

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

tantō, mei: Bitchū no Kuni-jū Tsuguyoshi saku - Jōji sannen nigatsu hi (備中国住次吉作・貞治三年二月日) - "Made by Tsuguyoshi, resident of Bitchū province, on a day in the second month of Jōji three (1364)"

(with *origami* by Hon'ami Kōchū from Shōtoku four, 1714, and a *tantō* box)

Measurements

nagasa 26.9 cm, *sori* 0.2 cm, *motohaba* 2.35 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 8.8 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keiō: hira-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, sunnobi, thin kasane, some sori

Kitae: dense ko-itame that features ji-nie, fine chikei, prominent jifu, and a midare-utsuri

Hamon: hoso-suguha in nioi-deki with a tight and bright nioiguchi that is mixed with a few ko-ashi and with kinsuji along the upper half of the blade

Bōshi: sugu with a somewhat pointed ko-maru-kaeri on the omote and a ko-maru-kaeri on the ura side

Nakago: ubu, ha-agari kurijiri, ō-sujikai yasurime, two mekugi-ana, the sashi-omote side bears centrally under the first, the ubu-mekugi-ana, a thinly chiseled naga-me and the ura side an identically positioned date

Explanation

Tsuguyoshi (次吉) was with Tsugunao (次直) and Moritsugu (守次) one of the most representative Aoe smiths of the mid-Nanbokuchō period. These smiths either hardened in *suguha* or in a flamboyant *saka-chōji-midare* whereas it can be said that Tsuguyoshi focused more on a *suguha* and Tsugunao more on a *saka-chōji-midare*. In any case, a highlight of their workmanship is that the *nioiguchi* is tight, bright, and clear.

This blade has a wide *mihaba*, is *sunnobi*, a thin *kasane*, and some *sori* and shows thus the typical *tantō-sugata* of the mid-Nanbokuchō period, what matches the Jōji era this blade is dated with which was the peak of such shapes. The *kitae* is a dense *ko-itame* that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, *jifu*, and a *midare-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *hoso-suguha* in *nioi-deki* with a tight and bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with a few *ko-ashi* and some *kinsuji* and therefore we clearly recognize the characteristic features of not only the Aoe School but also of Tsuguyoshi. The *suguha* is of a particularly calm nature and the *deki* of the blade is outstanding among all blades known by this smith. Also very valuable is the fact that the *tantō* is signed and dated, making this blade an important reference for studies on this smith.

The *tantō* comes with an *origami* that was issued by Hon'ami Kōchū (本阿弥光忠, ?-1725) in Shōtoku four (正徳, 1744), evaluating the blade with seven gold pieces, and a glossy black-lacquer *tantō* ox with a gold *makie* design of an arrangement of Chinese bellflowers. The piece was an heirloom of the noble Kan'in-no-miya (閑院宮) family and the fittings of the cords of the box show the chrysanthemum crest of this family in *kebori*.