

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

katana, mumei: Motoshige (元重)

Measurements

nagasa 65.7 cm, *sori* 1.1 cm, *motohaba* 3.0 cm, *sakihaba* 2.5 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 6.6 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 16.5 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, no noticeable taper, shallow *sori*, *ō-kissaki*

Kitae: rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare* and that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and *jifu-chō*

Hamon: *ko-nie-laden suguha-chō* that is mixed with angular *gunome*, some *togariba*, *chōji*-like elements, many *ashi* and *yō*, *kinsuji*, and *sunagashi*, the elements of the *ha* are partially slanting

Bōshi: *sugu-chō* with a tendency towards *midare-komi*, a *ko-maru*-style *kaeri*, and plenty of *hakikake* at the tip

Horimono: on both sides a *koshi-bi* with *soebi* that both end in *marudome*

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

Explanation

Motoshige (元重) was a Bizen Osafune School smith but belonged to a different local lineage than for example Kanemitsu (兼光) and Chōgi (長義). We know dated works from the end of the Kamakura period, i.e. the Shōwa era (正和, 1312-1317), to the mid-Nanbokuchō period, i.e. the Jōji era (貞治, 1362-1368), and there exists the theory that two generations have been active in that period of time. As for Motoshige's workmanship, he forged a *kitae* that is mixed with *nagare-masame* and *jifu* and hardened a *hamon* with prominent angular *gunome*, slanting elements, and *hataraki* like slanting *ashi* and *yō*, and so with the pointed *kaeri*, we recognize certain Aoe elements, with this tendency towards Aoe being thus regarded as a characteristic feature of Motoshige.

This blade shows a rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare* and that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and *jifu-chō*. The *hamon* is a *ko-nie-laden suguba-chō* that is mixed with angular *gunome*, some *togariba*, *chōji*-like elements, many *ashi* and *yō*, and *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*, with some elements of the *ha* being interpreted in a slanting manner. The presence of *nagare* and *jifu-chō* along the *kitae* and the angular *gunome* and slanting elements along the *ha* we clearly recognize the characteristic features of Motoshige, and with the magnificent *sugata* so typical for the mid-Nanbokuchō period, we are in agreement with the period attribution to this smith. A masterwork among all blades attributed to Motoshige whose *ha* features fine *hataraki* like *ashi*, *yō*, *kinsuji*, and *sunagashi*.