

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

tantō, mei: Bishū Osafune Kagemitsu - Gentoku sannen jūgatsu hi (備州長船景光・元徳三年十月日) -
“Osafune Kagemitsu from Bizen province, on a day in the tenth month of Gentoku three (1331)”

Measurements

nagasa 26.45 cm, *uchizori, motohaba* 2.1 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 10.5 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *hira-zukuri, iori-mune*, normal *mihaba*, a little bit *sun nobi*, *uchizori*

Kitae: overall rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and some *nagare* in places and that features fine *ji-nie* and a *midare-utsuri*

Hamon: based on *kataochi-gunome* and mixed with angular elements, *ko-gunome*, and *ko-ashi*, the hardening is in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie*

Bōshi: *midare-komi* with an *ō-mary*-like *kaeri* on the *omote* and a pointed *kaeri* on the *ura* side

Nakago: *ubu, kurijiri, kate-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, the *sashi-omote* side bears centrally under the second *mekugi-ana* a thin and largely chiseled *naga-mei* and on the *ura* side an identically interpreted date

Explanation

Kagemitsu (景光) was the son of Nagamitsu (長光), succeeded as third main line generation Osafune, and became famous for perfecting the *kataochi-gunome* style *hamon*. Extant dated works range from the end of the Kamakura period, i.e. the Kagen era (嘉元, 1303-1306), to the early Nanbokuchō period, i.e. the Kenmu era (建武, 1334-1338), and so we learn that his active period spanned roughly thirty years. He hardly produced such flamboyant works as Nagamitsu did and worked in a calmer style, focusing on a *suguha-chō* that is mixed with *gunome* which tend to slant or on a *kataochi-gunome*-based *ha*. Kagemitsu's *jigane* is outstanding and it has to be pointed out that it sometimes surpasses that of his father. Another characteristic feature of Kagemitsu is that unlike Nagamitsu, he produced relatively many *tantō*.

This blade has a normal *mihaba*, tends a little bit towards *sun nobi*, and has an *uchizori*, that is, it is of the classical *tantō-sugata* from the end of the Kamakura period. The *kitae* is an *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features fine *ji-nie* and a *midare-utsuri*. The *hamon* bases on *kataoichi-gunome* and is mixed with angular elements and *ko-gunome* and is hardened in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie*. Thus, we have here a typical interpretation of Kagemitsu and it is particularly delightful that the signature is still very crisp and clearly legible.