

NBTHK SWORD JOURNAL
ISSUE NUMBER 826
NOVEMBER, 2024

MEITO KANSHO:
APPRECIATION OF IMPORTANT SWORDS

Mei: Kuninaga

Accompanied by a Honami Kochu origami dated Shotoku 2 nen (1712)

Owner: NBTHK

Tachi

Length: 2 shaku 2 sun 8 bu 9 rin (69.35 cm)

Sori: 6 bu 4 rin (1.95 cm)

Motohaba: 8 bu 6 rin (2.6 cm)

Sakihaba: 5 bu 4 rin (1.65 cm)

Motokasane: 1 bu 7 rin (0.5 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu (0.3 cm)

Kissaki length: 8 bu 6 rin (2.6 cm)

Nakago length: 6 sun 6 bu (20.0 cm)

Nakago sori: 5 rin (1.5 cm)

Commentary

This is a shinogi tsukuri tachi with an ihorimune. It is narrow, and the difference in the widths at the moto and saki are slight. It is thin, there is a large sori even though it is suriage, the tip falls down going forward (the sori becomes shallower going towards the point), and there is a small kissaki. The jigane is itame mixed with mokume hada and some nagare hada. The entire ji is well forged, and there are ji-nie, chikei, and pale utsuri. The hamon is mainly a ko-choji style hamon mixed with ko-midare. There are some tobiyaki at the top of the hamon, the hamon is almost all nioi deki, and the entire nioiguchi is soft. The boshi has a wide yakiba. On the omote the boshi is a small midarekomi. The ura boshi is straight, and both sides have a slight return. The horimono on the omote is a bonji with a koshi hi carved into the nakago. The ura has a suken. The nakago is suriage, the tip is a shallow kurijiri. The new yasurime are kiri and old yasurime are unknown. There are five mekugi ana, there is a two kanji signature on the Omote's flat area above the third mekugi ana.

Kuninaga is one of the representatives of the old Kyoto sword smiths. He is supposed to be the son of the Sanjo Munechika school's Arikuni, or a grandson. He lived in Gojo with Kanenaga who was either his older brother or his father, and because of this, he is called as Gojo Kuninaga. Considering Kanenaga, all of Kuninaga's work appears to be older looking than Kanenaga's, so there is a theory questioning this historical sword book's opinion. His signed works consist of fewer than ten pieces. Besides a Juyo Bunkazai ken, there is an old imperial treasure "Meibutsu Tsurumaru Kuninaga", owned by Ise shrine, a tachi, two Juyo Bijutsuhin, and one Juyo token, and in addition there is a tachi without a signature which was handed down in the Bizen Ikeda family. Kuninaga's works are rare, but with the "Tsurumaru" tachi, his reputation is high. His signatures are inscribed above the mekugi ana along the mune side, and there are two styles: one has the kuni kanji compressed into a tight vertical shape kanji, and the other style is a vertical long angular shaped kanji. In the signatures, in the kuni kanji, the first and last strokes are connected and form an "L" shape, and conventionally, this is pointed out as being an unusual shape (reference: Token Bijutsu No. 604). Judging from this, either another smith inherited his signature, or his signature changed with age, and this issue should be studied in the future.

Kuninaga's styles reflect the period, and have a koshizori, a sori falling down going forward (i.e. becoming slightly shallower going towards the tip), a small kissaki, and a gentle tachi shape. There are two styles seen in his jigane, a refined ko-itame hada, or a well forged small itame hada. Also, his hamon are either a suguha style mixed with ko-midare and ko-choji, or mainly ko-midare and ko-choji with a small midare which is what we see in the Ise shrine tachi. Either style of hamon has frequent ashi and yo. His shapes and jiba (jigane and hamon) are elegant and sophisticated.

This tachi has a pronounced sori, and besides being suriage, is slightly narrow, and there is a small kissaki. You can see the original graceful tachi shape. The jigane is itame mixed with mokume, and is well forged. As expected, you can recognize the Kyoto style with no deficiencies or rough work. Also, the entire hamon is soft looking, and mainly a ko-choji style hamon mixed with ko-midare and small midare. The hamon style is similar to that of the Ise shrine's tachi. In addition, over the hamon, in some places, there are small tobiyaki hataraki. This is seen here before it is seen in Kyoto work as a characteristic point, and before it is seen in the work of the next generation of Kyoto smiths such as Awataguchi Kuniyasu, Ayanokoji Sadatoshi, and Rai Kuniyuki. In Kuniyuki's signed work, if there is a hi, the mei is signed on the flat area of the nakago. Unfortunately, the signature is slightly corroded, but we can confirm as I explained above, this has the first "kuni" kanji style signature. In any case, we can recognize this as a rare signed Kuninaga work, and this is very valuable as a reference material, and as a classic work.

