

NBTHK SWORD JOURNAL

MARCH, 2025

ISSUE NUMBER 818

MEITO KANSHO: EXAMINATION OF IMPORTANT SWORDS

Juyo Bijutsuhin

Nagano Prefecture Important Cultural Property

Type: Katana

Mei: tame Kubota Sugane kun Yamaura Tamaki

Minamoto Kiyomaro sei

Koka Hinoe Uma toshi 8 gatsu hi

Length: 2 shaku 6 sun 4 bu 8 rin (80.25 cm)

Sori: 6 bu 6 rin (2.0 cm)

Motohaba: 9 bu 4 rin (2.85 cm)

Sakihaba: 7 bu 3 rin (2.2 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 3 rin (0.7 cm)

Sakikasane: 1 bu 7 rin (0.5 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 3 bu 5 rin (4.1 cm)

Nakago length: 7 sun 9 bu 5 rin (24.1 cm)

Nakago sori: 7 rin (0.2 cm)

Commentary

This is a shinogi zukuri sword with an ihorimune. It is long and slightly wide, and the difference in the widths

at the moto and the saki is not prominent. It is slightly thick, there is a shallow sori and a long kissaki. The jigane is a well forged itame hada with some nagare hada. There are abundant dense ji-nie and frequent chikei. The hamon is gunome mixed with ko-gunome, togariba, and choji. The upper half of the hamon is a high, wide midareba. Some places have a nidanba (nijuba) style. There are frequent ashi, the nioiguchi width has wide and narrow variations, there is a dense nioiguchi, rough uneven abundant nie, and yubashiri, sunagashi, kinsuji, and nie suji. There is a bright and clear nioiguchi. The boshi is a large midarekomi, and the tip is sharp with a return. The horimono on the omote and ura are futasuji-hi carved through the nakago. The nakago is ubu and the tip is a slightly ha-agari kurijiri, and the yasurime are sujichigai. There is one mekugi ana. On the omote, along the mune side there is a date and a long signature. On the ura, between the mekugi ana on the flat area (hira) there is an inscription which starts with “tame” (for).

Kiyomaro's real name was Yamaura Kuranosuke Tamaki, and he was born in Bunka 18 (1813) in Shinano Kuni Akaiwa village (today's Nagano prefecture's Tomi-shi Shigeno). In Bunsei 12 (1829) he studied with his older brother Masao under Kawamura Toshitaka who was from the Inshu Hamabe school, and his first smith's name was “Ikkansai Masayuki”. Already, the following year when he was 17 years old, he already had some confirmed work. In Tenpo 5 (1834), he used the “Toshitaka” mei which is supposed to refer to his teacher Toshitaka, but he only used the mei one year, and then returned to using the Masayuki mei.

The following year, Tenpo 6, he went to Edo and he studied under Kubota Sugane who was a hatamoto, and well known as a military tactician. Sugane recognised his extraordinary talent, and with his sponsorship he established a bukiko, a sales organisation with a price for one sword of 3 ryo. In Tenpo 13 (1842), at the age of 30, Murata Keifu, who worked for government reform under Mori Morichika, invited him to Hagi to promote weapon production skills, and he worked at sword making for two years. During that period, he greatly improved his skills, and in Koka 2 (1845) he returned to Edo again, and at his forge established in Yotsuya, people called him "Yotsuya Masamune". The follow year he changed his signature from Masayuki to Kiyomaro, and at this time he made this lifetime masterpiece katana for his benefactor Kubota Sugane. In Kaei 7 (1854) on November 14th, after a long period of heavy drinking, his health suffered, and he committed suicide at the age of 42.

Kiyomaro's turbulent life and career started with him making Bizen Den choji midare hamon which he learned from Toshitaka, and later, with his natural talent, he established his original Soshu Den style. Elements in his work included gunome midare mixed with choji in his hamon, there are frequent sunagashi, strong kinsuji, and extraordinary variations full of movement. There are abundant uneven mura-nie (clumps or groups of nie). His unique sensitivity and aesthetic sense resulted in quality work with a high level of artistry. Also, his futasuji-hi horimono work is admirable, and with his unique Soshu Den style of work, he produced many masterpieces. His work is excellent, and unmistakable and distinguishable from others, but, because of his short career, not too many

works are available. People prize his work, and his masterpieces, even today, never cease to attract attention.

