

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

katana, mumei: Ko-Mihara (古三原)

kinzōgan-meい, sashi-ura: Meireki ninen shichigatsu mikka, Bushū ni oite futatsu-dō kiri-otoshi, Yamano Ka'emon no Jō Nagahisa + kaō (明暦二年七月三日・於武州二ッ胴切落・山野加右衛門尉永久「花押」) - "Yamano Ka'emon no Jō Nagahisa cut [with this blade] on the third day of the seventh month of Meireki two (1656) in Musashi province through two bodies + monogram"
kinzōgan-meい, sashi-omote: Manji sannen jūgatsu jūichinichi, mittsu-dō kiri-otoshi, Yamano Ka'emon no Jō Nagahisa + kaō (万治三年十月十一日・三ッ胴切落・山野加右衛門尉永久「花押」) - "Yamano Ka'emon no Jō Nagahisa cut [with this blade] on the eleventh day of the tenth month of Manji three (1660) through three bodies + monogram"

Measurements

nagasa 72.1 cm, *sori* 1.2 cm, *motohaba* 2.95 cm, *sakihaba* 2.0 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.4 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 21.8 cm, no *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, no noticeable taper, high shinogi, thick kasane, shallow sori, somewhat elongated chū-kissaki

Kitae: standing-out itame that is mixed with mokume and nagare, that noticeably tends to nagare-masame towards the ha, and that features ji-nie, chikei-like elements, and a shirake-utsuri

Hamon: hoso-suguha in ko-nie-deki with a tight and somewhat subdued nioiguchi that is mixed with hotsure, uchinoke, kuichigai-ba, and thin kinsuji-like elements,

Bōshi: sugu with a ko-maru-style kaeri and some kuichigai-ba on the ura side

Nakago: ō-suriage, kurijiri, gently slanting katte-sagari yasurime, three mekugi-ana, the sashi-ura side bears below of the first mekugi-ana and in three rows the result of a cutting test inlaid in gold and the omote side an identically positioned result of a second cutting test, also inlaid in gold

Explanation

The Bingo Mihara school emerged at the end of the Kamakura period and flourished henceforth until the end of the Muromachi period. Works from the end of the Kamakura throughout the Nanbokuchō period are referred to as Ko-Mihara. There were many *shōen* manors located in Bingo province which were owned and administrated by important shrines and temples of the Yamato region and therefore we can see a certain Yamato influence in the works of the Mihara School, suggesting that a certain exchange had taken place between the local smiths and their colleagues from the central Kinai region. In direct comparison with Yamato works, the *jiba* of Mihara blades shows in general lesser *nie*, the *kitae* tends to feature *shirake* and appears as a standing-out *itame* with a prominent amount of *mokume*, the *nioiguchi* is tighter, and the *bōshi* more calm.

This *katana* has a wide *mihaba* no noticeable taper, a shallow *sori*, and a somewhat elongated *chū-kissaki*, showing so the powerful and large blade shapes from the Nanbokuchō period, with the high *shinogi* and the thick *kasane* reflecting Yamato characteristics. The *kitae* is a standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare*, that noticeably tends to *nagare-masame* towards the *ha*, and that features *ji-nie*, *chikei*-like elements, and a *shirake-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *hoso-suguha* in *ko-nie-deki* with a tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *hotsure*, *uchinoke*, and *kuichigai-ba*. We recognize certain elements from the Yamato tradition and thus overall clearly the characteristic features of Ko-Mihara work. The blade is of a superior cutting ability, displays an excellent *deki*, and is with the tick *kasane* of a robust shape, which is delightful.

The tang bears two gold inlaid cutting tests performed by Yamano Ka'emon no Jō Nagahisa, one from the third day of the seventh month of Meireki two (1656) when he cut with this blade through two bodies, and one from the eleventh day of the tenth month of Manji three (1660) when he cut through three bodies. Double cutting tests performed by the same tester and recorded on both sides of the tang are very rare which makes this blade a valuable reference.