

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

katana, *mumei*: Aoe (青江)

Measurements

nagasa 71.0 cm, *sori* 2.0 cm, *motohaba* 2.8 cm, *sakihaba* 1.6 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 2.5 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 17.6 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, noticeable taper, thick *kasane*, some *funbari*, deep *sori*, rather compact *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and some *nagare* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, *jifu*, a prominent *midare-utsuri*, and along the upper half of the *omote* side and towards the *ha* a faint *sugu-utsuri*

Hamon: *hoso-suguha* in *ko-nioi-deki* with a tight and bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with a little bit of *ko-gunome*, *hone hotsure*, small *yubashiri* along the center of the blade of the *sashi-omote* side

Bōshi: *sugu* and running out in *yakitsume* manner with plenty of *hakikake*

Horimono: on both sides a *bōhi* that ends in *marudome*

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, *kurijiri*, on the *omote* side *takanoha-yasurime* (with rough *kiri-yasurime* at the upper part) and on the *ura* side *katte-sagari yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Explanation

“Swords from Bitchū” are already found in the early 11th century work *Shin Sarugaku Ki* (新猿樂記) that lists noted products of all provinces. The Aoe school that emerged later and flourished at the downstream of the Takahashi River continued to live from that fame. Generally, works made by this school up to the mid-Kamakura period are referred to as Ko-Aoe and those made later and throughout the Nanbokuchō period to just as Aoe. The workmanship of the Ko-Aoe school displays mostly a *suguha-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* with a rather subdued *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *ko-midare*. From the late Kamakura period on, the *nie* become more unobtrusive and with the Nanbokuchō period, the school focussed on a *saka-chōji-midare* with a tight *nioiguchi* that bases on a bright and clear *suguha*.

This blade has a wide *mihaba*, a noticeable taper, a thick *kasane*, despite the *o-suriage* some *funbari* and a deep *sori*, and a rather compact *chū-kissaki*. The *kitae* is an *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, *jifu*, and a prominent *midare-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *hoso-suguha* in *ko-nie-deki* with a tight and bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with a little bit of *ko-gunome*. Thus, we recognize the characteristic features of an Aoe School work from the end of the Kamakura period. Typically in particular are the prominent *midare-utsuri* that appears towards the *mune*, the *sugu-utsuri* that is seen along the upper half of the *omote* side and towards the *ha*, the *jifu*, and the *suguha* with its tight and bright *nioiguchi*. The *deki* of this blade is outstanding among all works attributed to this school.