's master smith Horikawa Kunihiro. However, Kunihiro had already reached an advanced age. At the time Kunisada was 18 years old, Kunihiro was supposed to be 77 years old, and one theory that says Kunihiro passed away in Keicho 19 (1614) at the age of 84. From Kunisada's signature in his early work and his characteristic style, it is considered certain that the same school's senior student Kunitoshi was his actual teacher. The migration to Osaka was made in Genna 7 (1621) when he was 32 years old. He has a signed work "Settsu Osaka ju Fujiwara Kunisada", and from this, we can guess that he moved there at least several years before signing this sword. However, in Genna 9 on September 15 he received the "Izumi-no-kami" title, and later he became the domain's craftsman in Osaka in his birthplace, for the obi-han (the prefecture) for the third generation lord Ito Sukehisa. In Kanei 7 (1630), at the age of 41 years, the Nidai Kunisada (Shinkai) was born. His last signed work was in Kanei 21 (1644) at the age of 55 years. The mei says: "seikoku (birthplace) Hyuga ju Inoue Izumi no kami Fujiwara Kunisada", and lists his birthplace and real name which he never signed before. It is not definite, but probably in this period, it might have been possible that the Nidai Kunisada used a daimei from the shodai, and we can imagine that the shodai made this last example of his own mei on work made by himself. Therefore, from the following year, Shoho 2 (1645), we see daimei by Shinkai, in the so-called sosho style mei (Dowa mei) (and some people think a Daimei was also used by other smiths in the school). From Keian 2 (1649) at the age of 60, the daimei becomes a kaisho style. He died three years later in Keian 5, on May 5th, at the age of 63.

This katana is different from the usual "Izumi no kami Fujiwara Kunisada" swords. At the top he has written "oite Osaka", and has omitted the Fujiwara name. This kind of signature is seen around the mid-Kanei period, and Kunisada was 40 years old and in his prime. The shape is wide compared with his usual work, the long kissaki is an almost large kissaki. The length is close to 2 shaku 5 sun, and this is an unusually large sword for him, and probably this is an elaborate special order. The hamon has a straight yakidashi, and is primarily a choji style hamon mixed with ko-gunome. Under the yokote around the monouchi area, the variation in the hamon appears to be emphasized too much. However, there are tobiyaki and yubashiri, and from the moto to the point, this shows his original style and his characteristic points. In addition, an eye-catching feature is on the omote, and is a detailed shin kurikara horimono inside of a frame, with not even slight wear being apparent. It seems to be in original condition, and we can recognize that it has endured only slight polishing wear. The horimono is either by Kunisada himself or a horimono specialist, and we cannot be definite about this. However, although there is a detailed excellent horimono here, there is no "hori-dosaku" in the signature (which would mean that the smith has also made the horimono). Also, one of Shodai Kunisuke's wakizashi has the same kind of relief and the ura has bonji and gomabashi horimono in the same location. From this, it seems highly likely the horimono was made by a specialist craftsman. Also, it is conventionally pointed out that the kurikara's characteristic points are that his eye is called an "acorn's eye", the upper and lower jaws are slightly short, the mouth opening is small, and long scales are seen at the top of his head.

In any case, this work has all of Shin Kunisada's characteristic points, and as one of his representative works, this deserves to be praised as a masterpiece.

Explanation and oshigata by Ishii Akira.

Shijo Kantei To No.822

Information

Type: Wakizashi

Length: slightly less than 1 shaku 5 sun 3 bu (46.25 cm)

Sori: 4 bu (1.25 cm)

Motohaba: 8.5 bu (2.6 cm)

Sakihaba: slightly less than 6 bu (1.75 cm)

Motokasane: slightly less than 2 bu (0.55 cm)

Sakikasane: slightly over 1 bu (0.35 cm)

Kissaki length: slightly over 1 sun (3.1 cm)

Nakago length: 3 sun 7 bu (11.2 cm)

