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MEITO KANSHO
EXAMINATION OF IMPORTANT SWORDS

Tokubetsu Juyo Token

Type: Ken

Mei: Mitsutada

Owner: NBTHK

Length: 8 sun 9 bu 4 rin (27.1 cm)

Motohaba: 8 bu 6 rin (2.6 cm)

Nakago length: 3 sun 8 bu (11.5 cm)

Commentary

Both sides are a shinogi zukuri ken style. There is a slightly large size, a high shinogi line, the center area has a gentle curve, the top is moderately wide, and there is a well proportioned shape. The jigane is a small itame hada mixed with mokume hada, the entire ji is well forged, and there are ji-nie and chikei. The hamon is based on suguha: one side is mixed with a slightly small ko-notare with a tight nioiguchi. The other side is mixed with a ko-midare style hamon and kuichigai style hamon. There are ashi and yo, on both

sides around the fukura area the width is narrow, and it is almost nioideki. On the bottom half in places, there are kinsuji. The boshi is straight and yakizume. The horimono on the omote and the ura are shinogi hi carved into the nakago. The nakago is ubu and the tip is kurijiri, the yasurime are a slight remaining katte-sagari. There is one mekugi ana. Under the mekugi-ana on the center there is a two kanji signature made with a slightly thick chisel.

Osafune Mitsutada was the actual founder of the Osafune school, and laid the foundation of the school which is the biggest school in Japanese sword history. His skills were excellent, and the school produced many famous master smiths, such as Nagamitsu, Kagemitsu, and Sanenaga, and they are evaluated very highly. His active period was supposed to be around the Hoji to Kencho periods (1247-56). From his son Nagamitsu, we have works dated in Bunei 11(1274) and Koan 8 (1285), and that period is definite. His signatures are all two kanji, except on old gyobutsu (imperial treasures) signed "Bizen koku Osafune Mitsutada", his main signed works are about 20 blades, and many of them are suriage and their original lengths were 2 shaku 5-7 sun long. He has two styles, one has a standard width, and the other is wide with a dynamic shape. The width differences between the moto and saki are small, and there are inokubi kissaki. His well forged jigane are tightly forged with a small pattern itame, there are clear midare utsuri, and the work is exquisite and refined. His hamon are mainly choji mixed with fukuro choji (bag-like choji) and kawazuko choji. Elements at the top of hamon are plump, at the koshimoto, the hamon is a small size. Around the

monouchi area, the width is narrower and gunome tend to stand out. Usually his nioiguchi have gentle ko-nie, and in some places there are kinsuji and sunagashi. The entire hamon is bright and clear. However, it has been pointed out, compared with the Ichimonji school's choji midare hamon, his midare have fewer vertical variations, and the middle of the hamon is more quiet.

Large suriage blades without a signature and judged as being Mitsutada's work have a dynamic shape, a well forged beautiful jigane with abundant ji-nie, and without considering utsuri, at first glance, look like Kyoto work, and many have a gorgeous choji midare hamon. On the other hand, his signed tachi tend to have a standard width, the hamon do not show much variation, and there is a relatively gentle appearance compared with mumei work judged as his. From this, some questioned whether the mumei work was really his work. But the 17th Tokubetsu Juyo Token blade from the Akita Satake family was a tachi signed "Mitsutada" and has been an important reference material, to fill in the gap between mumei works judged as Mitsutada's and his signed works used in previous studies. It again confirmed the skill of earlier appraisers such as Honnami Kotoku. Also, in recent years, Tanobe Michihiro, a former NBTHK museum vice director, examined old sword book descriptions, and studied Mitsutada's signature styles, and from these materials, he explained that work supposed to be the Ko-Bizen work with two kanji signatures are by Osafune Mitsutada, and they are supposed to be his early work (Token Bijutsu, issue No. 528) it is very well worth listening to his opinions.

