

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

katana, mumei: Unjū (雲重)

Measurements

nagasa 69.8 cm, *sori* 1.0 cm, *motohaba* 2.9 cm, *sakihaba* 2.2 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 4.4 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 21.9 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, hardly any taper, shallow sori, elongated chū-kissaki
Kitae: overall finely standing-out itame that is mixed with mokume and that features plenty of ji-nie and fine chikei

Hamon: suguha-chō to gently undulating notare in ko-nie-deki with a rather tight, bright, and clear nioiguchi that is mixed with ko-gunome, many ashi and yō, and fine kinsuji and sunagashi

Bōshi: some notare with a ko-maru-kaeri and hakikake

Horimono: on both sides a bōhi with soebi that run as kaki-nagashi into the tang

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

Explanation

The Ukan manor (宇甘庄) of Bizen province was home to a group of swordsmiths which was active from the end of the Kamakura to the Nanbokuchō period. The smiths of this group, for example Unshō (雲生), Unji (雲次), and Unjū (雲重), shared the character for “Un” whereupon they are referred to as “Un group.” However, due to their place of residence, the smiths are also referred to as Ukan (宇甘) School or Ukai (鵜飼) School, as Ukai was another local name for that region. The Ukan workmanship is quite unique among Bizen blades as we see the Bizen tradition being mixed with elements of the Rai (来) and Bitchū Aoe (青江) Schools, and as there also exist works which show Yamato characteristics, we can say that the Ukan style is quite varied.

This blade shows an overall finely standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie* and fine *chikei*. The *hamon* is a *suguha-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* with a rather tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *ko-gunome*, and many *ashi* and *yō* and so we recognize the Bizen tradition being enlarged with Aoe elements whereupon we clearly face the characteristic features of the Un group. With the wide *mihaba* and the noticeably elongated *kissaki*, the blade can be dated to the Nanbokuchō period and thus within the group to Unjū. The blade is of an excellent *deki* and its *jiba* is very healthy.