Nakago sori: slight

This is a shinogi tsukuri wakizashi with an ihorimune. The width is slightly narrow, the widths at the moto and saki are different, there is a standard thickness, a slightly large sori, a saki sori, and a chu-kissaki, and a small elegant shape. The jigane is itame hada mixed with mokume hada and nagare-like hada. There are ji-nie and bo-utsuri. The hamon and the boshi are as seen in the oshigata. The hamon width is slightly narrow for the width of the blade, some places have a midare hamon with large spaces between the midare waves. There are not many prominent ashi and yo. The nakago is ubu, the nakago tip is a slightly square kurijiri, and the yasurime are katte-sagari. There is one mekugi ana. On the omote, about a two kanji space above the mekugi ana, there is a small size six kanji signature made with a fine chisel on the shinogi ji. The ura has a date in the same style.

This smith has a blade over 2 shaku 2 sun long which is Juyo Bunkazai, and was forged in the neighboring province.

Tokubetsu Jujo Tosogu

Natamame (sword bean) sukashi tsuba

Mei: Sashu ju Oda uji Naoka

In the Satsuma gold smith's world, the Oda school is comparable to the Chishiki school. The Chishiki school, besides using iron, used inlays (iroe) of shakudo, and shibuichi, and a wide range of styles. The Oda school is good at producing a well forged iron ground with niku-bori sukashi. In the Satsuma gold smith's world, the Oda school is comparable with the Chishiki school. Many of their designs are the same as other Satsuma gold smiths, and include elements such as natamame (sword beans), bamboo and tigers and clouds and dragons, and from their designs and execution, it is no exaggeration to say they are Satsuma tsuba.

The true essence of the Oda school is seen in natamame sukashi tsuba. Many of the school's smiths worked with natamame sukashi tsuba, but Takada, the founder of school, has work which is notably thick and heavy, and is the best. If you pick one up, it is very heavy, and you can feel the rich carved volume. The saya (pod) carvings are the best part of the tsuba. Inside of the pod area, the beans are carved in three dimensions, and if you push it with your finger, it looks like it might fall out. However, the branches, leaves, and vine carvings emphasize the pods. They emphasize the pod's volume. The vines are curved, and wrap around in a spiral, and appear like a real plant. This delicate carving technique was also used by his son Naonori, but the impact of his work is not as strong as that of his father Naoka's.

The Satsuma domain had a large samurai class compared to other domains. However, they had a strong samurai spirit, and swordsmanship was popular in schools such as the Shigen-ryu and Jisen-ryu. This kodogu shows the Satsuma spirit as well, and Oda Naoka's tsuba work is supreme.

Explanation by Takeda Kotaro

Note: This tsuba is being exhibited in "The beauty of the Japanese Sword: the expression and essence of the Satsuma gold smiths" until July 21 at the NBTHK museum.

June Teirei Kansho kai

June Teirei Kansho kai

Date: June 14 (the second Saturday in June)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan Auditorium

Lecturer: Ooi Gaku

Kantei To No. 1: Tachi

Mei: Mitsutada

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 5 bu

Sori: slightly over 5 bu

Style: shinogi tsukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: itame hada; the hada is slightly visible and some areas have a strong visible hada; there are abundant ji-nie, and midare utsuri.

Hamon: mainly ko-gunome mixed with choji, ko-midare, and togari. There are ashi, yo, nioideki, tobiyaki, and some sunagashi. At the koshimoto there are some uchinoke and kinsuji.

Boshi: on the omote there is a strong midare with a sharp point and return. The ura is a shallow notare, the tip has hakikake and is round, and there is a return.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are bo-hi with maru-dome.

Usually, in Mitsutada's signatures, in the "mitsu" kanji, the first stroke is a vertical line and the second and third strokes are lower on each side and diagonal. But in this signature, the mitsu kanji's second and third stroke lines are vertical and directly beside the first stroke, and this is supposed to be an older work. This is a characteristic point and the same as seen in Ko-Bizen Mitsutada's mei. Considering this, recently, work thought to be by Ko-Bizen Mitsutada could be actually be Osafune Mitsutada's early work, and this is now thought to be a strong possibility.