This is the only ken example we have by Mitsutada. Besides this, in Bizen Koku, there are very few ken

made by Nagamitsu, Chikakage, Motoshige, Hatakeda Morie, and Sanemori, and for the Kamakura period's ken legacy, this is a very rare important work. Among these works, this ken has a slightly large size, a sense of volume, has maintained its healthy appearance, and is in an excellent state of preservation. The top is slightly wide, there is a moderate curvature, a well balanced gentle curve, and a classic shape. Also, usually, many ken examples have a nagare hada, the edge of the hamon has prominent hotsure, and often a Yamato style is present, but this ken's jigane is a small itame, the entire ji is well forged, and we can recognize the elaborate forging. The hamon's left and right sides are different, the nioiguchi is dark with pale shading, the tightness of the nioiguchi shows variations, and there is an interesting appearance. Also, this is the first (Showa 46) Tokubetsu Juyo Token ken, and later in Showa 49, it was classified as Juyo Bunkazai, and in the Edo period, one of the Iyo Koku Saijo han Matsudaira family handed down this item.

Also, in Reiwa 6, this was a gift from Mr. Suzuki Shoichi and he said officials should not store this away along with other items from his forty years of collecting. Other items of his collection were a Juyo Bunkazai tachi signed Kuniyuki (described in the No. 811 issue), another 13 blades classified Juyo Bijutsuhin, Tokubetsu Juyo Token, and Juyo Token, and in addition three Juyo Toso, with one set classified as Juyo Tosogu. We are following his will, and we wish to exhibit them often, and again we deeply respect him and thank him for this.

Explanation and oshigata by Ishi Akira.

Shijo Kantei To No. 817

Information

Type: Katana

Length: slightly less than 2 shaku 3 sun 3 bu (70.55 cm)

Sori: 4 bu (1.2 cm)

Motohaba: 9.5 bu (2.9 cm)

Sakihaba: slightly over 6 bu (1.9 cm)

Motokasane: slightly over 2 bu (0.65 cm)

Sakikasane: slightly over 1 bu (0.4 cm)

Kissakilength: slightly over 1 sun (3.1 cm)

Nakago length: 6 sun 1 bu (18.5 cm)

Nakago sori: none

This is a shinogi zukuri katana with an ihorimune. There is a standard width, the widths at the moto and saki are different, there is a standard kasane, the shinogi ji is wide, there is a shallow sori and a short chu-kissaki. The jigane is a tight ko-itame hada, there are frequent ji-nie, a dark steel color, the shinogi ji has a masame hada. The hamon and the boshi are as seen in the oshigata. There is a nioiguchi style, some parts of the midare hamon valleys have ko-nie, and there is a bright nioiguchi. The nakago is ubu, the tip is iriyamagata, the yasurime are kata suji chigai (the flat area is sujichigai, the nakago shinogi ji area is kiri). There is one mekugi ana. On the omote, under the mekugi ana slightly along the mune side, centered on the shinogi line, there are seven kanji and a title.

The katana has a habaki which has thick line carvings: on the omote there are 5 lines, and on the ura there are 4 lines, in a higaki style, and this is called an okuni-habaki (in the Edo period, each domain had its own style).

Tokubetsu Juyo Tosogu

**Tsuina zu (chasing away bad fortune design)
menuki**

Warikita Mei: Minayama Masaoki with kao

Following last month's issue, this is again a tsuinan design menuki. A demon is out, a fortune is inside, and this should be exactly the right subject for February. With only one subject, we can think about a season and annual event, and this can be an attractive part of tosogu.

The artist Minayama Masaoki was a student of Otsuki Mitsuoki, his common name was Naoichi, and his trade name was Hishiya. The first name was Masaoki, and later the writing was changed, but it was still pronounced Masaoki using different kanji. The leader of his school and his teacher was Mitsuoki, and the school had many master smiths and bright stars, such as Mitsuhiro, Kawarabayashi Hideoki, Tenkodo Hidekuni, and Shinoyama Tokuoki, and among them Masaoki competed, raised his level of skill, and became one of the school's representative master smiths.

