

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

katana, mumei: Ko-Mihara (古三原)

Measurements

nagasa 62.6 cm, *sori* 1.6 cm, *motohaba* 3.0 cm, *sakihaba* 2.05 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.55 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 13.7 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keijō: shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, somewhat noticeable taper, thick kasane, some funbari, deep koshizori, somewhat elongated chū-kissaki

Kitae: dense itame that is mixed with some nagare and that features ji-ne, fine chikei, and a shirake-utsuri

Hamon: chū-suguha in ko-nie-deki with a tight and bright nioiguchi that is mixed with a little bit of ko-gunome and at the base of the omote side with some kinsuji

Bōshi: sugu with a small and somewhat pointed ko-maru-kaeri on the omote side and a ko-maru-kaeri that leans towards the ha on the ura side

Horimono: on both sides a bōhi that runs as kaki-nagshi into the tanf

Nakago: ō-suriage, kirijiri, kiri-yasurime, one mekugi-ana, mumei

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. Some blades however also remind us of Aoe works whereupon it is likely that the Mihara School was also influenced by smiths from neighboring Bitchū province. The workmanship of the school features a standing-out *itame* with a prominent amount of *mokume* plus a *shirake-utsuri*, a tight *nioiguchi*, and a calm *bōshi* with a roundish *kaeri*.

This blade has a wide *mihaba*, some *funbari*, a deep *sori*, and a somewhat elongated *chū-kissaki* and is therefore reflecting the typical shapes of that time. The *kitae* is a dense *itame* that features *ji-nie* and *chikei* and the *hamon* is a *chū-suguha* with a tight and bright *nioiguchi* and so the blade may be mistaken for an Aoe work at first glance. The *nagare* however in the *kotae*, the *shirake-utsuri*, the hardening in *ko-nie-deki*, and the calm *bōshi* with its roundish *kaeri* do clearly reflect the characteristic features of the Ko-Mihara School. The *kitae* is with the excellently forged and standing-out *hada*, *ji-nie*, and fine *chikei* of an excellent quality and with the accented *suguha* featuring a quite tight and bright *nioiguchi*, we have here a masterwork among all blades attributed to this school.