The tachi has a narrow shape, a standard thickness, and the widths at the moto and saki are different. There is a large koshizori in spite of the blade being suriage. There is a slightly small chu-kissaki for the width. At first glance, it looks like it is from no later than the early half of the Kamakura period, but the tip does not fall down going forward (i.e. the sori does not become shallower going towards the point), but instead, the tip has sori. Also, the utsuri is not jifu utsuri, but rather midare utsuri, and it is clear. The hamon has a clear nioiguchi, instead of the older style nie and nioi, and from these details we can judge this as work made after the mid-Kamakura period.

However, in discussing Mitsutada's work, we can imagine that the blade would be wider and that there would be an inokubi kissaki. There is a well forged tight jigane just like Yamashiro work, the hamon has large bunches of choji mixed with gunome, and furthermore, the kawazuko choji are notable and exuberant. This type of style is seen in his mumei work. For examples of this kind of signed work, there is the Satake family's heirloom, the No. 17 Tokubetsu Juyo tachi but this is rare. Generally, his signed works have a standard width, some of the hada is visible, the hamon are small compared with above, the ko-midare pattern does not stand out, there are clear ko-gunome and ko-choji, and the width along the top of the hamon is uniform. At the koshimoto and around monouchi, the hamon width is low, and we can recognize an early Osafune work's characteristic points. Also, Nagamitsu made blades in this style, and at this time, we treated Nagamitsu as a correct answer.

Kantei To No. 2: Katana

Mei: Okachiyama sanroku junin Fujiwara Nagasada
Keio 2 (1866) 2 gatsu oite Bufu tsukuru

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 4 bu

Sori: slightly less than 5 bu

Style: shinogi tsukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jigane: tight itame hada; there is some nagare hada; there are abundant ji-nie, chikei, and a bright jigane.

Hamon: gunome mixed with togari, large gunome, and konotare. There are ashi, a very dense wide nioiguchi, frequent nie and muneyaki, some yubashiri, sunagashi, frequent kinsuji and a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: gentle midarekomi with strong hakikake; there are kinsuji and nijuba; the tip is a komaru with a return.

This blade is wide, and the difference in widths at the moto and saki is not prominent. The blade is thick and heavy, and there is a shallow sori and long chu-kissaki. From the shape you can judge this as Shinshinto period work.

The jigane has frequent ji-nie and clear chikei. The midare hamon has frequent nie, yubashiri, kinsuji, and sunagashi, and the nioiguchi is bright and clear. From this, you can judge this as a Shinshinto period Soshu Den first class master smith's work.

In addition, a noteworthy point is the mune. Among the Shinshinto period smiths who prefer a mitsumune, there are unexpectedly few, except on hirazukuri wakizashi and tanto, however, a high percentage of mitsumune work by leading smiths was made by Bizen Den Tairyusai Munehiro, and in case of the Soshu Den by Okachiyama Fujiwara Nagasada. From the Shinshinto style mitsumune and Soshu Den smiths, three names come to mind. First is Okachiyama Nagasada.

Notably, Nagasada's mitsumune work has sharp angles, and often it is wide. Also, his hamon contain prominent large togariba, and this is one of his characteristics, and often there is muneyaki. The boshi has strong hataraki, often the tip is komaru, and there is a wide nioiguchi like this one. Between the togariba, the open valleys have a midare hamon which fills the space in the valleys, and there is a very dense nioiguchi, and in many of these places, there are mura nie and nie kuzure.

Sa Hideyuki sometimes made swords with a mitsumune. With his large gunome midare hamon, the round top gunome stand out, and along the nioiguchi along the hamon, there are fewer mura nie, and the nioiguchi is brighter.

In voting, there were many people who voted for Kiyomaro group and Satsuma Shinshinto smiths. If it were the Kiyomaro group's work, there would be less hiraniku, a poor fukura, a very sharp shape, and there would be larger numbers of long kinsuji and sunagashi. If it were Satsuma work, the hamon ha-niku is more notable, rough nie form mura nie (groups or clusters of nie), there are abundant kinsuji and niesuji which are called Satsuma imo-tsuru (potato vines), and both schools have a few mitsumune swords.