This is Kiyomaro's famous monumental work and was made for Kubota Sugane. It is long, wide, has a long chu-kissaki, a shallow sori, and dynamic distinctive shape, and makes a great impact on those who view it. The jigane is a well forged itame hada and is mixed with his characteristic nagare hada. There are abundant dense ji-nie and chikei everywhere, and there are endless interesting forging details. The hamon is mainly large and small gunome, and in the upper half of the blade the hamon becomes wider. There are kinsuji, niesuji, some places show two parallel habuchi or nidanba. The hamon is undisciplined and wild but is beautiful. Also, from the tip to the base, there are frequent rough uneven nie, just like a scattering of silver mirror-like particles, and along with the uncontrolled hamon, this exhibits Kiyomaro's strong spirit. The period when he changed from the Masayuki signature, he exhibited all of his skill, which he had developed up to that point for his benefactor.

The Kiyomaro mei with "Yamaura Tamaki" is only seen on this sword and on kogatana. Considering the futatsuji-hi, we can see this is very carefully done, an example of Kiyomaro's representative work, and this work is worthy of praise.

This is being exhibited at "Suishinshi Masahide, 200 years after his death: the Edo Sansaku (Masahide, Naotane, Kiyomaro) Exhibition from March 8 - May 11, 2025. The early period work is being shown from March 8 - April 13th.

Commentary and oshigata by Ishi Akira.

Shijo Kantei To No. 818

Information

Type: Katana

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun (69.7 cm)

Sori: slightly less than 7 bu (2.05 cm)

Motohaba: 9.5 bu (2.9 cm)

Sakihaba: slightly less than 7 bu (2.05 cm)

Motokasane: slightly over 2 bu (0.65 cm)

Sakikasane: 1.5 bu (0.45 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 2 bu (3.65 cm)

Nakago length: 6 sun 9 bu (20.9 cm)

Nakago sori: very slight

This is a shinogi zukuri katana with an ihorimune. There is a standard width, the widths at the moto and saki are slightly different, there is a standard thickness, a large sori, and a slightly long chu-kissaki. The jigane is a tight ko-itame hada, there are abundant dense ji-nie, fine chikei, and a light steel color. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the oshigata. The choji and gunome choji together form a toran-ba, there is a dense nioiguchi, abundant ko-nie,

sunagashi, long kinsuji, and a bright nioiguchi. The horimono on the omote is a zui-un tamaoi dragon, and on the ura is bamboo and a plum tree. The nakago is ubu, the tip is a steeply angled ha-agari kurijiri, the yasurime are suji chigai with kesho. There is one mekugi ana. On the omote, under the mekugi ana slightly towards the mune side, centered on the shinogi line, there is a slightly large long kanji signature made with a thick chisel, and a “hori dosaku” soe-mei. The ura has a date.

Tokubetsu Juyo Tosogu

**Kouseki kochoryo Kanshin matakuguri zu
(ancient Chinese story design) daisho tsuba**

Daisho mei: Suifu ju Unno Bisei with kao

This is the Mito metalwork master smith Unno Bisei's daisho tsuba.

Unno Bisei was a Mito metal worker active in the latter half of the Edo period. One theory says that he was Tamagawa Bikyu's student, and from his high level of skill, he is supposed to have been shogun Tokugawa Nariaki's favorite metal worker along with Hagiya Katsuhira and Moritoshi's son. Even the Meiji period's second generation Bisei was influential with activities such as teaching in the Tokyo Art School.

The daisho tsuba's subject is an ancient Chinese story. The dai (large) tsuba has one scene from Yo-

kyoku (a Noh song) which is derived from the ancient Kouseki Choryo story. One scene shows Choryo receiving a book on military tactics from Sir Kouseki. The story is that an old man, while riding a horse, loses his horse shoes, and Choryo rescues them. The old man was Koseki, and he deliberately lost the shoes into the river, for the purpose of testing Choryo. Immediately, Choryo dove into the river, but a dragon (yokyoku is a large snake) picked up the horse shoes first and attacked him. Choryo drew his sword and fought to take back the shoes, and then returned the shoes to Koseki. Koseki appreciated Choryo's efforts, personality and qualities, and gave him a secret military tactics book. The dragon was an incarnation of Kannon Bosatsu (God of mercy) and was supposed to have been Choryo's protective god for the rest of his life.

