

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

katana, mei: Bizen no Kuni-jū Osafune Kiyomitsu kore o tsukuru - Tenbun nijūsannnen hachigatsu hi (備前国長船住清光作之・天文二十三年八月日) - "Made by Osafune Kiyomitsu, resident of Bizen province, on a day in the eighth month of Tenbun 23 (1554)"

Measurements

nagasa 71.0 cm, *sori* 2.8 cm, *motohaba* 3.3 cm, *sakihaba* 2.45 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 4.0 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 18.8 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, no noticeable taper, thick *kasane, funbari*, deep *sakizori*, somewhat elongated *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: dense *ko-itame* that is mixed with a little bit of *ko-mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a faint *utsuri*

Hamon: widely hardened and *ko-nie-laden gunome* with a bright and clear *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *ko-gunome*, angular and *koshi no hiraita* elements, some *togariba*, many *ashi* and *yō*, fine *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*, and some *yubashiri* and small *tobiyaki* in places

Bōshi: widely hardened *sugu-chō* with some *midare* and on the *omote* side a *ko-maru-kaeri* and on the *ura* side a late starting and somewhat pointed *kaeri*, on both sides *hakikake, mura-nie*, and a long turnback

Horimono: on both sides a *bōhi* with *tsurebi* that both end in *kakudome*

Nakago: *ubu*, bulbous *kurijiri* that tends to *ha-agari, katte-sagari yasurime*, one *mekugi-ana*, the *haki-omote* side bears a relatively thickly chiseled *naga-meい* that starts at the *mekugi-ana* and that runs along the *nakago-mune* towards the tip of the tang, the *ura* side bears a somewhat lower starting but otherwise identically positioned date

Explanation

The Bizen Osafune smiths from the end of the Muromachi period, and their works, are usually referred to as Sue-Bizen (末備前), i.e. “late Bizen.” Among those Sue-Bizen smiths there were particularly many who used the name Kiyomitsu, for example Gorōzaemon no Jō (五郎左衛門尉), Mago’emon no Jō (孫右衛門尉), Yosōzaemon no Jō (与三左衛門尉), Hikobei no Jō (彦兵衛尉), and Magobei no Jō (孫兵衛尉), whose names we know from extant blades signat that way. Most skillfull of these numerous masters were Gorōzaemon no Jō and Mago’emon no Jō Kiyomitsu.

This *katana* is a work of Osafune Kiyomitsu that is dated Tenbun 23. It does not bear a first name but the signature style is that of Gorōzaemon no Jō Kiyomitsu. With the wide *mihaba*, the somewhat elongated *chū-kissaki*, the thick *kasane*, and the prominent *sakizori*, the blade is of a typical *uchigatana-sugata* from the end of the Muromachi period. The shape is *magnificent* and the *kitae* is a dense *ko-itame* that is mixed with a little bit of *ko-mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a faint *utsuri*. The *hamon* is a widely hardened *gunome* that is mixed with *ko-gunome*, angular and *koshi no hiraita* elements, some *togariba*, many *ashi* and *yō*, and fine *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*. This Kiyomitsu focused on a hardening in *suguha* but he also worked in *midareba*, with this widely hardened and flamboyant interpretation composed of various different elements being particularly impressive. On most Kiyomitsu blades, the *hada* tends to stand out but here it is dens and finely forged and this of a noticeably high quality and so we have here with the perfectly healthy (*kenzen*) *jiba* a masterwork by Gorōzaemon no Jō Kiyomitsu. The blade shows a bright and clear *niogiuchi*, plenty of *hira-niku*, and feels massive and robust in hand, which delightfully adds to its overall magnificence.