Kantei To 3: Wakizashi

Mei: Shoji Chikuzen Daijo Naotane with kao
Tenpo 15 nen (1844) 11 gatsu kichijitsu

Length: 1 shaku 3 sun 1 bu

Sori: 2 bu

Style: hirazukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jigane: itame mixed with large itame and mokume; the hada is slightly visible; there are abundant ji-nie and frequent chikei.

Hamon: mainly kataochi gunome midare mixed with square shaped features; some places have saka-ashi; there are long ashi, saka-ashi, frequent nie, hotsure, yubashiri, kinsuji, sunagashi and a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: midarekomi with hakikake, and the tip is komaru.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are futasuji-hi finished in maru-dome.

This wakizashi is long and wide with a shallow sori. This suggests that it would be work from either the peak of the Nanbokuchō period, from the Momoyama period, or the Shinshinto period. It is thick, there is a strong shape, and there are long ashi, some of which look like they extend right to the edge. These features suggest that you can judge this as Shinshinto period work. In addition, this is a hirazukuri wakizashi with a mitsumune, the jigane is itame mixed with large itame, there are prominent chikei, and the hamon has frequent ha-nie which is a Soshu Den style. The hamon is mainly kataochi gunome, and has square shaped features which suggests Bizen Den work, such as Kanemitsu. There are classic traditional features present, and these are Shinshinto characteristic points.

The most successful smith using this kind of style was Naotane, and at this time, many people voted for the correct answer. Also, among work with this kind of style, there is utsuri and a soft hamon at the koshimoto. In many works without utsuri, we do not see a soft hamon around the machi area.

In voting, besides Naotane, Kurihara Nobuhide's name was prominent. He has work similar to Naotane. If it were his work, the jigane often has nagare hada areas, and near the hamon border, there are continuous long kinsuji and sunagashi, and often at the top of the hamon there are small ashi and ko-gunome, and there is a small hamon. Nobuhide's boshi have strong hakikake and a long return, and less frequently, mitsumune.

Kantei To No. 4: Katana

Mei: Hirosuke

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 4 sun

Sori: slightly over 9 bu

Style: shinogi tsukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: itame mixed with mokume; there is a slightly visible hada. There are fine ji-nie, dull chikei, and the ura has a slightly whitish jigane.

Hamon: the hamon is wide, based on notare, and has continuous ko-gunome and ko-choji mixed together; there are some gunome and ko-notare areas. There are ashi, fine yo, a tight nioiguchi, frequent nie, sunagashi, some kinsuji, and slightly small tobiyaki along the mune, or muneyaki.

Boshi: there is a wide yakiba; the boshi is straight with a komaru. There are some hakikake, and the tip is a shimaba style.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are futasuji-hi with marudome.

The Shimada school has a wide range of styles, including suguha, and also used neighboring area styles such as Sue Soshu (hitatsura), Sue Seki (togari-midare), and the Senji school (hakoba, with the omote and ura the same). Among these styles, it is easy to recognize and judge hitatsura work, and Hirosuke's gunome and ko-gunome hamon make less of an impression.

Originally, this kind of work was the Shimada school's main style and there are many master works. Notably, this work looks like it was modelled after good Soshu Den hamon, such as a shallow notare midare, with the notare mixed with gunome and ko-gunome, and among the Juyo Token swords, there are more of these blades than those which have hitatsura hamon.

This katana shows this kind of work. It is wide, there is a large kissaki, and the difference in the widths at the moto and saki does not stand out. There is itame hada with chikei, the notare hamon is mixed with gunome and ko-gunome with frequent nie, and notably this is supposed to be modelled after Sadamune's work, and he produced good futatsuji-hi.