The small tsuba shows Kanshin diving under and between a villain's legs. Kanshin was accused by a villain and was provoked "If you have courage to die, you should kill me, if not, you should dive under and between my legs". Kanshin thought this was a small thing, and endured it.

After that, they served under Ryuho, and Choryo was active as a tactician and Kanshin served as a general. During the So-Han war they exhibited great military merit, and were called the "Three heroes of the Han dynasty" along with Shoka. The tsuba's subject is an episode in the story of one of the heroes before he worked for Ryuho.

The daisho tsubas' iron ground is sukisage (deeply carved) to form the background, and the key elements such as people are takabori carving which makes them stand out. There is an excellent use zogan iroe (colored inlay), and this is a refined work. This shows

Mito's metal work vigor and power, and the use of the chisel is excellent and very precise, and is seen in every part of the scene. These dramatic scenes are powerful, and these are said to be masterpieces.

Commentary by Kugiyama Natsuko

February Teirei Kansho Kai

Date: February 8 (the second Saturday in February)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan Auditorium

Lecturer: Ishii Akira

Kantei To No. 1: wakizashi

Mumei: den Masamune

Length: slightly less than 1 shaku 9 sun

Sori: slightly over 3 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jigane: itame hada; the entire ji is well forged; the hada is visible in places. There are abundant dense jini, frequent chikei, and pale utsuri.

Hamon: the entire hamon is slightly narrow; it is midare and there are ko-notare mixed with gunome, ko-gunome, and ko-choji; some areas have nie-kuzure; there are frequent ashi and yo, a dense nioiguchi, abundant large, small and slightly uneven

nie; there are frequent kinsuji, nie-suji, sunagashi, yubashiri, and tobiyaki.

Boshi: midarekomi; the tip is nie kuzure and the entire boshi has hakikake.

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

Masamune was considered a great master smith in Japanese sword history. He is known for a nie style of work, and worked in the Soshu Den style, which came down from Kunimitsu and Yukimitsu. He enhanced artistry to the ultimate level, and people recognize him, not only in the sword world, but also are aware of him in the general public. His active period is supposed to be around the end of the Kamakura period. His swords have a standard width, the difference in the widths at the moto and saki is not very prominent, and there is a long chu-kissaki. On the omote, the tip of the hi is low (but on the ura hi, the tip is in a standard location). From these details, there were quite a few opinions that it was the next era's Nanbokuchō period work. Among the opinions, in looking at the ura futasuji-hi, there were opinions that it was Sadamune's work. However, if it was his work, although he inherited his teacher's style, his hamon are based on a shallow notare or mainly gunome mixed with ko-gunome, and there is usually a gentle original style. Hataraki such as chikei, kinsuji, niesuji, sunagashi, inazuma, tobiyaki, and yubashiri, and nie hataraki are not emphasized this much.

This is a Tokubetsu Jūyō sword judged as a Masamune wakizashi. Masamune's style includes nie hataraki, his hamon nioiguchi and nie fuse together, his hataraki such as the nioiguchi is light and dark in places, the nie are large and small and strong and

weak, and in the nioiguchi, wide and narrow variations are seen. He did not tightly control these details, and interesting nie kuzure are seen. His work is full of motion and has static areas, and he was not afraid of a lack of balance. There is a dynamic hamon style, like we can see here. The jiba (jigane and hamon) is rich in nie and a nioiguchi is present. Also, according old books, he is supposed to have passed away in the early Nanbokuchō period in Kōei 2 (1343), but this shape is an early Enbun-Jōji style, and we can think of other smiths here too. To see a similar style we can look at the meibutsu "Taro saku Masamune" which is a Kokuho, and the meibutsu "Ikeda Masamune" which is Juyō Bunkazai. Also, considering the futatsuji-hi, the meibutsu "Ogaku Masamune" has the same jiba style, so that helps in making this judgement.