This was in the "Kozan Oshigata", and in Showa 12 (1937) when it was a Juyo Bijutsuhin, the owner was the Uwajima domain Date family's 11th generation, Date Muneaki. From this we can feel sure that in the Edo period, it was handed down in the Date family.

This is part of Mr. Suzuki Shoichi's collection, which was assembled over a forty year period, and which was given to our association. In January of Reiwa 7 (2025) he felt individuals should not store or hide away such a collection, which included a Juyo

Bunkazai tachi signed by Kuniyuki, a Juyo Bunkazai ken with the mei Mitsutada, other Juyo Bijutsuhin, a Tokubetu Juyo Token, three swords which were in the Kyoho Meibutsu Cho, and 13 Juyo Token blades. In addition, he had three Juyo Tosogu, and one complete tosogu set. Following his wishes that these items be widely seen and appreciated, the NBTHK will be having a memorial exhibition "Japanese Swords from the Suzuki Shoichi Collection" from October 25 to December 21, 2025.

Explanation and oshigata by Ishii Akira.

Shijo Kantei To No. 826

Information

Katana

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 3 sun 2 bu

Sori: 5 bu (1.55 cm)

Motohaba: slightly over 1 sun (3.1 cm)

Sakihaba: 7 bu (2.15 cm)

Motokasane: 2.5 bu (0.75 cm)

Sakikasane: slightly over 1 bu (0.4 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 4.5 bu (4.4 cm)

Nakago length: 6 sun 6 bu (20.0 cm)

Nakago sori: slight

This is shinogi tsukuri sword with an ihorimune. It is wide, and the difference in the widths at the moto and saki is not prominent. It is thick, there is a shallow sori, and a long chu-kissaki. The jigane is itame mixed with mokume, and some places have a mokume and ayasugi style jihada, and a slightly visible hada. There are chikei, and a dark iron color. Below the machi there are whitish areas, and there is a mizukage. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the oshigata. The hamon is ko-nie deki, there are some slight muneyaki, and a slightly worn down nioiguchi. The horimono are concentrated at the koshimoto. On the omote, the dragon's tail is coiled around the ken as though it is tied to the ken, and this is the school's characteristic kurikara. Among the school's work, this smith has notably many kurikara. On the ura, under the bonji there are koshi-hi and soe-hi carved into the nakago. The nakago is ubu, the nakago tip's narrow width is slightly pronounced. The tip is ha-agari kurijiri, and the yasurime are kiri. There are two mekugi ana. There is a seven kanji signature on the omote under the mekugi ana, and along the mune side.

Tokubetsu Jujo Tosogu

San mei zan zu (“three famous mountains” design) kozuka

Mei: kao and gold stamp

Mei: Ansei Hinoto Mi Yochu Shunmei Hogan

This is Kono Shunmei’s last kozuka work, and he had a strong presence in the Edo gold smith world at the end of the Edo period.

The kozuka has a polished shibuichi ground which is tasteful and beautiful, and which has a quiet or understated impression. The omote has three mountains engraved in a small volume style ke-bori.

In the center, Mount Fuji is surrounded by clouds which are expressed with iroe zogan (color inlays) such as gold, shakudo, and scarlet copper. On the front, on the right side between two mountains, there is a plume like a cloud, and it is carved more shallowly than the mountains. On the left side of the mountain, there are cherry blossoms carved in gold and silver iroe (colored inlays). On the ura side, on the neko-kaki (cat scratch style) yasuri (file marks) there is a poem: “in Japan we have three great mountains, and because of these, we have a spring dawn and autumn dusk”. On the omote, the three best mountains are Yoshino in Yamato, Mt. Fuji in Suruga, and Asama in Shinano. Shunmei used a variety of styles, such as the Yanagawa style which used frequent takabori-iroe, and produced strong impressions with gorgeous work. Another style uses a relatively small number of colored metals, and expressed the minimum, just like this work. This kozuka does not have an excessive amount of carving, and from the design and colored metal, we see an accurate composition. It’s charm and elegance are apparent. Shunmei was known as a great master smith in the gold smith world, in line with the same period’s Goto Ichijo in Kyoto, and is known for his wide range of work.