In the Shimada school, for both the quality and quantity of work, Yoshisuke, Sukemune, and Hirosuke are excellent, and among the three of them, Hirosuke has slightly less work. But he produced many works with magnificent shapes, just like this katana. He was a skilled smith, and from the Shimada school, one Juyo Bijutsuhin is Hirosuke's work.

In voting, from the prominent saki-sori, and the wide boshi yakiba, people voted for smiths from the end of the Muromachi period from different schools. If it were Sue Bizen work, there should be utsuri, a mainly midare hamon and prominent high and low variations, fukushiki-gunome, and prominent ashi and yo. Sue Soshu work has more refined forging with prominent chikei, the hamon have choji and gunome, with slightly square features, and the midare bunches are a slightly larger size.

Kanefusa's midare hamon have open bottom valleys, large angular hamon features, and yahazu style hamon repeats. Many of his boshi are sharp and have a long return.

Taira Takada's jigane around the monouchi and koshimoto areas used to have a weak forging appearance, and the hamon have a prominent Sue Bizen style open bottom valley midare, and strangely shaped hamon features.

Kantei To No. 5 : Wakizashi

Mei: Izumi no kami Fujiwara Kunisada

Length: slightly less than 1 shaku 2 sun 9 bu

Sori: slightly less than 4 bu

Style: shinogi tsukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: a slightly tight itame hada; there are fine chikei, and slightly dull chikei.

Hamon: straight yakidashi at the moto, and above this a notare midare mixed with some gunome like features. There are small ashi, a dense nioiguchi, abundant nie, kinsuji, and sunagashi; on the ura over the yokote there are muneyaki and a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: on the omote the boshi is straight; some areas are a small midare; the tip is sharp with a return; on the ura the boshi is notare, the tip has hakikake, there is a komaru which is sharp, and there is a slightly long return.

Horimono: on the omote there is a kurikara; on the ura there is a long bonji, a koshi-hi and soe-hi finished with marudome.

This wakizashi is short, slightly wide, and there is a sharply angled high shinogi ji. There is a large sori, which is a saki-zori, and a large kissaki. This shape is seen in many Keicho Shinto blades. Kunisada later joined the Horikawa school which was prosperous in this period. His peak active period was from just before and after the Kanei period, and he continued to produce works which give an impression of having a large volume and include hiratsukuri and shobu-tsukuri blades.

This blade has a tight itame hada with fine ji-nie. The hamon has a straight yakidashi at the koshimoto, and a wide Horikawa style notareba. There is a dense nioiguchi, abundant nie, and the work is supposed to be close to that of his actual teacher Kunitoshi. But there is a bright nioiguchi, the area around the yokote has muneyaki and tobiyaki, which is seen as a Shin Kunisada characteristic feature. In addition, the kurikara horimono has unique acorn eyes the corners of the eyes are slanted. From this detail, many people voted for the correct answer.

Besides the correct answer, votes for Yasutsugu were prominent. That answer is supposed to have come from the Keicho Shinto style shape, and the notare hamon with detailed horimono. But if it were his work, there would be a dark colored jigane mixed with mokume hada, a visible hada, a worn down nioiguchi, and the boshi would be a shallow notare with a sharp tip and long return.

Echizen kurikara horimono are carved more deeply than this, the composition would be slightly closer or larger view, and the Sanko's nails are notably shorter, and often the tail

is wrapped around the hilt one time whereas Shin Kunisada preferred a tail wrapped two times around the hilt.

Ikkanshi Tadatsuna's dragon's eyes are big, the corners of eyes are less slanted, and many of the eyes are just round.

Shijo Kantei To No.820 in the May, 2025 Issue

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To is a katana by Horikawa Kunihiro.

This katana is wide and the difference in the widths at the moto and the saki are not very large. There is a shallow sori and a large kissaki. This is either a Nanbokucho period largely suriage blade, or work from the end of the Muromachi period to the Keicho period, or an often seen Shinshinto period shape, and you can narrow down the period.

