

Jūyō-tōken at the 48th *jūyō shinsa* held on October 11, 2002

katana, *mumei*: Taima (当麻)

Measurements

nagasa 69.2 cm, *sori* 1.2 cm, *motohaba* 2.9 cm, *sakihaba* 2.0 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.5 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 14.7 cm, no *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, relatively wide *mihaba*, shallow *sori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *nagare*, that partially strongly tends to *masame*, and that features *chikei* and plenty of *ji-nie*

Hamon: *nie*-laden *suguha-chō* with a wide, bright, and clear *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *notare*, *gunome*, *ko-ashi*, *yō*, *hotsure*, *kuichiga-ba*, *nijuba*, *uchinoke*, *yubashiri*, *kinsuji*, and *sunagashi*, the *yakihaba* widens along the upper half of the blade

Bōshi: widely hardened *sugu* on the *omote* side with a *maru-kaeri*, *nie-kuzure* and almost *ichimai* on the *ura*, on both sides a long running-back *kaeri* and *hakikake* at the tip

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, very shallow *kurijiri*, *sujikai-yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana* (of which one is plugged), *mumei*

Explanation

The Taima School was one of the Five Major Yamato Schools (*Yamato-goha*, 大和五派). It was founded by Kuniyuki (国行) and flourished from the late Kamakura to the Nanbokuchō period. The *meikan* list relatively many Taima smiths but only very few signed works are extant today, i.e. the majority of the Taima blades that are going round are unsigned and attributed to this school. By trend, the Hon'ami family and other appraisers from the past have attributed Yamato blades with a prominently *nie*-laden *jiba* and with many *chikei* and *kinsuji*, i.e. which are noticeably mixed with Sōshū elements, to the Taima School. However, the few extant signed Taima works do show a somewhat different workmanship but it is possible that by the time these attributions were made, signed blades of that sōshūesque kind did still exist.

The *kitae* of this blade is mixed with *nagare* and with much *masame* in places and its *jiba* is very *nie*-laden. The *hamon* is a *suguha-chō* with a bright and clear *nioiguchi* and therefore we clearly recognize the characteristic features of the Taima School. The blade is in perfect condition (*kenzen*) and of an excellent *deki*. Particularly gorgeous is the abundance of *nie* within the *ha* and we have here a masterwork among all blades attributed to this school which shows many prominent *hataraki* like *hotsure*, *kuichiga-ba*, *nijūba*, and *uchinoke*. The blade was once a heirloom of the Toki (土岐) family from Kōzuke province.