Shunmei used to live in Honjo, Mukojima, but he is supposed to have preferred to travel, and he travelled to places such as the Tohoku and the Northern Kanto region, and in each area, he worked at producing tosogu. He passed away in Ansei 4 (1857), in December, in Echigo, Nigata. This kozuka was his last work, and we can see the high values of the materials he used, and we can imagine that he visited many mountains during his long journeys, and this is one of his masterpieces.

Commentary by Koiwai Daiki

Teirei Kansho Kai

Date: October 11 (the second Saturday of the month)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan Auditorium

Lecturer: Arakawa Fumito

Kantei To No. 1: Katana

Mumei: Judged as being by Kuniyuki

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 4.5 bu

Sori: 5.5 bu

Style: Shinogi tsukuri

Mune: Ihorimune

Jigane: Itame mixed with some mokume and nagare hada; the hada is slightly visible. There are frequent ji-nie, chikei, and a bright jigane.

Hamon: Based on chu-suguha; mixed with ko-gunome, ko-choji, and komidare; there are frequent ashi, saka-ashi and yo. The habuchi is ko-nie-deki; there are small muneyaki, frequent kinsuji, sunagashi, and a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: Shallow notarekomi; the tip has hakikake; the point is a komaru with a return.

Horimono: On the omote and ura there are bo-hi carved into the nakago.

This is judged as being a Rai Kuniyuki katana and is accompanied by a Honami Kochu origami dated Kyoho 1 (1716). The funbari at koshimoto is not prominent, and in the original shape, the difference in the widths at the moto and saki was not too different. There is a koshisori, the tip has sori, and there is a wasori shape with a chu-kissaki. From these details, you can think about the mid-Kamakura period work. The jigane is itame mixed with some mokume and nagare hada, there are frequent ji-nie and a bright jigane. The hamon is based on chu-suguha, and mixed with ko-gunome, ko-choji, and komidare. There are frequent ashi and yo, and the inside of the hamon has frequent kinsuji and sunagashi. Looking at the details, there are small muneyaki and the Rai school's characteristic features. The classic hamon is mixed with komidare, and on the edge of the hamon, there are karimata style yubashiri, and especially from these details, among the Rai school, you can judge this as being work by the early period smith Kuniyuki.

In voting, besides Kuniyuki, many people voted for Rai Kunimitsu. This is a good answer because it captured the Rai school's characteristic points. But if were his work, the hamon would have clear gunome and ko-notare. Besides the correct and proper answer, many people voted for Yamato smiths, such as Toma, Shikkake, and Teigai. This was because of the vertically oriented hataraki inside of the hamon. But if it were Yamato work, there would be a high shinogi, and the wide shinogi ji would have nagare hada and masame hada.

Kantei To No. 2: Katana

Mei: Minamoto Kiyomaro

Kaei 2 nen (1849) 2 gatsu hi

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 6 bu

Sori: 6 bu

Style: shinogi tsukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: itame hada mixed in some places with nagare hada. There are ji-nie, and chikei.

Hamon: gunome mixed with ko-gunome and angular shaped features, and there are togari. There are frequent ashi, nie-deki construction, and some places have strong nie. From the mid- to the upper half, in some places there is a nijuba. There are frequent kinsuji, sunagashi, and niesuji.

Boshi: midarekomi with hakikake at the tip and a komaru. There is a return.

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

There is a narrow shinogi-ji for the width of the blade, and not much hiraniku. There are long ashi, and some almost reach the edge, from these details, you can think about Shinshinto period work. The jigane is itame mixed in places with some nagare hada. The width of the hamon's nioiguchi has wide and narrow variations, the entire hamon has abundant ha-nie, the inside of the hamon has frequent kinsuji, sunagashi, and niesuji, and from these details, you can imagine this is work by Kiyomaro and his school

In voting, many people observed these characteristic points, and they voted for the school's smiths such as Kiyondo and Nobuhide. If it were Kiyondo's work, he has fewer prominent hataraki inside of the hamon, and also many of the features at the top of hamon have equal heights. From the upper half of the hamon, we see angular shapes and togari shapes, and so the Nobuhide answer is also reasonable. In this case, his hamon would have more of these kinds of features, and more angular shaped features.

