

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

katana, *mumei*: Kenchō (兼長)

Measurements

nagasa 67.1 cm, *sori* 1.45 cm, *motohaba* 2.95 cm, *sakihaba* 2.1 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 4.7 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 17.4 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, wide *mihaba*, no noticeable taper. thick *kasane*, relatively shallow *sori*, elongated *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: finely standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and a little bit of *nagare* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, which partially appears in a rough and accumulated manner, and fine *chikei*

Hamon: large and flamboyant, *nie*-laden *notare* that is mixed with *gunome*, *koshi no hiraita* and angular elements, *togariba*, many *ashi* and *yō*, strongly sparkling *ara-nie* in places, *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, *yubashiri*, and *tobiyaki*

Bōshi: widely hardened *midare-komi* with a somewhat pointed *kaeri* and *hakikake*

Horimono: on both sides a *bōhi* that ends in *marudome*

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, *kurijiri* that tends a little bit to *ha-agari*, *kiri-yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Explanation

According to tradition, Bizen Osafune Kenchō, whose name can also be read Kanenaga, was a student of Chōgi (長義). Extant signed blades of him are extremely rare. There is a *jūyō-bijutsuhin wakizashi* which is dated Jōji five (貞治, 1366) and which is hardened in a *hitatsura*. Apart from that, there is a *jūyō tantō* dated Shitoku four (至徳, 1387) and a *tokubetsu-juyō tantō* dated Kakyō two (嘉慶, 1388). The *wakizashi* is very *nie*-laden and its *jiba* displays an abundance of *hataraki* which makes it come close to the workmanship of Chōgi but whose *deki* is overall even more leaning towards the Sōshū tradition than that of his master. That said, almost all unsigned blades attributed to Kenchō are basically similar to Chōgi but feature more *nie* and more *hataraki* within the *ha* and there are some works which are of a relatively large dimensioned *midareba* that is mixed with *chōji*-like elements.

This blade is with its wide *mihaba* and elongated *chū-kissaki* of a magnificent shape. The *kitae* is a finely standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and a little bit of *nagare* and that features plenty of *ji-nie* and fine *chikei*. The *hamon* is a *nie*-laden *notare* that is mixed with *gunome*, *koshi no hiraita* and angular elements, *togariba*, many *ashi* and *yō*, *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, *yubashiri*, and *tobiyaki*. The *bōshi* is *midare-komi* with a somewhat pointed *kaeri* and therefore we clearly recognize overall the characteristic features of the Chōgi group. As the *ha* is a large and flamboyant *midareba*, *nie*-laden, and of a free and bold interpretation, the attribution can be narrowed down to Kenchō within this group. The ups and downs of the *yakiba* are most prominent among all works attributed to this smith. The blade is with the *ashi* and *yō hataraki* of an ambitious interpretation and of an excellent *deki*.