This was supposed to have been owned by the shōgunate's ship magistrate Mukai Shokan Tadakatsu who supervised the shōgun's warship program and the shōgun's ships and patrol boats.

Kantei To No. 2: Wakizashi

Mei: Nakasone Kotetsu shinkitae saku

length: 1 shaku 7 sun 2.5 bu

Sori: slightly less than 3 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jigane: tight ko-itame hada; there are abundant large ji-nie.

Hamon: at the moto, there is a short yakidashi; above this there is a wide suguha style; at the koshimoto

and around monouchi the hamon is mixed with ko-notare and ko-gunome; there are ashi, a dense nioiguchi, and abundant fine even nie.

Boshi: at the yokote the boshi is yakikomi. The point is straight and round, and there is a long return and yakisage (a long kaeri extending down the mune).

This blade is wide for the length, there is a shallow sori, and it is notably thick. One could say it has a strange shape, and it is difficult to judge the period from the shape. If you look at the jiba carefully, there is a tight ko-itame hada with abundant large ji-nie. The hamon has a wide nioiguchi, and a distinct nioiguchi. Also, at the moto there is a short yakidashi parallel with the hamon, and at the yokote, there is a prominent yakikomi. In addition, some places have thick ashi, and from these details, you can judge this as work by Kotetsu, and a majority of people voted for him.

Possibly this was a special order, and it does not look like a wakizashi for a daisho, and sometimes we see examples of this kind of large wakizashi. This is such an example, and the mitsumune style is unusual. Also, a conventional continuous gunome hamon, or a "juzuba" hamon is supposed to be Kotetsu's unique hamon. But here we do not see too much of that typical style, and usually some places are mixed with juzuba, rather than being primarily a continuous midare, and those are gentle looking hamon, just like this one. However, in his early career called his "hanetora" era, his work has long yakidashi, the hamon are mixed with large and small fused gunome called hyotanba, and vertical variations are prominent, and we can point out that this is different from his later

work. This work shows more than enough of his later hanetora period's characteristic points.

Also, a second mekugi ana is sometimes seen in his work and is called a kesho ana. Among these, the area around the ana is carved with a chisel, and shows a chrysanthemum petal, so this is called a chrysanthemum ana. Besides this, in looking at the area around the ana, there are several styles, such as a tsubo ana, a kake-kawara ana, and a mayu ana. This work has no date, but from the signature style, this is supposed to be from around Enpo 4-5 (1626-27) and one of his last works.

Kantei To No. 3: Tanto

Mei: Ryosai

Length: 7 sun 2.5 bu

Sori: uchizori

Style: kanmuri otoshi

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: itame mixed with mokume; the entire ji has strong nagare hada and some masame hada is visible; there are ji-nie, and slightly whitish utsuri.

Hamon: at the moto there is a yakiotoshi; above this it is based on a narrow suguha with small notare; around the center of the ura, the hamon is wider; there are frequent ko-nie, fine sunagshi, and the upper half has some nijuba style yubashiri.

Boshi: straight, komaru and a return. The tip has fine hakikake.

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

The first thing you notice about the tanto is that above the machi, the hamon has a large yakiotoshi. This kind of feature is sometimes seen in either Ko-Hoki Ichirui work, and started with Yasutsugu, Ko-Naminohira, Kyushu kosaku such as Bungo Yukihiro, Ko-Aoe, and Unrui. The tanto's jigane is a dark color with a slightly sticky appearance. There is a strong nagare and itame hada, and there are some Yamato features. In some places the nioiguchi is cloudy, and considering these details, it is possible to think about Ko-Kyushu work. This started with Samonji who was supposed to be a founder of the Chikuzen school, and this is Ryosai's tanto. Except for this tanto, signed work by Ryosai is not seen anywhere, and this is a valuable reference work. People are widely aware of this in the Japanese sword world, and about half of the people voted for his name. As mentioned above, the style has common points with Ko-Naminohira and Bungo work in this period, and overall if you look at this as Ko-Kyushu work, it is a good enough identification.

