

MAGOROKU KANEMOTO 孫六兼元



Magoroku Kanemoto (孫六兼元) worked in Akasaka in Mino Province around the beginning of the sixteenth century. He flourished during the Eishô (永正) era (1504-1521) and the Daiei (大永) era (1521-1528). He was the son of the first generation Kanemoto (兼元). He was also a contemporary and sworn brother of the second generation Izumi no Kami Kanesada (和泉守兼定) who was also known as Nosada. They say that being a sworn brother is a stronger tie than being a brother by blood. Together these two smiths are recognized as being two of the premiere Mino smiths during this era of sword making.

The name Kanemoto (兼元) was used by the generation before Magoroku Kanemoto (孫六兼元) and several successive generations following him. In fact the *zokumei*, Magoroku (孫六), was also used

on occasion when referring to successive generations. Today it is thought that use of the Magoroku (孫六) name should only be applied to the works of the second generation.

There is also controversy as to the teacher of Magoroku Kanemoto (孫六兼元). Some texts say that he was the student of the first generation by that name and others say he, together with the second generation Kanesda (兼定), were the students of the *shodai* Kanesada (初代兼定). This is the prevailing theory despite the fact that the second generation Kanemoto (兼元) lived in Akasaka while the first generation lived in Seki that is some distance away. Also his tempering style of *sanbon-sugi* (three cedar tree) differs markedly from that of the *shodai* Kanesada (初代兼定).

If fact, the *sanbon-sugi* tempering style of the second generation Kanemoto

(兼元) (Magoroku (孫六)) differs what we commonly think of when we think of typical Mino *sanbon-sugi* tempering patterns for which this school is famous. The *sanbon-sugi* of the second generation consists of *gunome* having rounded heads in places making the hamon not totally uniform throughout the blade; while very sharply pointed heads that are juxtaposed in a regular pattern characterizes the works of later

generations. Compared to calligraphy, the *sanbon-sugi* formation of the second generation is in the *sôsho* (grass writing) style while later generations were in the *kaisho* (block) style.

SUGATA: *Katana, wakizashi, and tanto* are frequently seen, but *tachiare* few. As for *katana* while there are some that have the style of the previous *jidai*, most are typical of the latter Muromachi era in that they are in the *uchi-gatana* style about two *shaku* in length with a slight *saki-zori*. The *shinogi* will be high and there will be little *hiraniku*. *Tanto* will generally be in the *hira zukuri* style with *chukan zori* (little or no curvature). The blades will be a wide with a *kasane* that is a little thin.

JITETSU: In *shinogi-zukuri katana* and *wakizashi*, *masame hada* will show up clearly in the *shinogi-ji*. The grain in the *ji* of his blades will trend toward straight *itame* and or *mokume hada* with traces of *masame hada* mixed in. Those works that are done with a *gunome midare hamon* will have *hada* more of an *o-mokume* style while those works done in *hososuguha* will tend to show a more *ko-mokume hada* with *masame hada* near the *mune*. The overall effect of the *jitetsu* is that the grain will “stand out”. Also, there will be *shirake utsuri* in most blades and this is an important kantei point.

HAMON: When we think of the works of Kanemoto we think of the characteristic *sanbon-sugi* (three cedar trees) style of tempering.

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BÔSHI: When the blade is tempered in *midareba*, the *bôshi* is *midare-komi* with a hint of *jizô*; when done in *suguha*, it is generally *ko-maru*. Occasionally, there is a blade in which the *yaki haba* (width of the temper) of the *kaeri* (turn back) is wider than the *yaki haba* towards the *ha* (edge).

HORIMONO: Very rarely did his blades have *horimono*.

NAKAGO: Generally, his *nakago* are short in keeping with the general shape of the latter Muromachi Era. His *nakago jiri* are usually *iri-yamagata* in shape. His *yasurimei* are *takanoha* (hawk's feather).

MEI:

KANEMOTO 兼元 (Most common)

NÔSHÛ AKASAKA JÛ KANEMOTO 濃州赤坂住兼元 (Rare)