

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

katana, mumei: Kanemitsu (兼光)

(with *habaki* by Gotō Mitsumori, 後藤光守)

Measurements

nagasa 73.65 cm, *sori* 1.8 cm, *motohaba* 3.1 cm, *sakihaba* 2.4 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 6.1 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 23.0 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, no noticeable taper, deep koshizori, ō-kissaki

Kitae: rather standing-out itame that is mixed with mokume and some ō-hada and that features jinie, fine chikei, and a faint midare-utsuri

Hamon: on the omote side a notare-chō that is mixed with gunome, on the ura side a notare that is mixed with somewhat slanting chōji, koshi no hiraita elements, and angular gunome, both sides show ashi, yō, and a few kinsuji and sunagashi, the nioiguchi is wide, bright, and clear and the hardening is in ko-nie-deki

Bōshi: midare-komi with a somewhat pointed kaeri

Horimono: on both sides a bōhi which runs on the omote side as kaki-nagashi into the tang and which ends on the ura side in marudome

Nakago: ō-suriage, kurijiri, yasurime on the omote side sujikai and on the ura side katte-sagari, two mekugi-ana, mumei

Explanation

The Bizen Osafune main line started in the mid-Kamakura period with Mitsutada (光忠) and was then continued by Nagamitsu (長光), Kagemitsu (景光), and Kanemitsu (兼光). Extant dated works of Kanemitsu range from the end of the Kamakura period, i.e. the Genkō era (元亨, 1321-1324), to the Nanbokuchō period, i.e. the Jōji era (貞治, 1362-1368), and span so roughly 40 years. Up to around the early Nanbokuchō-period Kōei era (康永, 1342-1345), *tachi* and *tantō* by Kanemitsu have a *sugata* with normal dimensions and either show a *suguha-chō* that is mixed with *gunome* or a *kataochi-gunome*, thus a style that is very similar to that of his father Kagemitsu. Around Jōwa (貞和, 1345-1350) and Kan'ō (觀応, 1350-1352), the blades become larger and show a *notare*-based *hamon* that we do not see on local works prior, with most of such works dating around Bunna (文和, 1356-1356) and Enbun (延文, 1356-1361). Blades of this latter category are also noticeably *nie*-laden and are therefore referred to as Sōden-Bizen (相伝備前).

This blade is with its wide *mihaba* and *ō-kissaki* of the magnificent shape that was prevailing at the heydays of the Nanbokuchō period. The *kitae* is a rather standing-out *itame* that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a faint *midare-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a largely undulating *notare-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* with a bright and clear *nioiguchi* and is mixed with *gunome*, *ashi*, and *yō*, and with the *midare-komi bōshi* with its pointed *kaeri*, we have here a masterwork by Kanemitsu among all Bunna-Enbun-era blades attributed to this smith. Both *ji* and *ha* are in perfect condition. The blades comes with a massive but highly elegant single-piece solid gold *habaki* made by the 14th Gotō generation Keijō Mitsumori (後藤桂乘光守, 1751-1804) depicting the subject of a monkey trying to catch the moon. With the monkey staring at the crescent moon in *kebori* and the silver *okigane-iroe*, the piece is full of lyric sentiment. It is said that the blade was once owned by the Ryūzōji (竜造寺) family.