

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

tachi, mei: Bishū Osafune Sukemitsu (備州長船佐光)

Measurements

nagasa 75.65 cm, *sori* 2.5 cm, *motohaba* 3.0 cm, *sakihaba* 2.0 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.2 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 18.9 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.2 cm

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune*, relatively wide *mihaba*, noticeable taper, narrow *shinogi-ji* in relation to the *mihaba*, thick *kasane*, deep *sori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: overall standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare* and that features *ji-nie*, dark *chikei*-like elements, and some *utsuri* in places

Hamon: *ko-notare* in *nie-deki* that is mixed with various different elements like *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, angular *gunome*, and *ko-chōji*, the elements of the *ha* are overall rather small dimensioned and in the mid-blade section of the *ura* side, there is some slight tendency towards *koshi no hiraita*, in addition, there are *ashi*, *yō*, some *hotsure*, plenty of *sunagashi*, and *kinsuji*

Bōshi: *midare-komi* with *ko-maru*-like *kaeri* and *hakikake*

Nakago: a little bit *suriage*, *ha-agari kurijiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, the *haki-omote* side bears, starting above of the second, the *ubu-mekugi-ana*, and towards the *nakago-mune* a six character signature

Explanation

The *meikan* list the first generation Osafune Sukemitsu as being active around the mid-Nanbokuchō period Kōan era (康安, 1361-1362), with overall six generations working until around Eishō (永正, 1504-1521). The workmanship and signature style of this blade suggests that we are facing a late-Nanbokuchō Kozori work by the Sukemitsu smith who was a student of Mitsuhiro (光弘) and active around Eiwa (永和, 1375-1379).

This *tachi* is with its deep *sori* of a magnificent *sugata*. It shows an overall standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare* and that features *ji-nie* and dark *chikei*-like elements. The *hamon* is a *ko-notare* that is mixed with *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, angular *gunome*, and *ko-chōji*, with the elements of the *ha* being overall rather small dimensioned. Thus, in terms of interpretation of the *jiba*, we clearly recognize the characteristic features of late Nanbokuchō-period Kozori works. Although very little there is some tendency towards *koshi no hiraita* and so we can see the first steps towards the subsequent local Ōei-Bizen style. There are *nie*, *hotsure*, many *sunagashi*, and *kinsuji*. and the *bōshi* shows *hakikake*, so we have here an ambitious work. It is delightful that with the plenty of *hira-niku* left and the thick *kasane*, the blade is of a perfectly healthy (*kenzen*) *tachi-sugata*. The presence of *ji-nie* and dark *chikei*-like elements mixed into the *ji* we see more typical Kozori characteristics and also the *jiba* is *kenzen*, and with the presence of a signature, this blade is an important reference for understanding the workmanship of this smith.