Last month's Natsuo menuki used gold and silver for a demon, and an ofuku woman's face, and this also means a day and night contrast, and it was refined

work. This time, the artist Masaoki's carving is also full of charm with a tsuina design different from Natsuo's work. This is the Setsubun event (an event for the last day of winter) decoration, and the demon design is on a solid gold ground. Masaoki used gold and iroe (color) and this is a gorgeous menuki. The shakudo and colors are bright, and he produced elaborate work on the jigane or ground. On the tray, there are beans, a holly branch, and the head of a sardine, and these are essential items for Setsubun events, and this is different from the usual workmanship, and is a very elaborate work. The holly leaves seem to be dried out and some parts already show insect bites. The branch was cut for decoration, and it seems to show that days have passed. The demon seems to be running away and hunched over, and it is an interesting composition. Looking at details, his back, buttocks, and legs show muscular expression and are excellent. He carved the lower back of the demon, because he seems to have wanted to express this part of the image or carving. This is a master piece, and we can recognize his ability with his excellent carving technique and creative composition.

In talking about tsuina events in Kyoto, I think about the Yoshida shrine and Rozanji temple. Masaoki is supposed to have lived in Kyoto's Nijo Ogawa, and possibly he was looking at events there when he formulated his ideas for this composition.

Explanation by Takeda Kotaro

New Year's Teirei Kansho kai

Date: January 11 (the second Saturday of January)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan Auditorium

Lecturer: Ooi Gaku

Kantei To No. 1: Tachi

Juyo Bijutsuhin

Mei: Bungo kuni so Joshu saku

Length: slightly less than 2 shaku 5 sun

Sori: slightly less than 9 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: tight ko-itame hada; some parts of the itame hada form a large nagare hada; There is a slightly visible hada; there are abundant fine ji-nie; the forging has a sticky feeling (i.e. the ji appears like mochi); there are fine chikei and a pale whitish appearance.

Hamon: there is a yakiotoshi at the moto, and above that, a fine suguha style hamon; in places it is mixed with a ko-midare style hamon; the entire nioiguchi appears moist and dense; there is a nioiguchi with ko-nie, a few kinsuji, some yubashiri, and a slightly worn down nioiguchi.

Boshi: straight, with a yakizume style, and a very slight return.

Joshu is supposed to be a principal at one of the famous large dojo for shukendo (mountain asceticism which incorporated Shinto and Buddhist

concepts) in Bungo Kuni's Hiko mountain. Because he was a monk and a sword smith, the way of reading his kanji name is on-yomi (a Chinese reading) called "Joshu".

He is supposed to be either Bungo Yukihiro's teacher or student, and both styles are very similar. Joshu (Sadahide)'s works are very few, so at this time, Yukihiro was also treated as a correct answer.

However, prominent differences are: Yukihiro has many prominent detailed horimono at the koshimoto (Joshu has one), and Yukihiro's works do not show gyaku-takanoha yasuri, like on this tachi.

The tachi is long, the difference in the widths at the moto and saki is large, there is a large koshizori, a strong funbari at the koshimoto, the tip sori is shallow and looks like it falls down going forward (i.e. the sori becomes more shallow going towards the point). There is a small kissaki, and this shows evidence that it is a tachi shape that was made no later than the early Kamakura period. Also, for this period's work, Joshu and Yukihiro blades are slightly thick and this tachi has this characteristic point.

The hamon has a yakiotoshi at the moto, a nioiguchi style with ko-nie, and is based on a narrow suguha hamon. There is a strong moist appearing nioiguchi which is slightly worn down, and slightly separated from the hamon there are yubashiri, and these details along with the shape, the jigane, and the hamon are his typical style, and many people voted for the correct answer.

Also, Ko-Naminohira signed works are few, and the same applies to Joshu. However if it were the school's work, they have a high shinogi, a wide shape, the masame hada appearance is strong, there are more Yamato den details, such as nijyuba,

hotsure, uchinoke, the nioiguchi appears moist, and also there are whitish areas close to the hamon, and sometimes between hamon and these whitish areas, the steel is dark.