Among these periods, if it were a Nanbokucho period tachi, it would be longer, there would be a large sori, the tip would have sori, and there could be a koshizori. If this is a largely suriage blade, the funbari would be gone, and that is different from what the hints say, so that should not be a possibility. A katana from the end of the Muromachi period would have a pronounced saki-sori. Shinshinto period katana are thick, and so are the point areas, and many of them are heavy. The hints do not list these characteristic points, so a Keicho Shinto blade would be become the first candidate.

Kunihiro has some thick blades, but not as heavy as this one. In his Keicho Shinto work, the thickness of many of his blades are rather standard, and he has slightly thinner work. He has reproductions of old swords which seem to include exact copies of parts of the horimono which have been worn due to polishing, and it appears that he carefully studied older swords. It is a possibility that he copied even the thickness of the old swords which famous Koto samurai used until then, and noted the effects of repeated polishing. From the jiba (jigane and hamon) and futasuji-hi horimono, it appears that he was strongly aware of Sadamune's work.

The jigane has ji-nie and chikei, and itame mixed with mokume hada, and the hada is visible, and is a distinctive hada. This was meant to indicate that there was a "zanguri hada". This was seen in Soshu Den's Koto period forging which clearly showed a hada pattern, and showed some uruoi or an impression or a feeling of moisture. "Zanguri" means there is a visible hada, and a slightly dry appearance, and not close to a pleasing Koto texture.

We do not always say that "zanguri" describes Horikawa's work, and it is used to describe work from Sue-Sa and Naoe-Shizu, and sometimes Shinshinto work, but this depends on the individual sword. Also, this term may be used too much to describe or focus on Horikawa school work, and sometimes I have seen Kunihiro's suguha tanto

with tight forging work described incorrectly as zanguri, and we need pay attention to this.

The hamon is low, and a gentle notare with intervals between waves. The hamon border or habuchi has hataraki such as yubashiri and sunagashi, and around the monouchi area it becomes wider, with a slightly wider nioiguchi which is a characteristic feature of Kunihiro, and the hints referring to his worn down nioiguchi match with Kunihiro's characteristic points. The boshi is a shallow notare with a round return, which is the style most often seen in his work. Also, generally Shinto nioiguchi are carefully made but are relatively simple and not as interesting. But Kunihiro's nioiguchi has wide and narrow areas, a varying brightness, some areas have strong nie which can form mura nie, and his delicate variations are something we see in Koto work. At Kansho Kai, often people often vote for a koto work when seeing his work.

Also, extending below the machi there is a yakiba, and around the beginning of the yakiba, there is a mizukage. This is often seen in Kunihiro's work. In this period, sometimes the Shodai Tadayoshi, the Shodai Kunikage, and other smiths have mizukage. The presence or absence of mizukage is supposed to be due to temperature differences during yakiire around the machi area or in the nakago in the area where the surface of the water meets the nakago. On the nakago, mizukage is not seen since the nakago is not polished. Mizukage occurs around the area where the yakiba begins.

When a blade is retempered, i.e. during saiha, in order to protect the original nakago, the blade is quenched right at the machi (with the nakago remaining out of the water), because the smith wants to protect the original nakago's condition. In such a case, mizukage is seen around the machi on the blade, so sometimes we see mizukage around the machi or above the machi. In recent years, some experts have also discussed "yakidashi utsuri". In any case, when you look at mizukage or read that there is mizukage, it is necessary to determine if the mizukage is original, or resulted during saiha or retempering.

This nakago mune is round (and has a small volume), the tip is narrow and ha-agari kurijiri. The yasurime are a pronounced sujichigai. There is large kanji signature under the mekugi ana along the mune side, This matches with many examples of Kunihiro's nakago style.

For another proper answer, there were votes for Deiwa Daijo Kunimichi, Horikawa Kuniyasu, and Osumijo Masahiro.

Kunimichi is supposed to have had a strong relationship with the Sanpin school from Seki, and recently, a naginata with taka-no-ha yasurime was found (signed Heianjo ju Kunimichi, Keicho 1? nen 3 gatsu kichijitsu). His jigane has some areas with Seki style nagare hada. Many of his boshi are notare with a sharp tip or a Sanpin boshi. Also, his hamon are a large midare with saka-ashi, and the nakago tip is round, and these are his major characteristic points.

