

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

tachi, mumei: Ayanokōji (綾小路)

Measurements

nagasa 74.0 cm, *sori* 2.2 cm, *motohaba* 3.05 cm, *sakihaba* 1.8 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 2.7 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 21.2 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.3 cm

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, normal *mihaba*, deep *koshizori* with *funbari*, *sori* drops off towards and blade tapers noticeably towards the tip, *ko-kissaki*

Kitae: *ko-itame* that features *ji-nie* and a *nie-utsuri* all over the blade

Hamon: *ko-nie-laden* and relatively narrow *suguha-chō* with a wide and a *nioiguchi* that is rather subdued in places, the *ha* is mixed with *ko-midare*, *ko-chōji*, *ko-gunome*, angular elements, *ashi*, *yō*, and fine *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*, the *midare* elements are over the entire blade relatively closely arranged and some smallish *tobiyaki* appear along the middle of the *ura* side

Bōshi: *kaen*-like with plenty of *hakikake* and a long *kaeri*

Nakago: *ubu*, *ha-agari kurijiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana* of which one is plugged, *mumei*

Explanation

The Ayanokōji School was comprised of smiths like Sadatoshi (定利) and Sadayoshi (定吉) who were living in the Ayanokōji district of Kyōto. The *meikan* list Sadatoshi as having been active around Bun'ei (文永, 1264-1275) and one theory says that due to Sadatoshi living in close proximity to Rai Kuniyuki (来国行), the two smiths were making *daisaku* works for each other. The classical elegant workmanship of extant blades by Sadatoshi and Sadayoshi reminds us *prima facie* of Awataguchi Kuniyasu (粟田口国安) and their *hamon* consisting of closely arranged and small *midare* elements, a tendency towards *nijūba*, and a rather subdued *nioiguchi* suggest that they have been active somewhat earlier than traditionally stated in the *meikan*. Apart from that, we do see similarities in the workmanships of Sadatoshi and Rai Kuniyuki and it appears that the late years of the former overlapped with the early years of the latter.

This blade has a beautiful *ubu tachi-sugata* and shows a finely forged *kitae* and a *ko-nie-laden* *yakiba* that is mixed with *ko-midare*, *ko-chōji*, and angular elements. The *midare* elements are relatively densely arranged, the *nioiguchi* is rather subdued in places, and the *kaen*-like *bōshi* features plenty of *hakikake* and so we have here a masterwork which shows all the highlights of the Ayanokōji School.