Kantei To No. 2: Katana

Mei: Noshu Seki ju Kanesada saku

Length: slightly over 2 shaku

Sori: 5 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: tight ko-itame hada; some parts are mixed with nagare hada; there are dense ji-nie, a whitish jigane, and mizukage at the koshimoto.

Hamon: round top gunome mixed with gunome, yahazu-ba, togariba, ko-notare, and choji; there are some ashi and yo, a nioiguchi with ko-nie, a few sunagashi and a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: midarekomi; there is a sharp tip style komaru, dropping slightly down going forward; a long return, and a jizo boshi.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are futatsuji-hi carved through the nakago.

This is a short blade with a large sori, and in addition, the current accompanying hilt is long compared with actual katateuchi design short nakago, so from this some people voted for Kamakura period suriage work. But from the mizukage present at the habaki moto, along with the whitish jigane, you can judge this as an ubu shape.

If you look at it again, the difference in the widths at the moto and saki are large when going from the koshimoto to the tip, and the tip has sori.

In addition, the forging is mixed with nagare hada and a whitish jigane. The hamon's round top gunome mixed with choji, togariba, yahazu, and ko-notare, stand out between the midare hamon valleys. There are less ashi and yo, a slightly tight nioiguchi, less variations along the edge, and a nioiguchi style. Also, the boshi is midarekomi, and drops slightly down to the hamon edge, and there is a jizo boshi, and overall, these characteristics are seen in the latter half of the Muromachi period's Seki smith work, and are common characteristic points, and many people voted for Seki smiths.

Among these, from the prominent short length, we are looking at work from the early part of latter half of the Muromachi period. The hamon is bright, the forging is good, there is a tight refined jigane, and from these details, Kanesada is a good answer. Also, Kanesada's work often has mizukage around the hamachi area, and this katana clearly shows that.

Sometimes, Kanefusa has midare style hamon, and some people voted for him. But his active period was mainly around the Eiroku to Tensho (1558-91) period, and both, his blades and nakago, are long, and importantly, his kissaki are long.

Some people looked at the yahazu ba as Fujishima Tomoshige's tsuno-yakiba hamon. These are details at the top of the hakoba, and the square gunome have few flat parts, and both corners look sharp. His midare hamon have many hakoba and open valley hamon, there are frequent nie, and the edge of the hamon and boshi often have hakikake.

Kantei To No. 3: katana

Mei: Fujiwara Kiyondo saku

Bunkyu 3 nen (1863) 8 gatsu hi

Length: slightly less than 2 shaku 3 sun 3 bu

Sori: 4 bu

Style: shinogi tsukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: tight ko-itame hada: some places are mixed with itame hada; there are dense ji-nie, fine chikei and a bright jigane.

Hamon: gunome and gunome choji in a midare pattern, there are slightly thick ashi; nie-deki; some places show uneven rough nie, yubashiri, sunagashi, and long kinsuji; there is a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: midarekomi; there are hakikake, kinsuji, a sharp tip, and a long return.

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

This is a slightly wide blade, and the difference in the widths at the moto and saki is not prominent. There is a shallow sori and a large kissaki. Also, there is no evidence that funbari has been removed through the blade being suriage. In addition, for the width, the shinogi ji is narrow, there is no prominent hiraniku, the kissaki is slightly over 3 sun, and very long for the width and the overall length. It is a typical Shinshinto shape. Almost no voters made a mistake in identifying the period. Moreover, besides the healthy shape, the fukura is poor, and this is often seen in Kiyomaro school work.

Kiyondo has the Kiyomaro school's characteristic itame hada with abundant nie, frequent chikei, and a

strong jigane, and around the Keio (1865-67) period, he has works with a tight ko-itame hada, and sometimes he worked in this style before this period.

