Ryuteki / Nukan of the Heirloom of Kishu-Tokugawa Family

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Among the musical instruments of the heirloom of Kishu-Tokugawa Family, 27 pieces of Ryuteki / Nukan in total owned by the National Museum of Japanese History were investigated through close observation and radiography.

Observation by a high precision electron microscope revealed that vine such as cane or calamus instead of birch was wound around Aoyagi (H46-39), which had been considered to be “Hira kabamaki,” and that some Ryuteki had a weight formed into a Buddha statue inserted into its head. This investigation produced many such new findings that had not been revealed by past research. There was a case where the pipe body did not agree with the accompanying document, and there is a possibility that the pipes changed places. As an example, it is inferred that the Nukan called Gasho (H46-53) is the “Kokyō no Nishiki” mentioned in Meikanroku, judging from the accessories and the pattern of Kashiragane (decorative end cap) at the head. The specific time is not known, but there seems to have been confusion over the actual status of the collection. Since some point in time, Kishu Tokugawa Family’s collection has been scattered and lost gradually. Further investigation is needed to check against the facts.

Key words: Japanese music, musical instrument study, musical instrument, Gagaku, Nogaku, Ryuteki, Nukan