Besides the correct and proper answer, Shinshinto smiths such as Taikei Naotane and Hosokawa Masayoshi answers were notable. If it were Naotane's Soshu Den style, his hamon are based on notare, and many of his jigane are called "Uzumaki hada" with a characteristic large mokume pattern. If it were Masayoshi's work, his hamon are often mixed with angular shaped choji, called juka-choji where the choji fall down on the left and right to make a fan-like shape, and show a Bizen Den characteristic style. Also, this sword is listed in the "Kiyomaro Taikan" book, and it is also listed by the leading Kiyomaro researcher Mr. Fujishiro Yoshio with high praise, and he travelled to Shishu to make an oshigata.

Kantei To No. 3: Wakizashi

Mei: Tsuda Omi no Kami Sukenao

Genroku 2 nen (1689) 2 gatsu hi

Oroshijigane o motte kore o tsukuru (the tamehagane was made by the smith)

Length: 2 shaku 5.5 bu

Sori: 5.5 bu

Style: shinogi tsukuri

Mune: ihorimune

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

Hamon: there is a long yakidashi at the moto, and then there are large gunome mixed with notare, and this becomes a toran style. There are ashi in places, abundant nie, and fine sunagashi in the midare valleys. The entire hamon has a dense nioiguchi, and is bright and clear.

Boshi: there is a wide yakiba which is straight. The tip is a komaru and there is a return.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are bo-hi carved into the nakago.

Omi-no-kami Sukenao studied under Tsuda Echizen-no-kami Sukehiro, and later he is supposed to have married Sukehiro's younger sister. After he left the school, he went back to Takagi in Omi Kuni. After his teacher Sukehiro passed way, he is supposed to have established a permanent residence in Osaka.

The forging is a tight ko-itame hada, there are abundant j-nie, the hamon has a diagonal long yakidashi at the moto, there are large gunome mixed with notare, and this becomes toran style. From these details many people voted for Sukenao and his teacher Sukehiro. If it were his teacher Sukehiro's work, often the widths at the moto and saki are different, there is a shallow sori, and a Kanbun Shinto shape, so such a large sori for the width and shape would be hard to imagine. Also, the long yakidashi like this one, a large gunome hamon, and a toranba hamon is not Sukehiro's style, but more Sukenao's.

Besides these, votes for Itakura Gennoshin Terukane stood out. If it were Terukane's work, many of his characteristic hamon have three continuous gunome under the yokote, and there are yahazu style gunome, a katayama style hamon, and the entire interior of the hamon has sunagashi. Also, his shape would have a high ihorimune and poor hiraniku.

Kantei To No. 4: Naginata naoshi

Mei: Bishu ju Osafune Morikage

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 9 bu

Sori: slightly less than 7 bu

Style: naginata naoshi tsukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jigane: itame mixed with mokume hada. There are abundant ji-nie, and chikei along the bottom half of the hamon; in some places, there are jifu in the hada, and there is pale midare utsuri.

Hamon: ko-notare mixed with ko-gunome, and angular shaped features. There are frequent ashi and yo; mainly the hamon is defined by a nioiguchi with ko-nie.

Boshi: midarekomi; the tip has a sharp point, and there is a long return.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are naginata-hi with soe-hi, and both end in marudome.

Osafune Morikage is a representative of Bizen Kuni's Omiya school which started when Kunimori moved from Yamashiro Kuni Inokuma Omiya to Bizen. But in recent years, from his style, and the gyaku-tagane signature, it is thought that he belonged to an Osafune branch school, and the Chikakage and Yoshikage groups are considered strong candidates.

This is a naginata naoshi shape and it is difficult to judge the period. But if you look at the jiba (jigane and hamon) details, the forging is itame mixed with mokume, there are abundant ji-nie and pale midare utsuri, and from these details, you can think about Bizen work. The hamon is a shallow ko-notare with ko-gunome and angular shaped features. The boshi is midarekomi, and the tip is sharp, and these are characteristic features which lead us to think about Morikage. Based on these characteristic points, many people voted for Morikage.

Besides him, many people voted for Kanemitsu and Chogi. If it were Kanemitsu's work, his hamon are wider, and are a gentle notare mixed with gunome, the jiba (jigane and hamon) would be brighter and clearer. Also, if it were Chogi's work, his hamon are a large notare mixed with a variety of shapes, and his characteristic hamon are called an "ear lobe shaped hamon". There would also be more prominent kinsuji and sunagashi inside of the hamon. Also, besides Bizen work, Tanshu Hojoji votes stood out. They had naginata naoshi shapes, but the school's hamon are mainly choji with ha-nie and a gorgeous midare hamon.