The hamon has gunome and gunome choji in a midare pattern. There are thick long ashi, frequent nie, in places the strong nie form clumps and long kinsuji. The boshi has a midare pattern, there are hakikake, the tip is sharp and there is a return. Notably, looking at the kinsuji from the moto to the saki, there is a continuous line with kinsuji, niesuji, and chikei. This supposed to be come from the Kiyomaro school's use of a hon-sanmai-kitae, and the seam or joint can be seen from the hamon side and kawagane side.

Among the school's smiths, Kiyondo liked to make his gunome the same size and height, with a gentle hamon, and his nioiguchi are slightly tight. The katana omote side shows this kind of style, and people observed these characteristic points, and narrowed down the smith's name to Kiyondo.

Also, in some opinions, the boshi does not have hakikake, but has appears to have a combed appearance. This kind of characteristic often comes out in his masame forging work, the forging in the kissaki, and the masame hada lines are strong with the mune side hataraki. Sometimes it appears to be a usual midare hamon, but is not as clear as with masame kitae forging.

Kantei To No. 4: Katana

Mei: Dewa no kami Hokyo Minamoto Mitsuhiro
With Kiku mon

Length: 2 shaku 5 sun

Sori: 4 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: itame hada; the hada is slightly visible; there are abundant ji nie.

Hamon: choji midare; there are small choji, the large choji have prominent high and low widths, and these are mixed with fukuro choji, kawazuko choji, gunome, and togari; there are ashi, yo, ko-nie-deki; some areas show strong nie or mura nie or clumped nie. Tobiyaki are seen in places; there are sunagashi, and a bright nioiguchi.

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

Dewa no kami Mitsuhiro has dated work from Kanei 21(1635) to Tenna 3 (1683), so his active period was 50 years long. Because of this, he made many different shapes and lengths, and adapted his style to the periods he worked in, and has a diverse range of work. From around the beginning of the Kanbun period he produced Taishinn Hokyo work, and this was after Kanbun Shinto period work. But this blade has a long length, a shallow sori, a long chu-kissaki, and the shape does not show the period's characteristics. Probably this could have been a special order.

There is utsuri, and a gorgeous choji midare hamon reminding us of Ichimonji work, but it is not a tachi, and there is a katana shape. For the width, the shinogi ji width is slightly wide, there is a low shinogi with a flat look, and this type of shape is seen often in the Kanbun period. The shinogi ji shows a masame hada and the hada is visible. In addition, with the

midare choji hamon, the boshi is simple, straight and komaru, and from this, a majority of people made no mistake about the period, and voted for the Edo Ishido smith.

Also, compared with older work, the nioiguchi, and ashi and yo look hard, the valleys in the hamon end very far away from the edge.

Among the Edo Ishido school smiths, Mitsuhira had a visible hada. His choji hamon show many variations in size, height, shape, and large vertical variations, and some nie become mura nie (groups or clumps of nie). These are his characteristic points, and many people voted for his name.

Among the Ishido school smiths, Tsushima no kami Tsunemitsu has same kind of work as Mitsuhira, but many of his hamon are a small size, and there are no prominent high and low variations. Tatara Nagayuki's work often has a long length, his hamon nioiguchi are the tightest among the school's smiths, togariba are noticeable, his boshi are midarekomi, with a sharp tip and a long return. Overall, his work is strong and robust appearing. Also, the Fukuoka Ishido school had strong saka-ashi style hamon, many boshi are midare, and in addition there was prominent masame forging, and these are big differences.

Kantei To No. 5: Tachi

Mei: Bishu Osafune Sukemitsu saku
Eikyo 10 (1438) 2 gatsu kichijitsu

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 1 bu
Sori: slightly over 7 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: itame mixed with mokume, and the hada is slightly visible; there are ji-nie, chikei, and pale midare utsuri.

Hamon: the entire hamon width is low, with shallow open bottom valleys with ko-gunome and ko-choji; some places are ko-notare and there are angular shapes and a midare pattern; the hamon has spacings between its elements. There are ashi, yo, and a nioiguchi; in places, there are ko-nie, nie, some hotsure, yubashiri, tobiyaki, muneyaki, kinsuji, sunagashi, and a bright nioiguchi.