Kuniyasu is supposed to have been Kunihiro's youngest brother. Among the school's smiths, except for wakizashi, he is supposed to have made the largest number of works

with a zanguri jigane. He has some works which are similar to Kunihiro's, many his hamon are wide with an angular featured notare mixed with a midareba around the monouchi, and most notable, his nakago yasurime are a gyaku large sujichigai which is different.

Many of Masahiro's works are long, his jigane has prominent mokume hada, the hamon is mixed with ko-notare, and for the width of the blade, the hamon is wider than Kunihiro's, and we never see the hamon width become wider around the monouchi. Also, in the case of katana, he has very few two kanji signatures, and usually there is a long signature with a title. On the ura, many of his swords show where he lived, and this is supposed to be one of his characteristic points.

Commentary by Ooi Gaku

Notice Concerning Shinsa

The number of items accepted for Shinsa will be limited

Amended Statement

In order to improve efficiency during Shinsa evaluations, the NBTHK will limit the total number of items accepted for a Shinsa, and the number of items that one person can submit for a Shinsa. We appreciate your understanding this. If any items are submitted with false statements (including submitting extra applications for an item), the NBTHK may decide that these applications are inappropriate and may make the space available to other applicants. In such a situation, these items will be removed from the Shinsa without notice, and these applicants could be refused permission to participate in future Shinsa (please look at the terms of service).

Token Shinsa

A limited number of items will be accepted. During the acceptance window or month for a Token Shinsa, the number of items accepted will generally be 1,600 items.

The number of articles accepted through internet applications for a Shinsa will usually be limited to 1,400 items and to 50 items from one person.

From September, 2025 (beginning with the August application period) the limit in the number of applications from one person will be reduced from 50 items to 30 items.

The number of articles accepted through paper applications will usually be limited to 200 items, and there will be a limit of 10 items per person.

Toso Shinsa

Toso (koshirae) Shinsa applications can be made by mail or through the internet.

For these Shinsa, an upper limit of 100 items will be accepted.

The number of items accepted through internet applications will usually be limited to 80 items with a limit of 10 items per person.

The number of items accepted through paper applications will generally be 20 items with a limit of 5 items per person.

Tosogu Shinsa

Tosogu (koshirae component) Shinsa items will generally be limited to 750 items

Up to 650 items, with a limit of 30 items per person, will be accepted from internet applications.

Up to 100 items, with a limit of 10 items per person, will be accepted from paper applications.

Applications through the internet

After registration application for a shinsa is completed, click on the “registration” button, and the screen should show your complete pre-registration document. After the pre-registration is complete and you have a confirmed reservation number, you cannot change the accepted shinsa item for another item. In case you desire to change an item for shinsa, you must cancel the registered item, and then register another item. If you cancel an accepted item when the submitted Shinsa applications have reached the limited number, other people’s items cannot be accepted for Shinsa.

During the registration period, if you wish to register another item, and we have already reached limit for the number of accepted items, you cannot register any additional items for that particular Shinsa.

For the dates and times of the application periods, please read the 2025 Hozon and Tokubetsu Hozon Shinsa schedules.

Application via paper documents

The NBTHK must receive applications within the designated application period.

For the application periods, please check the 2025 Hozon and Tokubetsu Hozon Shinsa and reception schedules.

When the number of applications exceeds the limited number of applications which can be accepted, we will select applications by lottery among all the valid applications.

For the lottery we will use a digital protocol, and we will post a notice concerning the process.

1. For the lottery we will use an Excel function to provide a random number for each application.
2. Based on the number of applications received, we will accept applications until we reach the upper limit for the number of applications.

We will accept applications delivered by mail with postmarks.

We cannot accept applications delivered directly to the NBTHK counter or delivered by a courier service.

When the number of applications exceeds the limited acceptance number or received after the acceptance date, we will return the applications.