Kantei To No. 5: Wakizashi

Mei: Soshu-ju Akihiro

Oan 5 (1372)

Length: 1 shaku 3.5 bu

Sori: slightly over 1 bu

Style: hiratsukuri

Mune: mitsumune

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

Hamon: gunome mixed with ko-gunome, choji, and togari; there are frequent ashi and yo, abundant nie, yubashiri, and tobiyaki; the hamon becomes a hitatsura hamon, and there are frequent kinsuji and sunagashi.

Boshi: midarekomi; the tip is sharp; there is a long return.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there katana hi carved into the nakago.

Akihiro along with Hiromitsu represents the Nanbokucho period Soshu Den school. The period's tanto and wakizashi were popular, and were wide and long. Also, hitatsura hamon started in this period, and these two smiths were the best at making this style hamon.

The wakizashi's jigane is itame mixed with mokume, there is a slightly visible hada, and there are chikei. The hamon is gunome mixed with ko-gunome, and ko-notare. There are tobiyaki and mune-yaki, and this is a hitatsura hamon. The upper half of the hamon is prominently high, there are ashi, yo, and a bright nioiguchi with abundant nie, kinsuji and sunagashi. The jiba (jigane and hamon) shows very well the Nanbokucho period's Soshu Den characteristic points. Among these, generally, Akihiro's hamon are smaller or narrower than Hiromitsu's, and contain togari features. Akihiro also has some blades less 1 shaku long. On this wakizashi, the omote has round top hamon features called dango choji. The hamon's length is over 1 shaku, and this is similar to Hiromitsu's characteristic points, and at this time, a vote for Hiromitsu is treated as being as good as the correct answer.

Besides these smiths, many voted for Hasebe school smiths such as Kunishige and Kuninobu. They are good at Nanbokucho period hitatsura work, but their blade shapes are thinner, the jigane along the hamon and mune sides are a masame style, many of their hamon are based on notare, their boshi are large and round, which are different from this. Also, some people voted for Soshu Hiromasa and Tsunahiro, but they are from a little later period among the Soshu Den smiths. In this case, their shapes would be longer for the width, and would have a more prominent sakisori.

This wakizashi was handed down in the Tokugawa Kishu family for six generations. When Munenao's eldest son Naomatsu celebrated genpuku (at about 15 years of age), Shogun Yoshimune gave him henki (permission use part of his father's name, and he used the "mune" kanji from his father), and he changed his name to Munemasa and received this wakizashi. Also, it has an origami by Honami Koyu with a value of twenty mai, and these details are very interesting.

Shijo Kantei To No. 824

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 824 in the September issue is a katana by Mondo no Kami Masakiyo.

Masakiyo's last name was Miyahara, and he used to be called Kiyouemon or Kakutai. Following an order from Satsuma's lord Shimazu Yoshitaka, he studied Soshu Den under the domain's sword smith Maruta Souemon, and become a great

success. In Kyoho 4 (1719), according to the “Kyoho Sho-koku Kaji Aratame” (All Japan Sword Smith List) which was ordered by the eighth Shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune, he was listed in the Satsuma domain along with two other smiths, Hashiguchi Hyo-uemon (Naminohira Yasumasa), and Tamaki Koichi (Ippei Yasuyo). The following year, his work was submitted to the Bakufu and was evaluated. In Kyoho 6 (1721) in the New Year, he was invited to Edo along with Ippei Yasuyo and Nobukuni Shigekane in Chikuzen, and they were honored by making the Shogun’s blades at the Hama palace. These three smiths who were recognized for their excellent skills received permission to carve the Ichiyo Aoe mon on their blades. In addition, two Satsuma smiths received government positions from the imperial court with the Bakufu’s mediation. Yasuyo received the position of Shume-no-kami, and Masakiyo received the Mondo-no-Kami position. After that, Masakiyo received orders from the Shogun for swords, and he continued to be active in Kagoshima, and he passed away in Kyoho 15 (1730) at the age of 61 years.

Around the Kyoho period, sword smiths’ decline continued, so this type of promotional activity was pursued by the Bakufu, and it was a difficult time to support the large scale production of swords. We imagine that many smiths began making swords after they received an order. In this case, each order’s details or specifications would be listed, and many order’s details depended on the sword fighting school and styles, and individual body shapes, and it was supposed to be a difficult time for the smiths, and the period’s characteristic shape and details developed.