Boshi: on the omote, the boshi is a small midarekomi; there are some hakikake and the tip is sharp; the ura is midarekomi, the tip is komaru and there is a return.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are long koshihi with soe-hi and marudome.

This is dated during the Eikyo period, is a Sukemitsu tachi, and is supposed to be Rokuro Saemon jo's work. This is between the Oei Bizen and Sue Bizen periods which peaked before and after the Bunmei period. Many of these are transitional styles just like this tachi, and this is supposed to show Eikyo Bizen smiths such as Sukemitsu's characteristic points.

Both the tachi and katana are slightly narrow in shape compared with Oei Bizen and Sue Bizen, the kissaki are smaller, and many of them have a gentle shape. This tachi is also slightly narrow and has a small kissaki when compared with common Oei Bizen tachi.

The forging work showed two styles, itame mixed with mokume where the hada is slightly visible, and the other style was a tight ko-itame hada with a

beautiful jigane. Utsuri are bo-utsuri and midare utsuri, and there is prominent ha-nie work, pale utsuri and less prominent utsuri. This is the same as we see in Oei Bizen and Sue Bizen work.

At a glance, the tachi hamon looks like an Oei Bizen style with an open valley hamon, mixed with choji, gunome, and a midare hamon. But angular sharp hamon features are noticeable, the midare hamon elements are sometimes split, there is a low width, and it is a small size hamon. The entire hamon width is low, there are few ashi and yo, the midare pattern appears gentle, and the tachi shows well these characteristic points of the period. In addition, the boshi do not become too wide like Sue Bizen work.

It is pointed out, that Sukemitsu's midare hamon elements in many notare hamon are split into two, and this tachi has this characteristic point. On the other hand, Sukemitsu is supposed to have many tightly forged blades, but this tachi has a visible hada, so at this time if you look at Eikyo Bizen smiths such as Norimitsu, Yoshimitsu's name will be fine.

Also, among the Oei Bizen smiths, Iesuke and Noriie have some work from after the Eikyo period, and they are similar to Eikyo Bizen styles, and at this time, either smith's name is treated as a proper answer.

If you look at this as Oei Nobukuni who has examples where the hamon elements at the top of midare hamon split into two, his hamon are mainly gunome midare with nie, mixed with two continuous hamon features, and inside and at the edge of the hamon, variations would be prominent.

Shijo Kantei To No. 815 in the December 2024 issue

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To 815 is a katana by Oku Motohira dated Tenmei 8 (1788).

Motohira was born in October of Enkyo 1 (1744). In Anei 6 (1777) his father Motonao passed away, and at the age of 34 years he became the head of the family. This katana was made in Tenmei (1788) when Motohira was 45 years old. On the following year, Kansei 1 (1789) on December 1st, he received the Yamato no kami title. Notably, in the Tenmei to Kansei period, he made many master works, and we can say that that period was the peak of his career. Also, in Tenmei 5 (1785), his “Satsuyo-shi” signature almost disappeared, and instead he mainly used the “Satsuma Han Shin” (a signature used by someone who worked for the Satsuma clan) until he received the title in 1789.

This blade is wide, and the difference in the widths at the moto and saki is notably prominent. The long kissaki and the notably thick blade makes for a heavy blade, and from this, we wish to judge this as Shinshinto work.

Generally, Shinshinto characteristic points are a shallow sori and less hiranaku, but actually we have sometimes seen blades with a large sori. From the latter half of the Shinshinto period, there were no large scale battles for a long time, and the samurai became estranged from the earlier period's mainstream battle tactics, and saw new developments

in armor. From this, it is supposed that there was no universal sword shape.

In this kind of situation, for sword smiths, the customer's thoughts and preferences were likely to be of priority. There are copies of Osaka Shinto blades with a shallow sori, blades modelled after old tachi shapes with a large sori, and the works were mixed with different school's elements. Some sword smiths produced all types of shapes, and just from the shape, it could be difficult to judge a sword's period. Therefore, especially if you are confused by a shape, you should not judge just from the shape, and it is important to look at the jiba (jigane and homon) and nakago style, and to make a comprehensive judgement.