Some people put an emphasis on the jihada pattern and voted for Hosho school work. Definitely, this is a point, and in the jigane in some places, the strong nagare hada becomes a masame style pattern. But if it were that school's work, the entire hada is a dense orderly masame hada, and from not enough forging, there are often gaps in the masame hada pattern. In addition, their characteristic point is that the habaki moto hada flows toward the hamon side, and around the kissaki area the hada flows toward the mune. Also, they do not have this kind of yakiotoshi, and usually the machi edge area has yakikomi. Another point is that the kanmuri otoshi shape and jiba feel weak, so some people's opinion was that this was

Ryokai work, but their jigane does not have this much strong nagare hada. If they have nagare hada, some places are mixed with a masame hada, and they are based on the Rai school style.

Kantei To No. 4: katana

Mei: Hizen koku Saga ju Masahiro

Kanei 16 nen (1639) 2 gatsu kichijitsu

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 3 sun 4 bu

Sori: 6 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jigane: ko-itame hada mixed with some itame hada; the hada is slightly visible; there are ji-nie.

Hamon: the entire hamon is high; there are gunome mixed with choji; there are frequent ashi and yo, a dense nioiguchi, and slightly uneven abundant nie; there are some kinsuji and sunagashi; the upper half of the hamon has tobiyaki, and there muneyaki.

Boshi: straight with a round tip; the ura has a long return.

Although the hamon has a large midare pattern, the boshi is straight, with a round tip and a return. From these details we first wish to look at this as a Shinto period work. The jigane is a tight ko-itame hada, and looking at the midare hamon pattern, the lower part has a dense nioiguchi and nie. In some places, the midare valleys and tips of the ashi pause before the hasaki or edge of the hamon, and the boshi follows the fukura, From these details, it is not difficult to

judge this as a Hizen-to. Then looking at the details, the overall jigane color is dark, the hada is fine, slightly visible, and similar to komenuka hada. Also, groups in the midare hamon are connected by a low width or narrow hamon which is either a suguha or shallow notare style. Among the Hizen-to in particular, we see relatively many Bo-Hizen hamon styles.

In the first vote, there were almost no mainstream smiths' names. In the second vote, half of the people voted for Masahiro, Yukihiro, or Tadakuni. But if it were work by Tadakuni, the entire hamon would have more prominent frequent sunagashi and kinsuji, and this is his characteristic point. Yukihiro has fewer of this type of high wide gorgeous midare hamon, but in his midare hamon, the intervals between the main features are small, and many of the hamon are less bold and active.

This is a shodai Masahiro katana. Among the Bo-Hizen smiths, overall, a high or wide midare hamon which has an abundance of variety is seen in many of works. This hamon has large nie and prominent kinsuji and this is a good example of his style. Also, the nidai Masahiro's better work has the same kind of workmanship, so from this, his name was also treated as a correct answer. However, the Nidai Masahiro has more swords with wide hamon, and which are thick.

Besides these smiths, there were votes for Dewa daijo Kunimichi and Shin Kunisada. If it was work by Kunimichi, one of his characteristic points is a midare hamon which someplace has saka-ashi, the boshi is a large shallow notare with a sanpin boshi. If it is work from Kunisada, usually gunome are mixed with choji, the entire hamon is a small dense midare, and the

height differences between the features are not prominent.

Kantei To No. 5 : Tachi

Mei: Soshu ju Tsunahiro
Tenmon 17 nen (1548) tsuchinoe saru
2 gatsu hi

Length: slightly over 2 shaku 5 sun 7 bu

Sori: 8 bu

Style: shinogi tsukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jigane: itame hada mixed with mokume hada; there is some nagare hada; in places the hada is visible; there are ji-nie, chikei, and shirake utsuri at the koshimoto.

Hamon: narrow suguha mixed with ko-gunome; there are small ashi, a nioiguchi with slightly uneven small nie.

Boshi: straight, with a large round point; on the ura there is a slight kuichigaiba.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are bo-hi with marudome. On the omote under the hi, there are bonji, goma-bashi, and rendai; on the ura, there are bonji and a so style kurikara; both sides have kasane-bori.

This is dated Tenmon 17, and is a Soshu Tsunahiro tachi. Many of his signed works are short uchigatana and long hirazuku wakizashi. There are hitatsura hamon with prominent tobiyaki and muneyaki, but tachi with suguha hamon are very rare. Probably this

was a special order from a prominent samurai. In making suguha hamon, possibly the amount of forging or the number of times the steel is folded is increased, and the itame hada is not as prominent as usual, and the forging is more refined. This is not only a suguha hamon, but is difficult for kantei, because one must find and recognize all of the elements in the hamon.