This katana’s width and thickness are standard, the widths at the moto and saki are different, there is a shallow sori and a long chu-kissaki which could be an Osaka Shinto style. Masakiyo has different shapes he made, such as wide with no strong differences in the widths at the moto and saki, or in the thickness at the moto and saki, a large sori, and he has many blades with a long chu-kissaki, but sometimes we see a large kissaki or a chu-kissaki. From just the shape, there is no clear deciding factor to enable us to judge the period, and we can say that it is difficult to judge this as a characteristic shape by Masakiyo.

However, there is a rich hiraniku, prominent ha-niku, and similarities to Shinto period Satsuma characteristic points. Also at this time, by carefully observing the jiba (jigane and hamon), Satsuma’s characteristics should become clearer.

The jigane has characteristic thick strong Soshu Den ji-nie and chikei, but there are no chikei-like nagare dark kawarigane which are often seen in Satsuma Shinshinto swords. Masakiyo has some jigane which are mixed with this kind of kawarigane, but there are few, and many of his jigane are tightly forged and mixed with nagare hada and chikei, like this one.

The hamon looks like one from Satsuma. There are strong ha-nie mixed with rough nie, and there are many imozuru style thick stripe-like hataraki. This is modelled after the Shizu style. The hamon is notare mixed with gunome and togariba. There is a wide midare hamon, large and small prominent vertical variations, and near the top of

the hamon there are yubashiri and tobiyaki (sometimes nijuba and sanjuba overlap). There is a dense nioiguchi with some variations, and this clearly exhibits Masakiyo's style. Also, among the Satsuma swords, he has many of the brightest and clearest nioiguchi.

The boshi has a slightly wide yakiba (wider than usual), and the strong hakikake forms a kaen style which matches with his characteristic points.

The tip of nakago is narrow and a kengyo style (sometimes he has iriyamagata tips), and the yasurime are a shallow katte sagari. On the omote along the mune side there is an Ichiyo Aoi mon and a long kanji signature with his appointed name, and this matches his nakago styles after his received his title.

However, before he received his title, his nakago tips were more often iriyamagata, and his yasurime were sujichigai (when using his earlier name Kiyomitsu, the yasurime are kiri too). After he received his title, and as he approached his later years, the katte sagari yasurime tend to become shallower.

Besides the correct answer, some people voted for the Satsuma smiths Ippei Yasuyo, Yamato no kami Motohira, Hoki no kami Masayuki, Echizen Yasutsugu, and Iga no kami Kinmichi.

Considering Yasuyo, and from Satsuma swords, the period, the mon, and the appointment, we can say that that answer is reasonable. His hamon are mainly a notare style suguha, or suguha with a distance between gunome, and are a gentle hamon. His nakago tips are kurijiri, and the yasurime are higaki.

Motohira and Masayuki's work are usually never seen with a mon. Motohira's midare hamon from the moto to the saki are not very changeable, some areas have a tight nioiguchi, and his characteristic points are seen sometimes at the koshimoto. His nakago on katana have a tachi mei, his yasurime are sujichigai or katte sagari. Many of Masayuki's shapes, around the monouchi area, become slightly narrow and there is a very long kissaki. He has a less tightly forged jigane, and often someplace, there are whitish lines in the hada. His yasurime are a characteristic katte-sagari.

Yasutsugu's nakago style has many similar points with Masakiyo's, but his jigane are itame mixed well with mokume, the hada is visible, there is a dark color jigane which can resemble an Echizen jigane, and these are his characteristic points. Also, many of his nioiguchi are worn down.

Kinmichi's Shizu style hamon are a midare with some places having prominent angular hamon features, with a worn down nioiguchi. Also, if there is a prominent togariba hamon, many of the togariba are mixed with round top gunome and choji which become a Sue Seki style midare, and this is different from the katana style. Also, kiku-mon are not seen in the Shodai's work, and would be seen after the Nidai's work. Iriyamagata nakago tips are rare in the Shodai and Nidai's work, many of the Shodai's nakago tips are either kurijiri, ha-agai kurijiri or kengyo. Most of the Nidai's nakago tips are kengyo, and in addition, his yasurime are sujichigai or a pronounced katte sagari.

Explanation by Ooi Gaku

Attention: Once you decide on an answer and submit it, you cannot change it. Also, some people submit several answers, and in this case, even if one is the correct answer, all of their entries will become invalid. So please be careful and submit only one smith's name.