Also, it is thought that there was less hiraniku in the Shinshinto period, but conversely, a rich hiraniku is supposed to be a Satsuma blade's characteristic point. Their swords were supposed to be able to withstand an intense beating from Satsuma's Shigenryu fighting style, and there were even hard nie style hamon thought to make a blade less likely to chip, and in many of them, the ha-niku is a prominent niku. Therefore, people who were aware of this characteristic point, first judged this as a Satsuma katana. Their hamon are very hard, and if less skillful polishers polish it, the ha-niku does not decrease, only the ji-niku decreases, and from this, sometimes we have seen prominent ji mura (uneven ji) blades.

Motohira's katana kissaki are less long, and many of them are a chu-kissaki or a long chu-kissaki, and this katana falls into this category.

Motohira's forging is a tight ko-itame hada, there are abundant fine ji-nie, there is a slightly sticky feeling, and a refined jigane, and Motohira has a good reputation among Satsuma blades. He does not have the white lines at the border of the san mai steels which we often see in the same period's smith Hoki no kami Masayuki.

The hamon is a Shinshinto style, and there are thick ashi, the top of the midare hamon border is sharply defined by nie, there is a dense nioiguchi, and some places are mixed with nie, there are thick and long kinsuji and nie-suji, and some have an imozuru shape, and indeed that is a Satsuma blade's likely appearance. Among his hamon, Motohira is good at producing a bright nioiguchi, large gunome, or sometimes a ko-notare which is continuous from the moto to the saki. Furthermore, around the koshimoto area his characteristic tight nioiguchi is seen clearly. Also, his kinsuji appear just like an entangled itame hada called "Motohira's fishhook" which is supposed to come out often on the jiba (jigane and hamon), and here it is seen around the monouchi area inside of the hamon.

Motohira's boshi are a midarekomi style, but there are relatively few large midare boshi. Many of them are suguha with frequent hakikake mixed with kinsuji, and prominent nie kuzure, and there are hakikake with a dense nioiguchi just like on this katana, and they have prominent strong hataraki.

Motohira has impressive horimono showing armor and warriors, but not many, and most of his horimono are bo-hi or simple designs. Most of his bo-hi either stop at the machi, or around the togi-damari area, or

finish there. This katana though is an unusual example.

His nakago have narrow tips and a kengyo shape, and around the Ansei period he made nakago with shapes close to an iriyamagata shape. His yasurime are sujichigai, and on the ura (tachi mei) there are mei, and this is his unique point. Usually, his signatures have a slightly large size, and start one kanji above a mekugi ana, and along the mune side, and are made with a thick chisel. On the omote there is a date starting two kanji above the mekugi ana and this is his usual style.

A proper description of Masayuki's many shapes is that they are slightly slim around the monouchi, and there is a large long kissaki. His forging produces a less beautiful tight jigane compared with Motohira's, and as I mentioned above, many of them show the san mai border area's whitish line. Also, many of his midare hamon shapes change around the monouchi area, and maintain a low width, and a gentle hamon. He has a less tight nioiguchi at the koshimoto. His katana mei is signed on the omote (i.e. a katana mei).

Beside these, Mondo no sho Masakiyo's name stands out. If it were his work, the nioiguchi and nie have wide and narrow, strong and weak variations over the whole area. His hamon are ko-notare mixed with large and small sized gunome, togariba, and the size of the midare pattern and pace of the variations stand out. Many his boshi have strong hakikake, and become a kaen style. Also, he has some tachi mei, and compared to Motohira and Masayuki, the shinogi line does not meet with the kengyo nakago tip, and he signed along the mune side. Masakiyo's shinogi line

matches with the kengyo nakago tip, and this is different from the others.

Explanation by Ooi Gaku.