First, in looking at the shape, for a tachi the degree of koshizori is small, there is a slight sakizori tendency, and the decrease in the thickness of the blade going from the moto to the tip (the amount of tapering) decreases suddenly, and this is apparent. There is a mitsumune, and from this, one has a slight hesitation to judge this as Kamakura period work. Also, the mitsumune center line or surface is notably narrow for the thickness of the blade. There is a possibility that this is Muromachi period work. Moreover, if you observe carefully, the upper half of the blade, especially around the monouchi area, has prominent muneyaki which is an unbalanced feature for a gentle suguha. However, the horimono on the omote and the ura are kasanebori and are seen in many Soshu works, and we can recognize the so style kurikara's sanko hilt is hexagonal. From this, with the period, you can think that this is possibly Sue-Soshu work.

Some people voted for Heianjo Nagayhoshi, and sometimes he has suguha work, and his horimono are well recognized. Certainly, his so style kurikara are the same shape as this one, and a similar style. In this case, most of his horimono are single subjects, and not kasane-bori. Many of his ko-itame hada jigane are tighter and more refined, his hamon have a bright nioiguchi, and are more refined than this one,

and are sophisticated works. Also, as traditionally said, on Nagayoshi's kurikara dragon, the area where the body and ken cross is carved to a shallow depth, and there is more volume, and these are his characteristic points and those are different from what we see on this sword.

The nakago oshigata is 98% of the actual size.

Shijo Kantei To No.816 in the 2025 New Years issue

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To is a katana by the Nidai Echizen Yasutsugu.

The original meibutsu Atagi Sadamune sword is listed in the "Kyoho Meibutsu Cho" in a section listing swords lost in fires. The theory that it was lost in the Meireki fire was strongly supported. However, evidence for the existence of the destroyed sword is not clear, and it is not clear if the Meibutsu Cho report is correct. However, from the "Honami Kotoku Do Koon Oshigata Collection" there is an oshigata, and the nidai Echizen Yasutsugu was working from that oshigata, and so it is possible that we can visualize what the original Atagi Sadamune looked like.

According to the Kyoho Meibutsu Cho, the Atagi Sadamune blade length is 2 shaku 1 sun 5 bu, the horimono on the omote are a bo-hi and kage-hi (soe-hi) which stop above the machi, but under the habaki.

There are bonji and ken (suken) on the ura, which is kiriha tsukuri, and the hi are narrower than on the omote, and there are kage hi (soe hi). These futasuji-hi stop about 5 sun above the machi. Also, on the ura there is a kanji zogan or inlay: “Atagi Sadamune nari, Hashiba Okayama Chunagon shoji nari”, and the owner is Kobayakawa Hideaki.

When compared with this, the nidai Yasutsugu’s horimono match, also the nakago tip is kiri, and match with the original blade’s nakago jiri.

The length is 1.5 sun longer than the original Sadamune, and naturally the machi is lower (or farther from the tip) than on the original, and possibly the horimono’s size is carefully designed to fit, but no adjustments were made for the horimono's location, so the horimono’s location is not exactly the same as on the original. On the omote the bonji and suken stop above the nakago and are located on the koshimoto.

On the other hand, the kissaki is quite small, and is a chu-kissaki. The widths at the moto and saki are different, the shape is mainly from the nidai Yasutsugu’s active period and similar to work around the Kanei period. This is not an exact copy of the original, and we can see elements from the nidai’s era. However, besides this example, there are wakizashi which fit the original description with a reduction in the blade’s length, and it appears the smith was careful about conforming with the original blade’s description.

However, the Shodai Yasutsugu’s Atagi utsushi has a large kissaki fitting with the style of the Keicho Shinto era, and same as the original kissaki. On the

omote horimono there are only bo-hi and soe hi carved up to the nakago, and the bonji and suken horimono are omitted, and the lengths of the hi are all longer than on the original. His nakago tips are usually kengyo, which is different from the original, and considering the later horimono composition and reflecting his own work, many horimono are only seen on one side. This reflects the fact that the shodai had more freedom or flexibility than the Nidai, and this is different from the Nidai's utsushi.

