

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

tachi, shu-meis: Aoe (青江)

Measurements

nagasa 68.8 cm, *sori* 2.4 cm, *motohaba* 2.8 cm, *sakihaba* 2.0 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.15 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 21.7 cm, hardly any *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, no noticeable taper, thick kasane, deep sori, chū-kissaki

Kitae: overall densely forged ko-itame that is mixed with a little bit of ko-mokume and that features plenty of ji-nie, much fine chikei, some jifu in places, and a midare-utsuri

Hamon: chū-suguha-chō in nioi-deki with ko-nie that is mixed with ko-chōji, ko-gunome, many ashi and yō, kinsuji, and sunagashi, the ha is somewhat subdued along the mid-section of the blade

Bōshi: on the omote side notare with a somewhat pointed kaeri, on the ura side midare-komi with a late starting and pointed kaeri that runs back in a long fashion

Horimono: on both sides a bōhi that runs as kaki-nagashi into the tang

Nakago: ō-suriage, kirijiri, katte-sagari yasurime, three mekugi-anas, the sashi-omote side bears centrally under the second mekugi-anas the large shu-meis attribution "Aoe"

Explanation

"Swords from Bitchū" are already found in the early 11th century work *Shin Sarugaku Ki* (新猿楽記) that lists noted products of all provinces. The Aoe school that emerged later and flourished at the downstream of the Takahashi River continued to live from that fame. Generally, works made by this school up to the mid-Kamakura period are referred to as Ko-Aoe and those made later and throughout the Nanbokuchō period to just as Aoe. The workmanship of the Ko-Aoe school displays mostly a *suguha-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* with a rather subdued *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *ko-midare*. From the late Kamakura period on, the *nie* become more unobtrusive and with the Nanbokuchō period, the school focussed on a *saka-chōji-midare* with a tight *nioiguchi* that bases on a bright and clear *suguha*.

This blade shows an overall densely forged *ko-itame* that features plenty of *ji-nie*, some *jifu* in places, and a *midare-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *chū-suguha-chō* in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie* that is mixed with *ko-chōji*, *ko-gunome*, many *ashi* and *yō*, *kinsuji*, and *sunagashi* and so we clearly recognize the characteristic features of an Aoe work from the end of the Kamakura to the early Nanbokuchō period. Also very typical for this school is the *bōshi* with its pointed *kaeri*. With the wide *mihaba*, the *chū-kissaki*, and the deep *sori*, one can still imagine the original *tachi-sugata* of the blade despite it being (*ō-suriage*) shortened.