

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

tachi, shu-mei: Aoe (青江)

Measurements

nagasa 68.8 cm, *sori* 2.4 cm, *motohaba* 2.8 cm, *sakihaba* 2.0 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.15 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 21.7 cm, hardly any *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, no noticeable taper, thick *kasane*, deep *sori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: overall densely forged *ko-itame* that is mixed with a little bit of *ko-mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much fine *chikei*, some *jifu* in places, and a *midare-utsuri*

Hamon: *chū-suguha-chō* in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie* that is mixed with *ko-chōji*, *ko-gunome*, many *ashi* and *yō*, *kinsuji*, and *sunagashi*, the *ha* is somewhat subdued along the mid-section of the blade

Bōshi: on the *omote* side *notare* with a somewhat pointed *kaeri*, on the *ura* side *midare-komi* with a late starting and pointed *kaeri* that runs back in a long fashion

Horimono: on both sides a *bōhi* that runs as *kaki-nagashi* into the tang

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, *kirijiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, the *sashi-omote* side bears centrally under the second *mekugi-ana* the large *shu-mei* attribution “Aoe”

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 shows an overall densely forged *ko-itame* that features plenty of *ji-nie*, some *jifu* in places, and a *midare-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *chū-suguha-chō* in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie* that is mixed with *ko-chōji*, *ko-gunome*, many *ashi* and *yō*, *kinsuji*, and *sunagashi* and so we clearly recognize the characteristic features of an Aoe work from the end of the Kamakura to the early Nanbokuchō period. Also very typical for this school is the *bōshi* with its pointed *kaeri*. With the wide *mihaba*, the *chū-kissaki*, and the seep *sori*, one can still imagine the original *tachi-sugata* of the blade despite it being (*ō-suriage*) shortened.