Also, since the Shodai has no horimono extending into the nakago, there is a theory that the Shodai Yasutsugu never saw the Atagi Sadamune, and actually made copies of Kiriha Sadamune. The Kiriha Sadamune's horimono are only omote soe-hi extending up to the koshimoto. On the ura below the bo hi, there is a long bonji and a suken. At the 24th Juyo Token, the shodai had a signed "Atagi Satamune utsushi" blade, so from these works, this does not seem to be wrong, and to naturally look at this as an Atagi Sadamune utsushi. My personal opinion is that in order to keep space for the signature, he omitted the horimono.

However, without these utsushi details, from the jiba (jigane and hamon), it is possible to judge this as a Yasutsugu work. At this time with the shape, many people voted for the Nidai.

Katakiriha styles are seen in many swords from the Keicho period, when Nanbokucho style work became popular. This nakago is ubu, there is no funbari, and from this, we should first consider Keicho Shinto period work.

However, as I mentioned above, this is not a peak Keicho period shape, but from a little later during the transition to the Kanei Shinto shape.

The shodai Yasutsugu passed away in Genna 7 (1621) on September 9, and his active period coincided with the peak of the Keicho Shinto period. His shapes are wide, differences in the widths at the moto and saki are not prominent, there is a large kissaki, and works with only Keicho Shinto features and with a chu-kissaki are few. In contrast to this, the nidai took over after the shodai, and until he passed away in Shoho 3 (1648), his active era was mainly around the Kanei period, and because of this, he has narrower blades with large kissaki, unlike the shodai. His shapes have a standard width, the widths at the moto and saki are different, there are many blades with a large sori, and mainly with Kanei Shinto shapes.

But this blade has a shallow sori, and we see similar styles in the shodai's work. The nidai's works are from Genna 7, he has some daisaku work with the shodai, and in addition, their jiba and nakago styles are similar, so at this time, either the shodai or nidai are treated as correct answers.

The jigane is dark, and the hada is itame mixed with mokume, and is a hokkoku (northern Japan) hada, this kind of jigane is seen often on a large number of swords and is called an "Echizen gane", and often is seen in Yasutsugu's work. Also, there are frequent chikei, on the kiriha side, and along the mune there is masame hada (on the shinogi ji), and this is supposed to be a Yasutsugu characteristic point.

The hamon in a number of the nidai's utsushi-mono works are diverse, but this is a Keicho Shinto era work, and the better Soshu utsushi style work based on notare with large midare hamon were popular. There are nie groups clustered together, some rough areas, abundant sunagashi, and a slightly worn down nioiguchi which are Yasutsugu's characteristic points. Also, sometimes (but not often in the shodai's work), there are muneyaki.

The boshi is notarekomi, there is a sharp tip, a return, and a sanpin style boshi. The return extends past the the yokote line, and is a long return, and this is seen in his usual work.

The nakago tip is essentially kengyo or iriyamagata, the yasurime are katte sagari (sometimes sujichigai), the nakago mune are square, and the omote has a mon, the aoe mon (some of the shodai's work has no mon). On the nakago, almost on the center there is a long signature, and these are often in Yasutsugu's style.

For another proper answer, there were votes for Echizen Shinto smiths such as Yamato Daijo Masanori and Yamashiro no kami Kunikiyo, but both smiths' katakiriha katana are very rare, and the horimono are different. Masanori's yasurime and nakago tips match those of Yasutsugu, but there is no mon. Kunikiyo has some chrysanthemum mon, but he carved them on the ura (tachi mei) side with his signature, and these are big differences. In addition, his nakago tips are kurijiri.

Note: Yoshihara Hiromichi's "Tsuguhira Oshigata" "Koetsu Oshigata," and "Kodo Oshigata" are considered to be forgeries. Caution is required when comparing them with originals from the Kyushu Industrial University's Basic Research Center (issue No.14). However, no other book has these oshigata, and when looking at the Nidai Yasutsugu oshigata, I will try to examine them more carefully.

Commentary by Ooi Gaku.